

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

I can't be the only one who looks at the calendar and thinks, "Wow. It's 2016."



As those of us in education enter the halfway mark of the school year, it's a good time to revisit what we do and how we can refresh ourselves for the next six months.

As teachers, our focus should always be on our students. But are we overlooking another stakeholder who plays a big role in our students' lives?

Are we involving parents in the education process?

Many years ago, when I was an elementary schoolteacher, I had a student who was struggling with his math facts. The parent devised a flash-card game using basketball statistics. In a relatively short time, the student learned his facts.

Not only did the parent realize that his child needed help, he took the time to create a way to make the subject understandable and work with him to master it.

As a parent, I also know how I felt when I wasn't able to help one of my children. One of my children briefly saw a speech-language pathologist for help in saying the "R" sound. The pathologist provided ways for us to help at home.

What both of these anecdotes show is the need for communication.

As a teacher, I communicated with the parent about the need to work with the student on his math skills. As a parent, I communicated with the school district about ways to help my child.

In an article by John Grotto (<http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/schools-and-parents-are-essential-partners-in-the-education-of-students/education>), a former superintendent in New York state schools, Grotto extols the benefits that teachers have



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on students and the degree to which parents can affect their children's success.

"There is no room for complacency on the part of either teachers or parents. Both must continually put forth their best efforts. Proactive communication from both parties enhances their relationships and effectiveness."

What is done at school can be reinforced at home and vice versa. As they say in athletics, the more reps, the better.

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