

Article Series
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It's no secret that the perception of public education in our region is not positive. Clearly perception is not reality. Overall, public school teachers are undervalued and underappreciated community resources. To the public at large, our school system appears to be in disarray. Nothing could be further from the truth. Despite shoestring budgets and disengaged stakeholders, pockets of excellence exist within the public schools of Fall River. Collectively, we need to provide the resources necessary to expand and grow these pockets of excellence.

The business of primary and secondary education is not static. Nor is it free. In spite of excellent leadership and innovative teaching approaches, our public school system is destined for de-evolution unless we make exceptional public education a priority and provide the resources needed to achieve this goal. Our economic survival depends on innovative teaching approaches that stress excellence in the humanities, science, technology, engineering and mathematics in K-12 curriculum. Jobs in the knowledge-based economy require post-secondary education. Currently, Fall River public schools offer innovative programs that allow students to earn college credits in their senior year. Let's join forces to take the next step in order to make a college degree the norm for all of our public school students instead of an exception.

We are all responsible for the educational success in our community. Business leaders, often the first to complain about the lack of an educated workforce, do little to provide support for education. A recently appointed committee seeks to remedy this deficiency. Likewise, parents need to do their part in providing encouragement and motivation for education. Become engaged and provide academic support for your children. Stress the value and importance of academic achievement. And the community at large must step up to support public education, both financially and non-financially. Volunteer. Help with fundraising. Support concerts, sporting events and school activities. Community support matters. Our efforts can only succeed if everyone makes public school success a priority and is willing to put in the work necessary to make it happen.

To fail to do so places Fall River at peril economically, socially, culturally and emotionally. Our collective quality of life will increase in direct correlation to our successful focus on public education. Let's make Fall River a positive national example of a community coming together to provide exceptional public education to everyone, regardless of race, class or socio-economic status. For in the words of Gandhi, A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history. Our future is in our hands. Join us in our mission to make the Fall River public school system a model for other communities to emulate. Can the children depend on you?