June 5, 2008

Letter to the Editor of the Daily Herald,

On Monday, June 2, the Daily Herald published an article entitled “Grayslake Elementary District 46 honored by company it hired”. Unfortunately, the reporter chose not to portray the excellent work of District 46 staff and administrators.

I had a meeting with the reporter earlier in the year to discuss Blue Ribbon. I presented him with a binder of data to support the improvements made as a direct result of this audit. He did not open the binder. I also invited the reporter to visit our classrooms to view firsthand, the instructional improvements made. He chose not to visit.

Let me provide the readers with the facts, not opinions.

Fact: Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of education for all children.

Fact: If we truly were “buying” awards, we would have made sure all of our schools received awards.

Fact: Our schools were evaluated on the following criteria: Student focus and support; school organization and culture; challenging standards and curriculum; active teaching and learning; technology integration; professional community; leadership and educational vitality; and family and community partnerships.

These criteria are research-based and are identified as key in the improvement of instruction.

In addition, parents, students, and staff were invited to respond to a survey regarding our district.
The Daily Herald article quotes Edward M. Mazze, Professor of Business Administration at the University of Rhode Island, as saying “the awards were of no significance” and the district is unnecessarily “patting itself on the back”.

I would personally like to “pat the backs” of the District 46 School Board, administration and staff who opened their doors for an in-depth audit of their educational process. I am proud of the staff, and I am proud to be the Superintendent in a district that is willing to allow outside experts to review their teaching methods.

Improving instruction and learning for the students of District 46 remains our top priority. I invite anyone who is truly interested in supporting that goal to spend time in our schools. That is where the real evidence is.

Sincerely,

Ellen Correll,
Superintendent

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