

Achieve Like a 'Cane

How one district has improved school climate by reaching out to the community

SESSION: *Increasing Achievement by Improving School and Community Climate*

Presenters: Craig Olson, district administrator; Diane Tremblay, grant coordinator/teacher, Hayward Community School District

Achieve. It's as simple as that in the Hayward Community School District. "Achieve" is the mission statement of the district.

Two years ago, when Craig Olson was hired as district administrator, the leaders of the district and community didn't know the school district's mission statement. Additionally, there was a significant divide in the community surrounding Act 10 issues. The school district community needed a common language. Very quickly, the school board approved its one-word mission statement.

Since then, the district began a school promotion campaign to link the school and area businesses together and to further develop a common language for the community. The district mascot is the Hurricanes, so the campaign was titled, "Like a Cane." The campaign intends to create and improve partnerships between schools, families, and the community to improve culture and climate. According to the district, Hayward believes that when schools, families and communities support each other, student achievement improves and students tend to feel a sense of belonging and pride in their school and peers.

What does it mean to be "Like a Cane"? The community has responded in great force to show the students just how much the area business leaders care for the Canes. Banners, flags, signs and stickers are

visible throughout the community with messages such as, "Golf Like a Cane," "Be Healthy Like a Cane," "Bank Like a Cane," and "Stylin' Like a Cane" depending on the business displaying the message. There are more than 100 banners hanging in the community spreading the district message.

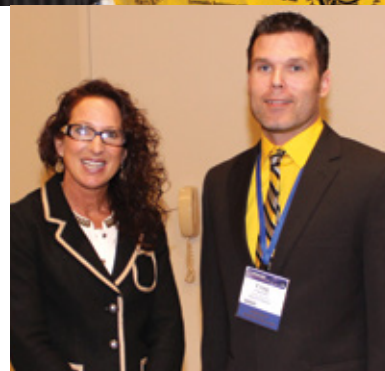
"This program has created ownership," Olson said. "It's like the Packers with community ownership."

The district administrator feels that in order to "Achieve," his staff must be team-oriented, enthusiastic, flexible, and want to be around kids. His mantra includes the phrases, "No excuses," "Know Your Role," and "Stay Positive."

Olson believes that the hiring process is critical to the success of his campaign because you can teach someone to teach science, but you can't teach someone to be team-oriented. Therefore, he must be sure that new hires possess the desired traits.

In addition, the district administration tries to support its teachers in coping with the many mandates that affect their professional lives. Olson says that, in Hayward, they don't constantly talk with their teachers about PBIS, Common Core, RtI, etc., but instead focus on creating an atmosphere surrounding "The Way We Do Business" (WWDB). Again, the culture and climate of the school district is emphasized.

Has the district seen success?



Diane Tremblay and Craig Olson, Hayward Community School District

Definitely. Here are some ways in which the district has seen positive change as a result of the "Like a Cane" campaign:

- no fights in the high school this year;
- the tribal council and the school district talk together;
- student perception of violence in their school is down;
- physical assaults on school grounds have decreased in number;
- weapon possession is down;
- alcohol use has decreased;
- students feel safer at school;
- students report greater teacher support; and,
- graduation rates have improved. ■

"This program has created [community] ownership..."

— Craig Olson, Hayward Community School District