

COMMENTARY

COBB DESERVES BETTER

Status quo no option for Cobb schools

It is my belief that those individuals or organizations, like the CCSD, that resist change are in jeopardy of continuing to decline, but at an accelerated rate.

"Today's workplace requires a new way of thinking. Embrace the changes or risk being swept under the rug," writes Robyn D. Clarke in "Out With the Old: In With the New."

Ms. Clarke notes that, "We are living in a time of great social and technological transformation. Thus, clinging to outdated beliefs about work is a sure road to nowhere. We have to replace them with thinking more in tune with today's 21st Century business needs, core competencies, and life skill sets."

One of my professional colleagues recently shared an article called "Lessons of the Square Watermelon." It begins with the identification of a problem for Japanese grocery stores. They are much smaller than their U.S. counterparts and therefore don't have room to waste. Watermelons, big and round, wasted a lot of space. Most people would simply tell the grocery stores that watermelons grow round and there is nothing that can be done about it. That is how I would assume the vast majority of people would respond.

But some Japanese farmers took a different approach. If the supermarkets wanted a square watermelon, they asked themselves, "How can we provide one?" It wasn't long before they developed the square watermelon.

The solution to the problem of round watermelons wasn't nearly as difficult to solve for those who didn't assume the problem was impossible to begin with and simply asked how it could be done.

It turns out that all you need to do is place them into a square box when they are growing and the watermelon will take on the shape of the box. This made the grocery stores happy and had the added benefit that it was much easier and cost effective to ship the watermelons. Consumers also loved them because they took less space in their refrigerators.

Lessons Learned

Don't Assume: The major problem was that most people had always seen round watermelons so they automatically assumed that square watermelons were impossible before even thinking about the question.



H.E. Holliday

MORE OPINIONS CONTRIBUTOR

Things that you have been doing a certain way your entire life have taken on the aura of the round watermelon and you likely don't even take the time to consider if there is another way to do it. Breaking yourself from assuming this way can greatly improve your life as you are constantly looking for new and better ways to do things.

Be creative: This often requires thinking outside the box. Most people who viewed this question likely thought they were being asked how they could genetically alter watermelons to grow square, which would be a much more difficult process to accomplish. By looking at the question from an alternative perspective, the solution was quite simple. Being creative and looking at things in different ways in all portions of your life will help you find solutions to many problems where others can't see them.

Impossibilities often aren't: If you begin with the notion that something is impossible, then it obviously will be for you. If, on the other hand, you decide to see if something is possible or not, you will find out through trial and error.

Challenges That CCSD Must Immediately Resolve

- Overhaul the dated 20th century curriculum to address the dropout problem.
- Replace current management with visionary leaders.

Needed: A Comprehensive 21st Century Curriculum

CCSD must recognize that in the year 2008 one curriculum size does not fit all. They must move expeditiously to implement programs that emphasize career and technology programs (Chattahoochee and North Metro Tech) as well as college preparatory.

Many 21st century students have no interest, money, or the support systems in place to attend traditional four-year colleges. Why has it taken so long for this CCSD administration, especially the curriculum and instruction department, to recognize that point of view? They need to look no further than the exciting high school model that is taking place in neighboring North Carolina. That model insists that all students make a decision by the 10th grade as to whether or not to pursue traditional college or to select a career/technical track. That notion alone will

reduce the growing number of students who wander aimlessly from one class to the next with little interest or direction.

The North Carolina model should help curtail the growing dropout problem that now negatively impacts America's public schools. This will ensure that Cobb students have viable career options instead of being a burden to taxpayers upon leaving school. Have you paid attention to the salaries of electricians, plumbers, computer technicians, HVAC workers or health-care workers?

Many of our international competitors put these educational options into place long ago. We can no longer continue to turn out students with few marketable skills after an extended stay in public school. The job market calls for more skilled workers at all levels, not less.

