



Commissioner's

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Comments

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The Dream

Ask any teacher this week if they've had "the dream" and most would say yes.

It all has to do with the start of the school year – the most exciting time of the year in so many respects. Whether it is the smell of new school supplies or the excitement around buying them; whether it is students wondering who their teachers will be this year; or parents knowing that yet another year is ticking away; it is a time of new beginnings.

My daughter loves back to school shopping and always has. She buys what she needs and often what she doesn't. This year she is a senior and oh the excitement! She loves Kentucky and her school, which as a dad, makes me pretty proud. She and her friends have already planned a pep rally and what they will wear to the first football game.

This same excitement was evident on Sunday, as I had the opportunity to meet most of our wonderful students and their parents at registration for the Kentucky School of the Blind. They are so happy to get the school year started.

So, what does all of this have to do with "the dream" you may be asking? Well the dream for our students is generally wrapped up in the excitement of the new year and all the fun ahead. For our teachers and administrators, "the dream" includes that element, but also usually is symbolic of the large responsibility placed on their shoulders.

Seems amazing, but I have been out of the classroom for 13 years. Yet, I still have "the dream" about this time each year. For me, it starts with me teaching in my lab. All is going well, but a gradually increasing murmur begins in the back of my class and spreads across the classroom until all of my students are completely out of control and they are not paying the least bit of attention. They are running around and throwing paper and to my amazement not interested in learning science at all. At this point, I wake in a cold sweat.

The best "dream" or maybe I should say the worst "dream" I have heard lately was from a Lynette Ballard, a 6th-grade math teacher in Estill County, who told me her version. She and her math colleagues went on a vacation and crash-landed on a desert island. While rescuers saved them, they were taken immediately to the school. Their first day back after surviving this horrible ordeal was the day of the district walk through!

I have heard other teachers talk about "the dream." For some they cannot find their lesson plans; they don't have any materials; or no one showed up but them; and even some say they realize they left home without an important piece of clothing!

The pattern always seems to be the same. But why? My interpretation is that, as educators, we realize how important it is to be ready and prepared for our students. We realize that their future depends on our preparedness. It is that concern that manifests itself in "the dream." As with any profession, there are those who see education as a job, perhaps having lost sight of the fact that students are why we do this job, and some that are not prepared to do what must be done to better themselves and their instruction. But, I believe this is the exception and not the rule.

Most of our educators are excited about the new year, and realize that the future successes of our students rely on us to be great at our jobs. Each year we should strive to be better than the last, because our students need and deserve it. As educators, we dream our "dream," so that our students can realize their dreams.