

August 31, 2023

Blog – Labor Day

This Monday will be Labor Day, the unofficial end of the summer season. Labor Day became a national holiday in 1894, when it was determined that the first Monday in September would be designated as a day to honor and recognize the men and women who have contributed to the development and achievements of the United States. I am glad that we have a holiday that serves to honor all of our workers, regardless of their position. I believe that it is the efforts of each of us that contribute to the greatness of our country.

As a child, one of the greatest gifts my parents gave me was the belief that I could accomplish anything, if I was willing to work long and hard enough to achieve my goal or task. Their words have been a source of comfort and strength when I might have wanted to give up on something because the way seemed too hard or difficult. I could hear their words echo in my mind and then felt that maybe success was just around the corner, if I could just keep moving forward. As a long distance runner it helped me to find success in each mile that I completed.

During my career in education, I have come to realize that each child in school is both gifted and talented and also have areas of improvement. It is our responsibility as a school system to help students develop their gifts and to foster growth in the areas that need improvement. We are not all the same and we should not want to be the same – we grow as a society because we have different strengths and abilities that when put together are for the greater benefit of all. I am the oldest of five children and though all my siblings grew up with the same parents on the same dairy farm at relatively the same time period, we are all quite different. I loved books and would spend most of my free time reading; my brother who is two years younger found enjoyment working with his hands and working outside in nature. We are both happy and successful in our choices – we recognize the skills the other one has and are pleased that each of us were able to take our gifts and create a career centered on our areas of strength.

One mistake I think we made in education, and I am as guilty as anyone, was trying to convince students and parents that everyone needed to go to college in order to find success. In reflection, I think many of the students would have been just as happy and successful going to a vocational school, entering an apprenticeship program or going to the military and armed services. Today, we have many jobs in the trades that we cannot find individuals to fill. These are good, high-paying jobs that perform great services in our community, state and nation. It is my hope that we can help provide all of our students with the skills, knowledge and traits that they will need to recognize their strengths and help find a place to use these strengths to provide them with a life full of promise and reward.

I hope that each of you have a great Labor Day weekend filled with family, friends and enjoyment. You each deserve this day - our nation recognized many years ago that your efforts and labor have been essential in our prosperity as a nation. So once again have a great Labor Day weekend, end summer with as much joy as possible and get ready for a new school year filled with promise, excitement, and preparation for a great future.