

Article Series
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When The Education Committee of the Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry asked me if I would be on the committee, I jumped at the chance. As a life-long citizen of Fall River who went to public schools and is raising my children in the public schools, I welcome any chance to be involved in the mission of the Fall River Public Schools.

As someone who went to college for Sociology and Human Development and spent six years working for the Fall River Housing Authority, I understand the challenges that some families in our city face on a daily basis just getting their children to school and putting a meal on their table. As someone involved in a family business in Fall River, I know how important it is that we help all of our children reach their fullest potential so the city has an educated workforce that can help Fall River's economy grow. As a parent, there is nothing more important to me than my child's education.

Sometimes we hear that parents in Fall River are not involved in the schools and with their children. Of course there are cases like that, but I see a different Fall River. I see parents that show up for parent teacher nights. I see parents that go to the Holiday shows. I see parents out every night at basketball, hockey, baseball and soccer games. Many parents are involved.

Parental involvement consists of all types of things. We all know we can be involved in Parent Teacher Organizations, which are a wonderful way to support the school financially and expose our children to activities they might not otherwise be exposed to. They are not, however, the only means of support. In the book "Beyond the Bake Sale," many other opportunities for family involvement are discussed. One important idea is being a strong advocate for your child. This involves setting high expectations for your child, the teachers and administration regarding attendance, homework, grades and test scores. In addition, asking for assistance when needed, lining up other educational activities and helping your children set goals for the future are all ways we can be involved. Asking a child about their day and talking to them about their homework is a daily opportunity to check in and let our children know that we value their education and future. If you are looking for a great book, I recommend "Beyond the Bake Sale."

Not only do we need to be involved with our children and schools in whatever way we are comfortable and available, but we also need to stand together and let the community know that we feel strongly that nothing is more important for our children and our city's future than education. In these times, hard choices always need to be made. The choices cannot be made on our children's backs and the city's future. There is a notion that residents of Fall River do not place a high value on education. I don't believe that. Let's stand together and show our mayor, city council, school committee, administration, teachers and children that nothing is more important than education.

Prior to becoming a member of The Education Committee of the Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I started a facebook page called Fall River Parents SOS (Save Our Schools). The intention is to share important articles, ideas for involvement and to galvanize people about important issues and meetings. I encourage you to join this page so we can help the community provide quality education to Fall River's children and band together to ensure that no less is acceptable.