

Remembering to be appreciative



For those in the education field, two events loom large in the month of May - high school graduations and Teacher Appreciation Week. On the surface, they may not seem like comparable events, but in my mind they are closely linked.

As a parent, I was always mindful and grateful for the role my son's teachers played in his life, but never more so than when he was graduating from high school. As I looked back with pride on my son's achievements and the obstacles he had overcome, I could not help but feel tremendous appreciation for the educators who, like me, had believed in him, encouraged him and pushed him to be the person he had become. I felt more than ever the partnership we had in shaping the exceptional young man who would soon be entering the "real world."

As a teacher and principal, I was humbled by the trust parents placed in me and my colleagues, and felt privileged for the opportunity to play a role in the lives of their children. When I watched my students graduate from high school, I felt the same pride, hope and worries for them that I felt for my own son. Again, I was struck by the sense of kinship and collaboration I felt with the families of these remarkable young men and women.

As parents all across our state prepare to usher their children through the milestone that is high school graduation, I encourage them to take a moment to give themselves a pat on the back for a job well done. One of the joys of parenthood is taking some measure of ownership in the accomplishments of our children. I also encourage them to remember those who have helped them along the way. May 6-10 is Teacher Appreciation Week. If there are educators who have been significant in the lives of your children, this is a good opportunity to let them know the role they played.

For teachers, I encourage you to take what may be a new view of Teacher Appreciation Week. Not only is it a time for others to express their appreciation to the educators who have made a difference in their lives, it can also be a time when educators are reminded to appreciate the

special opportunity they have to touch the lives of others. Very few individuals are given the ability and the responsibility to make a lasting impact on so many young lives. It is appropriate to take time out to be thankful for this blessing.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane".

Dr. Diane DeBacker
Kansas Commissioner of Education