

Fallico Speaks Out

Posted: Thursday, April 26, 2012 6:15 am

Editor, Journal: My cousin, an attorney, recently quipped; “Hey I wanted to thank you and your colleagues.”

I asked, “For what?”

He finished the joke with “Well we used to be one of the most detested professions but it looks as though you guys are filling that role now.”

Funny...

Not that an attorney should ever be detested, but to have teachers as the new despised group just doesn't make sense. But it does make sense as the political environment and overall national sentiment is such that we citizens have misdirected our economic frustrations away from those who mismanage our money (taxes, pensions, and investments), and have turned them toward our workers (teachers, police, firefighters, etc.).

How did we get duped into missing the actual target? And how does this political climate effect education?

Negatively is the answer, whether we have children or not. It can bring down teacher morale and motivation. It can discourage talent from entering the work force. It can dull the classroom as it clouds enthusiasm. And it ultimately affects the way the next generation learns and the degree to which they'll succeed.

Fact: One main factor currently helping to stabilize property values here is our good schools.

Good schools are made by quality families who send quality kids to be educated by quality teachers. The higher the quality of any/all three factors, the higher and stronger property values.

Fact: our Maine South average ACT score is 25, and that is excellent!

Fact: according to an April, 2011 article published in the New York Times, the average starting salary for a teacher in the U.S. is \$39,000 and after 25 years of service climbs to a whopping \$67,000.

It is not lucrative to be an educator, but it is always rewarding. Our district's teachers' average salary is high, but with dozens of retirees in June of 2012, this average will come down substantially, while the high degree of quality and professionalism will remain.

As we continue to accept the politics behind “teacher bashing” we also continue to discourage good teachers and, in turn, good teaching.

Let's support each other and focus on making our community stronger by supporting good teachers who serve our kids.

Craig Fallico, Park Ridge

(Ed. Note: Fallico is a community member and Park Ridge property owner since 1983; a real estate broker in Park Ridge since 1981, a teacher/coach at Maine South since 1987 and a father of five Maine South graduates...and married to one, too. He recently announced his resignation as head wrestling coach at Maine South.)