



## It's Not What You Think

Aug. 19, 2019

The start of a new school year has always been an exciting time around my household, and last week was no different. It was great to greet students and families as they returned from summer break. The hugs, handshakes and high fives were perfect reminders of the reason why we do what we do.

Walking through several elementary schools last week reminded me of my first days in Mr. Hatch's class at Parnell Elementary. It was an awesome experience, and I still remember the feeling 45 years later. Mr. Hatch was my kindergarten teacher, and I believed back then that I was his favorite. I now realize that he made all of his students feel that way from day one. I have forgotten way more than I remember, but what I can say is that he told us daily that he believed in us – and we believed him. I now know that it was his belief and his genuine concern that made a difference for me. He held us all to high expectations and constantly shared his belief in our success. We loved Mr. Hatch because we believed that Mr. Hatch believed in us.

What I now know is that many of my other teachers believed in us as well and wanted the best for us, but Mr. Hatch told us and showed us daily. I am challenging each one of you as you carry out your daily responsibilities, **please be intentional about sharing your belief about your student's potential for success.** What you believe about your students is critical, but it is not enough to think it and not share it. The students must know that you believe in their success, and I am asking you to show them with your words and actions.



I know many of you have heard that as an educator, it is not only what you think about students' potential success that matters, and it is not what they think about their own potential success that matters. It is what they think that **YOU** think about their potential success that, in most cases, makes the difference. Many of us can relate to this sentiment because we have all likely done something or accomplished something not because we believed, but because someone we looked up to and cared about believed we could. They believed in us, and we achieved because we believed in them.

As we focus on ensuring excellence in education so that all of our students will achieve their full potential this year, **I challenge each one of you to be intentional about communicating your expectation of success for the students you serve.** Don't just think it, tell them. Let them know that you believe in them and their success, and they will believe in you. Who knows, maybe they will remember you 45 years later.

With gratitude,



Mike McFarland