

## Education: Monumental Challenge & Opportunity

Our children's educational experience will not be what we experienced. Public education has changed dramatically in the past five years as districts strive to meet the federal and state requirements, and I believe it will change even more in the next five.

Like most organizations in our State, public education is reassessing how it does business. This isn't due to any flash of genius or philanthropic surge; it's due to the economic reality that we need to improve our quality of education if our students are to be competitive in the job market, and we need to do so in the face of declining revenues. It's a monumental challenge, some would say a crisis. But all challenges hold opportunities and sometimes our best thinking comes during a crisis.

The question is how do we ensure that all our students are successful during their K-12 school years and beyond?

We currently have one of the shortest school calendars of any industrialized nation. Perhaps a longer school year or year-round school calendars are needed. Allowing students to graduate as soon as they've met the requirements has merit, as does allowing elementary students an additional year if that's what they need to be successful. Teaching to mastery on a unit-by-unit system and remediating students on targeted areas makes far more sense than having students repeat an entire semester when, in fact, they have already mastered half of the course.

Any of these changes require that we think differently. It also means that in this era of declining revenues, we will need to let go of some things that are well ingrained in our system in order to provide different opportunities.

We certainly need to reevaluate how we deliver education. What will remain constant is the absolute need for parents and communities to stay committed to, and involved with, the success of the next generation. Support your students. Their success will be our success.