

# A View from the Principal's Office

November 19, 2019

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I want to lead with a well-earned congratulations to the cast and crew of *The Addams Family* for three sold-out performances. What an amazingly entertaining show!

During the past couple of months, I have found myself speaking to prospective students. The most difficult questions for these students to answer have been, “What do you want to learn and how do you want to learn it?” These questions never fail to stop students in their tracks. It seems that some young people have never considered school as a place to pursue their interests. As I have thought about this, it has dawned on me that, perhaps, this is developmental. As a parent, I remember (not with fondness) the abbreviated dinnertime conversation about the school day:

I ask: “How was your day?”

Child responds: “OK”

I press: “What did you do in school, what are you learning?”

Child closes the conversation: “Nothing.”

So maybe it is simply a developmental stage that our young people go through – or maybe we need to consider a rigorous education tailored to our students’ interests, abilities, and strengths. I found with my own children that they were talkative when they were engaged in something that excited or interested them. I have a sneaking suspicion that all high school students can engage, can be excited about their school day, and will feel inspiration as deep to their core as any of us. These questions should not stump so many of our students – prospective and current.

I had a moment of clarity recently when I overheard someone ask a young student if they are a “hands-on learner.” I will admit that this is a question that I have asked too many times to count; it dawned on me in that moment that EVERYONE is a “hands-on learner.” After all, what is the alternative – young people who are “hands-off learners?” Frankly, “hands-off learners” tend to

be disengaged learners. Why wouldn't everyone want an engaging, hands-on / minds-on, learning experience? While I am confident that the array of opportunities available at our school provide this for most of our students, we will continue to explore what this means for our students as we look to the future in our quest to partner with all learners. I hope that in the future all students are excited to talk about their day and look forward to an engaging learning experience.

Over the past four years, I have used a View... at this time of the year to encourage everyone in our community to support each other. We will be hosting our third All-School Breakfast on Friday, Nov. 22. This celebration provides all members of our school with a wonderful opportunity to share, grow, and enjoy being part of our community. I recognize, as the holiday seasons approach, that there are students and families among us who struggle to enjoy the bounty represented by the season. As we have in the past, we will be seeking to partner with families to ensure that every member of our school community can participate in a festive Thanksgiving meal. If you are interested in supporting this mission, please feel free to drop off food for our school-based food shelf; donations, made out to Hartford High School, are also accepted.

Thank you for reading,

Nelson Fogg  
Principal