Visionary Leadership Needed

I recently read an article in the Marietta Daily Journal that suggested that CCSD may never get off the No Child Left Behind "Needs Improvement List." This admission of defeat is unacceptable and highlights our immediate need for improved positive leadership in our public schools. We need a new approach to selecting Central Office personnel because our current leadership management process is severely flawed.

Joel Barker, the famous futurist, notes in his book "The Power of Vision," that thinking positive about everything you do promotes success and sustains a vision. Leaders must have a vision in order to lead people. Visions guide people to change.

Vision is the result of dreams and actions. You succeed against all odds if you have a profound vision. Man can only flourish by looking into the future.

"Vision with action can change the world." This means whether visions are positive or negative, without a vision things stay the same. Leaders must be change agents in order for their organizations to continue to be successful.

In conclusion, if this current CCSD administration cannot resolve most of the 21st century challenges then they should immediately hand in their resignation. The boys, girls, teachers, administrators, parents and Cobb community members deserve better.

Dr. H.E. "Doc" Holliday is an assistant professor at Kennesaw State University and former chief of staff for the Atlanta Public Schools. He is also the author of a book, "Gender Education in 7 Steps."

INSIDE REPORT

Michigan strength moves Romney to top of VP list

The principal reason why former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has climbed to the top of Sen. John McCain's practical wish list for vice president is the possibility that he could bring Michigan's 17 electoral votes to the Republicans for the first time since 1988.

Private polls show Romney could make all the difference in Michigan. A McCain-Romney ticket carries the state by a moderately comfortable margin. With any other running mate, McCain loses Michigan.

George Romney, Mitt's father, was a Detroit auto executive and the popular three-term governor of Michigan. The younger Romney won the 2008 primary in Michigan over McCain, who had won there in 2000 against George W. Bush.



Robert Novak

COLUMNIST

JINDAL SURVIVES

Reports of a decline in the popularity at home of Louisiana's first-year Gov. Bobby Jindal over his mishandling of more pay for state legislators have been greatly exaggerated. His long-shot chances for the Republican vice presidential nomination remain.

A private Louisiana survey of 800 registered voters taken July 6-8 by The Polling Company shows 60 percent favorable (with 39 percent strongly favorable) and 18 percent unfavorable for Jindal. Those numbers contradict Jindal's reported precipitous decline after the 37-year-old governor reversed himself twice on the legislative pay issue but ended up opposing it.

A footnote: A select audience of New Hampshire Republicans was startled Tuesday when McCain told them "you are really going to like" Minnesota's 47-year-old Tim Pawlenty — what sounded like a possible tip-off of his vice presidential choice. But McCain's intimates are accustomed to hearing him praise Pawlenty.



Bobby Jindal

FUNDRAISER OBAMA

Sen. Barack Obama is employing his fundraising prowess to raise money not only for his presidential campaign but also for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, seeking a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate.

Recipients of Obama's summer mailing include many lobbyists who are called "switch hitters" in political parlance — contributors to lawmakers of both parties who seek to open Capitol Hill doors to them on a bipartisan basis.

A footnote: While Democrats have a good shot at picking up four more Senate seats to put their majority at 55 to 45, collecting the 60 seats needed to break filibusters without Republican help seems out of reach.

"We must have a deadlock-proof Democratic majority," Obama said in his letter.

GRAMM GONE

Although former Sen. Phil Gramm's resignation as national co-chairman of McCain for President was considered to be essential by the campaign, he resigned on his own without being asked.

As this column reported a week ago, Gramm apologized to his old friend and political ally John McCain for embarrassing his candidacy, and McCain told him not to worry about it. Shortly thereafter, Gramm resigned rather than become an attack target for having called America "a nation of whiners" whose recession is "mental."

The same McCain strategists who felt Gramm had to go also consider his departure a major loss. McCain valued Gramm's economic and political advice.

Robert Novak has covered Capitol Hill since 1958.



