

Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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I've mentioned in this space about the frequent changes that face educators.

Proposed changes always are intended to improve some aspect of education. Often, the changes are rooted in good ideas and if allowed to play out, may in fact improve education.

Bill Daggett, founder and chairman of the International Center for Leadership in Education, said the bigger obstacle to better education isn't that we're not embracing change, but that schools aren't keeping up with the necessary change.

During the Ohio ESC Association's fall conference in Columbus last week, Daggett said our nation has changed but how we educate children hasn't. Specifically, we're using 20th century methods in the 21st century.

Daggett, who has been a proponent of technology education for decades, said today's students are the best educated but the least-prepared for the world they will live and work in.

"While our schools continue to provide a quality education to our students, the world in which students will live and work is changing and advancing at an even faster rate than improvements in our schools. In spite of our best efforts, many schools are not preparing students for success in the world they will inhabit after graduation," Daggett said in a similar address at a January conference.

Part of that deficiency stems from all those changes educators face regularly as new legislation is introduced before previous efforts have been tried to their fullest extent.

It is important, Daggett said, to create a culture within schools that supports improvement before abandoning an idea for the next thing that is being heralded.

Daggett has said schools that improve successfully do so by conveying to staff members that the need for change is necessary. It is only after that message has been accepted that successful change begins.

"Schools that falter, on the other hand ... tend to dive right into changes without ensuring that stakeholders understand the need for those changes," Daggett wrote in a white paper that stemmed from the January conference.

To read more about Daggett's views on challenges in education, view the white paper at www.leadered.com/pdf/2014MSC_AddressingCurrentandFutureChallenges.pdf.

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