

In a March article in the *Ashland Times Gazette*, I was quoted as saying, "Overall, I am pleased with the district's results" on our state report card. I wanted to take the opportunity to share some more in-depth comments about our district's state report card for the 2014-15 school year.

Some might look briefly at our scores and say for the most part we were average. This is because of how we are trained to look at "C's." Under the old system, districts had ratings of "Excellent with Distinction," "Excellent," "Effective," "Continuous Improvement," "Academic Watch," and "Emergency." The new system has transformed these labels into letter grades from A to F because the state thought it would help people better understand the report cards if it used the same labels as student grades.

If you compare the two grading systems, the "Effective" rating is equivalent to a "C" under the new system. In my opinion, an "Effective" rating is more appealing than seeing a "C." Understanding what the "C" stands for is one of the reasons I was not discouraged.

We also scored very well in certain areas, receiving numerous "A's" and "B's." The only area that we scored below a "C" was in our K-3 literacy. Under the old system, we would have had a "Continuous Improvement" in this category. We identified a large number of students for reading plans and only 42% of those students were removed during the year. If a struggling reader is identified, we want to keep extra supports in place until we are certain that the student will pass the third grade reading guarantee. Over 99% of our students passed the requirements to be promoted to the fourth grade.

Whether we scored an "A" or a "D," we will continue to seek improvement in what we do. Our task now is to look at the data from the testing results and see where we can improve. As a district, we understand the need for consistency in aligning our curriculum with the standards. In recent years, we purchased an elementary and middle school math and language arts curriculum to meet this need. This past year we purchased a K-4 science curriculum. We updated our textbooks at the middle and high school. Because of the move to online testing, we purchased a technology program that teaches the grades K-8 state technology standards. Our Title program is using a new program called LLI.

These are all excellent programs, but we are charged with the professional task of utilizing these programs to the fullest. We understand the need for professional growth. Our 2016-17 school calendar has four professional development days included for staff training.

As I stated in the beginning, I am pleased with our results, but I assure you that we as a district are not satisfied. We understand that we can improve, and we will improve as our principals and teachers take great pride in what they do daily. We truly do want every child to be successful. This success can only be accomplished with every stakeholder being invested in our students. Your involvement in our school and community contributes greatly to our success.

Thank you for your continued support.