

DR. MAYER'S MEMO

Center for Youth Research
and
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What is our investment in students?

This past Friday I had the honor to sit in the audience at the dedication ceremony for the new convocation center at Mt. Carmel High School (Chicago, IL.) The speakers reminded this audience of the saga of survival this school experienced throughout the years. In the not so distant past, the school was an eyelash from closing. At that time, the area where the school is located was suffering from many of the social ills that fall upon urban areas. The school didn't abandon this neighborhood and it is now being praised for being one of the anchors instrumental in the revitalization of its neighborhood. The new building is a 15 million dollar wonder that symbolizes the thriving present and bright future of this inner city school. The donations came about as a result of a vigorous fund raising campaign led by grateful alumni.

The dramatic investment that this new building represents is an obvious representation of how we rally in support of education and of how education can change communities and lives. Not every day is there a 15 million dollar campaign to invest in our students. (Thank the Lord.) But, everyday does contain a critical investment campaign that is on-going in every school year. I call it the 1.5 million dollar campaign because the effort we put into each student, everyday, results in a 1.5 million dollar pay-off for them across their work careers. I am not being Pollyannaish to rally you around this notion. Just do the math. Conservatively, if our students work for 35 years after their schooling and they average \$50,000 per year, the result is well over 1.5 million dollars over the course of their working life-time.

Our daily investment is important. It's a 1.5 million dollar fund raising campaign!

Practical Ways Parents and Schools can Make This Daily Investment. In a follow up to the last issue of **Mayer's Memo** where I examined getting students to school, this issue I would like to discuss what specifically can be done to get students and parents to invest in the success of students once we get them there.

Let me outline what parents and schools can bring to the table everyday to make this investment. As regular readers of this Memo can attest, I am fanatic about the simple fundamental steps that can be easily employed to ensure positive behaviors in young people. This approach is no different here with our daily investment campaign. If we do these little investment habits with students K thru 12, I will assure you that you will see success.

Over Please

Invest in Success—Daily Investment Habits for Successful Students

From Mayer's Memo Vol. 18 No. 2

Parents

Wake Up with Your Child:

At all ages--be there as your child gets organized and off. This means a lot and is simple. Think of what message is sent by not doing this.

Visit the School Website/Homework Site:

Know what their homework is. Know when tests and assignments are due. Know when school events are coming. Then comment on this---don't nag--- letting them know you you're aware stresses how important school is.

Talk "School" Around the House:

Even if you get only a shrug or a sigh in return, talk about school and be POSITIVE when you do. Then drop it. Again, don't nag!

Go to as Many School Events as Possible:

When you go to a parent's night, bake sale, hear a speaker, or go on a field trip your child is very aware that YOU ARE INVOLVED. The message is, "School is important to us."

Make School a Special Place:

Make school clothes special. Have special school supplies, press their clothes, make lunches special. They need a new supply item don't grouse about it, instead express your eagerness to get it.

Enforce Bed & Homework Times & Curfews:

If you are lax with this you are creating a lazy student and that translates to poor grades. Adherence to bed times and curfews are habits. Start these habits early in a student's career and stick with them. The pay-off is huge.

Never, Ever Complain about Paying for School:

Nothing is as deflating as hearing your parents complain about the expenses for school. "I guess it's just not a priority" is what that translates to. This holds true for public as well as private school families.

Schools

Be Professional at All Times:

Always be a "professional educator" and adult around the students. Don't be sloppy in your language, attitudes, paperwork, notes, mannerisms, dress, or habits in front of the students.

Be Keenly Concerned about the School Environment:

Make the classroom an invigorating space to learn. Fill the room with meaningful affirmations. Do the same with the entire school. Keep your classroom clean and insist that the students do as well.

Don't Accept Late or Sloppy Work:

Accepting carelessness is disrespectful to them and to you. It is not being a 'buddy' or doing them any favors. Most of all---they know that!! Nothing tells them school is not important more than this by teachers.

Stress and Teach Dignity and Civility:

If you accept a lack of respect for others and for themselves, then they become lazy, unmotivated learners. Monitor behavior at assemblies or school events. This gives the message that school is a "special" place.

Make School a Special Place:

Insist and teach that they don't act or talk in school like they would 'on the street'. Enforce rules and consequences. If you don't it results in an unmotivated, apathetic student.

Point the Student Toward Excellence:

ALWAYS point every student toward excellence in themselves and their work. Students need to hear, "You can do this." How many of us hold dear that person who believed in us?

"Sell" School to the Students:

Be positive in you attitude and approach to the students. Think of the example of a restaurant. A food server who is positive and effusive about your order makes you want to come back for more.

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