

COMMENTS ON AMY'S RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Common goals aimed at continuous improvement are the hallmark of leadership and growth for any institution. Under Amy's leadership I have seen this district go from distrust of the board to a strong partnership between us and the faculty and staff. During her tenure the district has professionalized every aspect of human resource management, financial management, and physical plant management. Through her blood, sweat, and tears, Amy delivered a practical 21st century educational facility that will serve the district for at least the next 100 years, and she has steered us through a once-in-a-century (fingers crossed) pandemic.

But those are just the things that Amy did because they needed to be done. Her greatest contributions are largely unheralded because they go over many of our heads. Amy is a great educator. Curriculum and student achievement are her greatest passion. Amy took a traditional, siloed, top-down, 19th century factory-style school and transformed it into something special and the best kept secret in Ingham County. She created a system for annual school improvement where everyone is involved. Data and staff input from the previous year is used to create the goals for the new year's *School Improvement Plan*. The teachers have the opportunity to review the plan and provide additional input and changes. When finalized, each teacher works on an *Aggie Improvement Team* throughout the year to accomplish the goals of the plan. Continuous improvement has been fully integrated and made routine.

In the same way, Amy led the establishment of many other systems that combine the use of data and teacher feedback to make decisions that are best for kids. A non-exhaustive list of examples includes:

- The *District School Improvement Team*, which plans effective professional development
- Implementation of the *iObservation* system of teacher evaluation, which provides meaningful feedback for continuous teacher growth
- The *Aggie Problem-Solving Teams* of teachers that target specific areas of need for improved learning
- Bringing to Dansville national educational experts in Spring Math and Standards-based Grading, even making Dansville the first school in Ingham County (and one of the few in the state) to fully implement Standards-based Grading K through 12th grade. Like all the other systems, this is a continual process that is always being adjusted and improved to best meet the needs of our students.

None of these changes would have been possible without Amy's collaborative approach and her continued encouragement to everyone to innovate and try new things. Teachers especially have been given the support to try a new project or implement a new way of doing things in their classrooms. Each classroom has become part of a whole system that meets students where they are and scaffolds them within and across grades and subjects beginning in kindergarten and bent on unlocking their full potential by graduation.

Attending to the heart as well as the head, Amy established the annual Community Day, which brings together our K-12 students for a day of intentionally thinking of others, being kind, and serving the community. This connects with the 7 Mindsets program Amy introduced that has helped so many students.

Most importantly, Amy has created a culture where everyone feels like “family”. This is far more than just promoting the term “Aggie Family”. She has worked tirelessly to make sure people know how much she cares about them, and she makes sure every single person knows they are an important part of our team.

The culture Amy created emanates from a strong love and respect for every individual. It opens the door to the talent that they *each* possess...and refuses to cast anyone into a category labeled for disdain or hate. This is a culture that does not coerce but persuades. And persuasion employs patience and collaboration, which is how it is personal and not political. It is a Win-Win strategy for the kids and the community.

Amy’s retirement creates a hole that cannot entirely be filled. But maintaining a culture is a different task than building one. I truly believe that the Aggie Family can pull together as we have in the past and attract a leader that will sustain the culture Amy has created, and this Small, but Mighty, district will continue to retain and attract the top-notch teachers and administrators who inspire creativity, confidence, compassion, and hope in *every* student on their journey to becoming world-changing members of the Aggie Family.

Sincerely offered with thanks for the contributions of Principal Tania Dupuis, this day, November 22, 2021.

Michael B. Kapp

**President
Dansville Schools Board of Education**

Small but Mighty

We will inspire creativity, confidence, compassion, and hope in all students.

Our students will demonstrate knowledge, critical thinking, communication skills, and collaboration as world-changing members of the Aggie Family.

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