

Support Travis Day for school board

Morehead City, N.C.

Feb. 27, 2020

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing to voice my support for Travis Day for the Carteret County Board of Education. I have known Travis since we were at West Carteret together in the late 80's. After college, we both moved back home to Morehead City to raise our families. I am proud to call Travis a life-long friend.

Travis is an extremely intelligent and hard working member of our community who has devoted his time, skill and effort to make our schools better. Long before he was a member of the Board of Education, Travis was donating his time in our public schools. Travis is a doting father who has coached his daughter's sports teams and mentored the youth in his church. Travis is not only capable and competent, but he believes in giving his most precious asset of time back to our kids.

It has been disheartening to see Travis suffer from personal attacks for his decision not to fund the MaST High School (MaST). Travis made that decision based on what he believed was in the best interest of the taxpayers and ALL of the students in this county. He reviewed the facts, listened to the passionate arguments from the MaST parents and then made an unpopular decision to not fund the school. Travis didn't make the decision lightly or to create enemies. Rather, Travis was wise enough to balance the vocal concerns of the 100 MaST students with the needs of the other 8,000 students in this county. What more could you ask for in an elected official than someone who had the courage to swim against the stream of outrage and do what he believed was in the collective best interest of the taxpayers and students in this county.

I can appreciate that the 100 MaST students (and their parents) who have been lucky enough to attend MaST would think the school was a great deal. And if

those same parents believed that keeping MaST open was in the best interest of their child, then they certainly had every right to make that argument. But, as one who has argued for a living, I must confess that I was initially caught off guard by the intensity, passion and personal attacks intertwined throughout the "Keep MaST Open" campaign.

Although the anger and outrage directed at the School Board was ultimately successful in keeping MaST open an additional year, it should be noted that the argument may have had a completely different effect on the parents of the roughly 2500 traditional high school kids who are not enrolled at MaST. Some of us have sat around and wondered why in the world were the MaST parents so upset? What was fueling their outrage? What was the source of their anger? Why were all of the MaST parents so upset that their kid might actually have to go to school with our own?

As a parent of two kids that go to West Carteret, I would like to know from the MaST parents why they fought so hard to avoid one of the three traditional high schools. Put another way, what did MaST offer your child that the other three high schools did not? Class size? Better teachers? Smaller School? Better Students? Safety? Facilities?

At the end of the day, if the MaST parents believe as they have so passionately argued that MaST is a radically better option for their child than West, East or Croatan, then I think it is only fair that they explain what opportunities MaST affords their child that the other three schools do not. We traditional high school parents love our kids too. What are MaST kids getting that ours are not? What do we need to be upset about?

Thank you in advance for any responses and please support Travis Day for the School Board.

JAMES CUMMINGS