

From the Superintendent's Desk

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It has been a week-and-a-half since students and teachers have finished up the 2016-17 school year at River Ridge. Meanwhile, construction workers are now in full swing working on the new addition or engaging in remodeling at the existing ES/MS/HS. It has been a different kind of "busy" for administrators, secretaries, custodians, and Business Office workers. We're still in the "finishing up tasks" mode to wind down the 2016-17 school year before thinking about what needs to get done in readying for the start of the new 2017-18 school year.

For this article, I have been thinking a lot about "change." Things don't stay the same. Change **does** occur. It's inevitable; and, it's constant. It's how one thinks of "change" that makes all the difference.

Some people will tell you that they don't like change. Why? Because it takes them out of their comfort zone. Some folks like the "same 'ol, same 'ol." They are the ones who will say, "That's the way we've always done it before (and we like it that way). We're used to things **that** way. With repetition, they know from experience what to expect. Despite living in that frozen moment of time or reliving yesteryear, maybe they haven't noticed that life around them has changed or is changing; or, maybe they know it and simply don't care. There is a truth here, though, and it has to do with some people just don't want to be taken out of their comfort level.

Change can be unsettling. Change can make one fearful. To cause someone to have to do something differently than what they want brings about an uncomfortable feeling that forces them to reckon whether they're up to the task/challenge in order to do it successfully or not. Or, if it has to do with people, getting used to what it's like talking/working with someone new creates an unsettling state of mind.

How someone reacts/responds to change makes all the difference. Rather than resist/fight/or fear change, turn it into a "positive." With change comes new opportunity, a chance to take a different approach to something; or a way to create something that is different or anew. For example, I'm thinking about changes in personnel we'll see at River Ridge in the coming days/weeks/months (e.g., Administrative Assistant, Special Education Director, Maintenance Director, Ag. teacher, Science teacher, and Special Education teacher). While we were used to, or liked (or didn't care for) the previous person in the position, chances are the next person will be different or do things differently than his/her predecessor. Good or bad, alike or different, these people deserve our support and nurturing as well as our patience to do things in their own way. They will exhibit strengths and they will exhibit traits we may not be used to—but that's okay! With change, they deserve time and an opportunity to bloom in their new setting. What's neat about this is that maybe **we** will learn something new or develop a new appreciation for something we didn't have before or took for granted.

What one needs to remember about “change” is that it happens and it’s okay. In the process, we shouldn’t be afraid or reluctant to try something new—even if it means failing. We can always learn from mistakes. Hopefully, we become better persons because we were willing to experiment, take chances, to learn and grow, and go beyond our comfort barriers.

In these next 2-3 months I’m looking forward to reflecting, planning, delegating, and trying out new ways of doing what I do. My advice is “to live life and don’t let it pass you by.” Don’t be looking in the rearview mirror; look ahead with anticipation and optimism. I can’t wait for the new 2017-18 school year ahead and being part of those changes!