

The Biggest Lie: It's All About the Kids

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
Friday, 20 November 2015 07:06



People sometimes wonder why I'm sarcastic. I tell them that a steady dose of listening to politicians and even non-government types talk about their lofty goals that will benefit EVERYBODY, or maybe just a small group of people unable to defend themselves, has made me that way. You've heard the same words, maybe.

The one that bothers me the most are when these same 'leaders' use the phrase, 'It's all about the kids.' That one makes my blood boil, especially when it is evident that whatever they are doing is not for the kids, it's for the egos and control of those making the decision.

Take the recent decision of the New Mexico Activities Association, the governing body for extracurricular events in the public and private high schools in the state. Their complete book of rules are too complex for most, and too boring for others, yet they always seem to insert themselves into matters that do NOT benefit the kids but does benefit public schools, especially those not doing well academically.

Here's the situation in a nutshell. For the last several years the majority of the students excelling at the statewide Science Fairs and moving on to the National level are home-schooled students. The NMAA took those wins as an insult to the Public School System, it seems, and halfway through the preparation period for Science Fair entries, ruled that homeschoolers must join a public school team in order to be eligible, despite the fact that at least for this year, most or all the slots have already been filled.

What the NMAA is really saying is the public and even private schools are unable to compete with the originality, imagination, and talent of those who learn from their parents. It's not about ALL the kids, just the kids that can't or won't keep up academically.

The Biggest Lie: It's All About the Kids

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
Friday, 20 November 2015 07:06

Someone needs to remind the NMAA that this isn't a basketball game or a cheerleading program, this is about who can do the work and do it well. Not physical work, or work that comes easier when your post player is seven-feet tall, but brain work. You know, the stuff that schools are supposed to be teaching you.

My uncle used to tell a story about a mule he used to clean the ditches around his farm. He trained this mule to get into the ditch and pull a kind of rake behind him that would pull out the weeds and whatever other debris that accumulated in the ditch.

The mule worked well for years, even enjoying being put into harness for this dirty job. But one day a smart man from the government came by and told my uncle that he was cleaning the ditches all wrong. He reprimanded him for putting the mule into that filthy ditch and told him that the place for the mule was on the bank of the ditch, where he could stay dry while pulling the rake. So my uncle adjusted the harness, brought the mule up from the ditch, and tried to get him to pulling the rake. But the mule just stood there, looking around. He nibbled a few bites of grass that were nearby, stretched a couple of times, but made no effort to move the rake, not even another inch.

The moral of his story, my uncle said, was that once some animals get out of the rut, they don't know what to do next. The rut I'm writing about is the one prevalent in the national school systems, that if a student does not attend a mainstream school, they will suffer in the future. Data suggests otherwise, but teachers and other leaders refuse to be moved by facts. Students must be intimidated, influenced and manipulated into believing what the teachers and administrators want for their own benefit, not for the kids. Exceptions may be made for the very well-behaved ones, but that is all. Everyone else needs to stay in the ditch!

Basketball season is upon us. It starts out slowly because of the Thanksgiving holiday, but will pick up dramatically next month. Hope I see you in the bleachers!