Barack Obama

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No welcome for those who broke our laws to get here

DEAR EDITOR:

Re: Rich Pellegrino letter, "Inalienable rights' apply to immigrants, too" Thursday's MDJ

Mr. Pellegrino makes a lot of interesting presumptions about illegal immigration and what it means for this nation. He talks about his own grandparents who he says were "illegal" and "undocumented." While I don't know the facts of their immigration, given the time frame during which they would have probably immigrated, it's unlikely that they sneaked into this country.

No one can deny we are a nation of immigrants. My family immigrated to North Carolina in

1711. My wife and I are currently working on the paperwork by which she will shed her German citizenship in favor of the right to be called an "American."

Those documents which Mr. Pellegrino quotes are part of the heritage my family was here to see created and the heritage that my wife will be adopted into. Where Mr. Pellegrino errs is he stops with the words, "the pursuit of happiness." He seems to forget the rest of the line, "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

When we instituted our government, we instituted the laws that shape and form the very

structures which have governed us. When we drafted the Constitution and required all of our elected officials to swear an oath to it rather than a person or office, we said that our highest allegiance is not to an individual or position, but to the structure of laws that define our Republic.

Mr. Pellegrino would put on equal footing those who would thumb their nose at our law with those immigrants who have waited and struggled and sacrificed to come here legally. Immigration is not an easy road, especially for two newly married college students like my wife and I were.

When one slip-up resulted in her being sent back to German for the entire first year of our mar-

riage, the temptation was there to bring her back across the boarder illegally and undocumented. But we didn't. Instead we waited.

The reason that the majority of good Americans, and especially the vast majority of newly immigrated Americans, don't agree with Mr. Pellegrino is because most of them understand that we don't swear our allegiance to a "prince or potentate," but to our highest law, to protect and defend. It doesn't seem right to them that someone should be welcomed into our American family who sought to be part of it by breaking its laws in the first place.

Jason Shepherd
Marietta

Immigration problem not our laws, but other countries'

DEAR EDITOR:

Cobb County is making national news this month, and I want to thank the MDJ's D.A. King for shining the light. It should be simple. Elected officials should be the first to stand up and follow the law, but unfortunately big business and greed have put integrity on the back burner. We are in the midst of a propaganda war in this country, and anyone speaking out against illegal immigration is now labeled a racist, hater, xenophobe or vigilante. The pro-pen borders lobby is well funded by greedy

big business and all over this country oozing with kindness, compassion, bathed in flowers and candy and all that is nice!

But why aren't they in Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and other Central American countries, demanding those governments stop the corruption which is causing all the immigrants to flee to another country, just to sustain decent living conditions and hope for a future?

The problem is not with America's immigration laws, but with these other countries' lack of human rights and civil rights. That is

where these civil rights groups should be focusing their time and energy.

In the meantime, elected officials in this country need to do all they can to protect its citizens so we don't eventually become one of those countries everyone wants to flee!

All law-abiding citizens should be paying attention, stand beside King, applaud his efforts and help him shine the light to keep corruption in local government at bay. I do!

Mary Kirkendoll
Smyrna

Cobb kowtowing to hate, bigotry

DEAR EDITOR:

I was surprised to read Friday in the MDJ that Cobb County plans to kowtow to hate and bigotry.

This announcement, by Commission Chairman Sam Olens, goes on to say that he does not care whether the law requires it or not.

I am the managing partner of a commercial real estate business in Cobb County and cannot believe that our county government plans to waste our tax dollars on an issue that may not be required by law and with no evidence that this action will protect the common good.

If Mr. Olens wants to serve the citizens of Cobb, those

resources would be better utilized by conducting criminal background checks on those wishing to obtain a business license in the county. I have personal experience with a former tenant (and convicted felon) that set up a business in Cobb with the sole purpose of using it to launder drug money. And yes, this individual was a

United States citizen.

Addressing this issue is much more important than wasting resources on checking the immigration status of individuals that want to open a legitimate, tax-paying business in Cobb.

Mark Mitchell
Smyrna

THUMBS UP!

