

**PHILOSOPHY**

The Governing Board has a broad concept of what constitutes excellence in education. This concept rests on three distinct assertions: the first is about the nature of man; the second is about the nature of our democratic society; the third is about the nature of schooling necessary to train students for productive participation in our society.

We see each student as a unique individual worthy of great respect. Even though each student is different and unique, we see more similarities than differences. All of us as human beings have the same basic needs and desires. This universal commonality is as elemental as realizing that we are gregarious animals with the same biological needs. An individual person cannot exist and cannot be understood in isolation. Human beings live their lives in a social matrix that defines their personal world. Yet the miracle of human society is based on each person exercising his/her own free will as he/she matures.

Free will is the basic engine of change in human society and sets human society apart from the societies of all other social animals. A human animal, through the exercise of his/her free will, has the power to consciously change the society in which he/she lives. The corollary is that free will does not reside in society itself. Any society that recognizes, honors and empowers the individual, as the source of change, while protecting the rights of others, will necessarily be a more vigorous, dynamic and healthy society. Any society that ignores or tries to suppress this basic truth signs its own death warrant. This is the basic difference between a democratic society and a totalitarian society.

The United States of America was structured as a democratic society by guaranteeing the civil liberties of its citizens. The Biblical injunction that we are all "children of God" was translated into the political assertion that "all men are created equal." The initial discrepancy between the stated ideal and the actual fact of liberty for a privileged few created a political tension in our society. Over the past 200 years, through the dreams and efforts of men and women of conscience, our society has accepted a more highly developed ideal of universal suffrage and equality of opportunity for all. The realization of this revitalized dream is still unfolding.

The development of public education in this country has paralleled the development of our political institutions. Indeed, many of the men and women of conscience are products of our public education system. Our country has been one of the world leaders in pioneering the revolutionary social concept of universal education. America has substantially achieved this quantitative objective. The next revolution in education is one of universal excellence. We must make changes.

**PHILOSOPHY** (continued)

We cannot achieve tomorrow's dreams with yesterday's methods. To ensure that every student has an equal opportunity for the future, it is necessary to restructure our methodology so that we personally address the needs of each individual student at his/her own level. There can be no such thing as failure. If a student does not achieve success, then we must change the delivery system, and change it again and again if necessary, until the student does achieve success. Students don't fail; teachers don't fail. It is only systems and methods that fail the teacher and student alike. Success must be programmed for all students. With such new programs in place, every student will have the opportunity to succeed, build self-esteem and develop high expectations of himself/herself. We must have the courage to put behind us the traditional system that assures that the success of some students is defined by the failure of others. Likewise, we must identify and eliminate programs that stereotype and label students and set diminished expectations for this student or that group. In stating this, we realize full well that several funded, state-mandated programs fall into this category. We must seek creative alternatives to these identified programs and secure alternate funding sources.

In a very basic sense teachers don't teach; an individual student learns. It is the teacher's responsibility to create the environment in which students can learn. It is the principal's responsibility to empower each teacher to be able to create such an environment and to relate the environments of separate classrooms into a synergistic whole. It is the administration's and Board's responsibility to articulate the vision and to provide the necessary resources to carry the vision to fruition. It is incumbent on each of us in the educational system to take all the necessary steps to guarantee that every student has the proper encouragement, foundation and training to develop to his/her fullest potential. In making this commitment, it is our intent to seek the support of the family, church and other institutions in our community. We see that the efforts of all, although independent of each other, should be complementary. By utilizing a holistic approach, we can help structure a creative environment designed to bring about the maximum physical, intellectual and ethical development of each student.

The nature of schooling necessary to achieve such high ideals has to be more than the traditional "Three Rs." Looking forward to the future in which our children will live, we see a dynamic, technological, democratic society in which the rate of change will be accelerated compared to our time. We seek to graduate students that are proficient in all the skills of learning, have a thorough grounding in the arts and sciences, hold in high regard the sanctity of all life and have an abiding commitment to our free democratic institutions and the free enterprise system. Such a student will have an abiding love of life, learning and liberty.