

Dear Staff,

First - please allow me the honor to compliment each and every one of you for your commitment to Hereford ISD and the children of Hereford. I am so fortunate to work with a caring and dedicated staff. I have yet to travel amongst educators where Hereford has not been praised for our professional attitudes, hard work, and dedication to a level of collaboration that is transforming not only Hereford ISD, but other schools in our state and nation into powerful resources for growing productive and healthy citizens.

Second - I'm frustrated that a new member to our community was either compelled or delighted to write a negative report about our school system. I am however encouraged that he chose to interview me in addition to reporting his interpretation of the data. I hope that you were able to make it all the way through the piece. As I talk throughout our community I am thoughtful to share that we teach students; students who are more than a test score, more than a data point on a graph. Growing up is a complicated process, and since we are responsible for much of that process, reducing our efforts to one test score is an injustice to our professionalism. Besides that, it's my opinion that we really care about the kids of Hereford; so much so that a single article will not deter our best efforts.

Third - I'm attaching the link to the original source of the data that Mr. Farrell used for his article: <http://www.cppp.org/factbook08/index.php> The source of the data is the *Center for Public Policy Priorities*. As I was referenced in the Brand article, "data and statistics don't lie". This is a true statement, however context is very important. The original data was used to write an article about the observation that students of poverty are not performing at the same level as their non-disadvantaged peers. <http://www.cppp.org/files/10/KC2008.pdf>. There was no answer as to why this is occurring...limited opportunity, poor teaching, poor administration, test bias, or any other number of factors that could be applied, but certainly not generalized. So please, look at the data. If you drill down enough you will be able to access a broad range of data tables that are both interesting and provoking. Along with the data source, also notice that this data was not reported

by school district, it was reported by county. Since we are the only comprehensive public school district in Deaf Smith County it does reason that the report reflects Hereford ISD (with a little Walcott). Other counties cannot claim this correlation; with any "average" some districts are below and some above the data reported. So while we may not like our rankings in this report, you cannot assume that the same rank applies when districts are aligned by any of the measures gathered in this study.

Fourth - We work hard. You certainly know this to be the case. When hard work goes unnoticed, or worse condemned, there is the option to quit working. We will not and cannot allow that option to be fulfilled. As an administration we will continue to provide the leaders, teachers, and support-staff with the resources they need to educate children in Hereford. As educators, each of us must persevere to find the right combination of content, respect, relationship, engagement, relevance and magic to grow our students into excellent adults. Scores will come and go; high scores are always preferable...but kids and kid's hearts do not come and go, we are responsible for the whole child and I know we are doing a great job! Join me in a resolution (not just for this new year) to continue to work hard to meet the needs of all children. By supporting excellence and achievement in the hearts and minds of our multi-dimensional children (and each other), we will not allow ourselves to be reduced to a data point.

Kelli Moulton