



## Big Bytes 2/24/15

This weather! I know we should not complain, we could be in Boston. At the same time the temperature takes a toll on us. We have to wear more layers, plan ahead for any season on any day. Here at school we have had to have indoor lunch and recess. Not being able to get out and “blow off some steam” has an effect in the classroom.

I don't have a lot of news or my usual food for thought this week. I want to tell you, though, that your children are very important to us. Sometimes it seems that on the one hand we are perceived as too strict and on the other too lax. Probably on any given day we may be both. The abiding truth is: we care deeply about your children. We are concerned for their future and their present. If we seem too tough on them, expecting too much, giving too much work or homework, please know that we are not out to get them. Their success here and our responsibility for preparing them for high school is our top priority.

We are blessed in the Junior High with an outstanding faculty. They are true professionals who love their subject matter and care even more for the success of your son/daughter. We know what can happen to students who are not properly prepared. Having been a high school guidance counselor for a few years, I cannot tell you the heartbreak of kids who come to high school and find out that they cannot be a doctor or some other kind of professional because no one pushed them to get the grades they needed in junior high, to get the courses they needed in high school, or to get the prerequisites for these occupations. Success in high school depends on a strong foundation. It depends on learning to be responsible with long-term assignments, keeping up with reading assignments, budgeting time, and listening in class.

I have shared with the students on many occasions that each time they do not do their best they are closing another door on themselves. Many students ask the question, “How will I use this in my life?” Perhaps they will never use a particular subject in their life, but in order to get to the subject they will use, they need to pass the prerequisites. Discussing high school and occupations may seem premature to you. It is not. We are here to help, encourage, and yes, reprimand and chastise if we must. It is all done with concern and affection. This is not to say that on occasion teachers do not become exasperated and show it. It is to say that when that happens, student and teacher work it out.

When I was in the classroom (most of it spent with Junior High students), people would ask me what I did. When I told them, their first reaction was, “Oh no, that's tough.” It is tough sometimes, but not for the reason others may think. What is tough is to see a student, full of potential, running headlong down a path of destruction. What is tough is to see a student put up a wall and be determined to let no one or nothing inside. What is tough is to see a student do less than he or she is capable of in order to impress peers. These are the ‘tough things’ of teaching.

Every student is important to us. We are on their side. Just as you do as parents, sometimes we must be tough on them, because we love them.

dg

