

Bet they aren't dancing to the Six Pillar Shuffle

We're fortunate to count many school educators and administrators as friends. In fact, you'll be seeing many of them participate in our guest blogs. Here's a contribution from Brad Buck, Associate Superintendent for School Improvement at Waukee Community Schools.

Recently there was an article in the local newspaper about the "grinding" that is occurring at high school dances around the Des Moines metro area. There was information presented about the reactions of parents, students and administrators to the type of dancing that is underway. They also talked about the manner in which it is being handled from handbook implementation, to turning on the lights, to seeking student input about how to improve the behavior, to other solutions.

The article highlighted that students are always going to push the envelope on what is acceptable and that push back has occurred as long as there have been schools. That is likely true, but what has also not changed is that there are standards for decent behavior and all of us – parents, religious leaders, school personnel, community leaders, students, etc – have a role in transmitting those behaviors within a generation and from one generation in our society to the next. The article reinforced for me the importance of teaching character whenever we can and embracing the ideals of respect and responsibility, among others, espoused in the Six Pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS.

Another important concept that emerged for me from the article is that we need to involve all of the associated parties to be part of the problem-solving regarding a solution. What better

way to clarify the real issues associated with this type of dancing than by clearly defining the offensive behavior and seeking a solution for the issues? In most cases, being forced to define the behavior and the underlying issues associated with the behavior can be a learning point for those who are defining the behavior as well as all who are involved in seeking a solution.

My favorite sentence in the article was from a student and it is how I will close: "It comes back to character," [the student] said. "The person you are when nobody is watching is who you really are."