

Standardization of best practices...

It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Standardization of best practices is used very effectively in the business community; it also can be used in the school system. As Superintendent, I will promote and support standardized practices that can be implemented in all schools.

However, the Superintendent must not impose top-down solutions with unrealistic timelines. Solutions demand adequate time for changes to be internalized.

Increased student achievement is significantly affected by the role of the building level administrators. In order for the administrators to be more effective, they need to have more local control over their schools, including their budgets. With increased control, each school will be able to customize according to their demographic needs.

Empowering principals means that major financial decisions concerning their schools are made by them. It makes no sense that all major financial

expenditures are handled at the district level only. Individual school-level administrators need more control in order to meet the demographic needs of their individual schools. When principals are given more autonomy, they can make localized adjustments which will enable them to deliver significant results.

Because Escambia County has a high mobility rate, many students attend a number of different district schools in one year. Consequently, it is imperative that we develop and implement a common scope and sequence, created by a consensus of teachers, for students at all schools in the same course/grade.

Principals and teachers must be committed to following the order of instruction so that when children move from one school to another, they will not have gaps in their learning. Without a common scope and sequence of learning, followed by common assessments, the system creates fragmented learning. With no standardized framework and teaching sequence, we guarantee failure for many students.

A standardized framework will not prevent teachers from utilizing their own special talents. Rather, it will simply provide them a specific order in which

skills should be taught. Teachers are free to be as creative and innovative as they wish to be in teaching skills. Again, this is a simple and good practice that has not been used uniformly or effectively in our district.