



# Tomorrow's News Today

*News From the Tomorrow River School District*

*From Michael Toelle, District Administrator*

**November, 2017**

*"The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people." Woodrow Wilson*

You may be noticing an opening trend in my news articles. I like using famous quotes as a way to get my message across. The above quote is a critical piece of advice to follow in a quest to be an effective school administrator and leader. Providing leadership to the entire district is a very important part of my overall mission.

My interpretation of what falls under "leadership" or how wide the "district" may differ from a typical book definition. Providing leadership in the school context to me means providing guidance, support, knowledge and expertise on curriculum, and sharing my vision/values with my staff. But being a leader in the district also comes with one additional critical piece, which is working with parents and students. Working with parents by assisting with problem solving, managing conflict, and situational guidance all fall under tasks I take on daily. As a principal, direct communication with parents was key to my role and likewise is key to our principals' roles now. As Superintendent, I now work with the principals to help them communicate with parents on the bigger issues. When it comes to working with students, I always aim to lead by example, setting a positive tone, working on character building, providing positive reinforcement, working on social skills, and assisting with problem solving. These are my major tasks with students throughout the district, and I do this by making sure relationships are established and the lines of communication are open.

In my eyes, leadership and the district go way beyond the school doors and beyond school hours. This may be where my interpretation of district leadership differs the most: when my duties start and stop. To me, the doors never close and communication never stops. I love seeing students outside the school day and always make a point to interact with them. I enjoy seeing parents and doing business with them whenever I am out and about in the community, and I make a point of communicating with them. That's all part of the job of being a school leader.

For years I've ended my news articles stating that my door is always open and my phone is available, as I want to assist with questions and concerns. Answering phone calls or e-mails from parents or staff at 9:30 in the evening is just part of the job. To me this means anytime and not just during the school day. If it's a school issue, I want to be able to assist, and the sooner I know about it, the easier it is to address. What I'm trying to get across, as reflected in the Woodrow Wilson quote, is that dealing with and listening to the community is the most important part of my position. I will always make time to meet and talk with community members, parents, teachers, and students.

So, make sure to use me as a resource during the school day or during the evening, all in an effort to help your child be successful in school. Let's plan on working as a team for the remainder of the school year. If a situation does arise, please remember: my door is always open, my computer is on, and my phone is available. Until next month, have a great start to the winter season.