

Be Greater than the Average

*Tammy Mangus, Superintendent of Schools*



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Dear Member of the Monticello community,

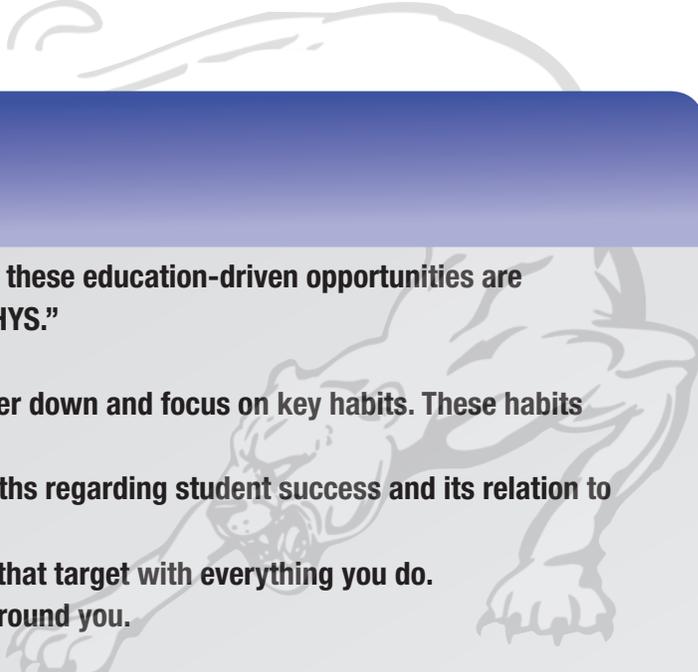
This past week, I had the pleasure of hearing from an “Innovation Instigator” from Apple. Yes folks, that is actually a job title. He spoke of his first days at Apple. During orientation, the first question he asked was, “What is it like to work for Steve Jobs?” The answer was that working for Steve was just like working for anyone else, with one exception. That singular exception was what defined the company and made it successful. At several points throughout the day, Steve would stop random employees and ask, “What did you do to add value to this company today?” If employees could not answer the question or provided a feeble answer, he would collect their badges and discharge them from their duties.

The purpose of this was simple: Each and every day, employees were expected to identify a personal mission for their work which, in turn, feeds the mission of the organization. Long before it was cool to do so, Steve Jobs defined for his employees that it was not WHAT they did but WHY they did it that made the organization successful.

So what does all of this have to do with us? Well, quite simply, we must understand that we are not educators. Instead, we educate. Why? Because regardless of outside factors, we are hired to ensure that children learn and grow. Not just the students who seem ready to learn, but every student. Now, please know that I am not naïve; I am completely aware that students come to us at various levels of achievement. Some can, and will, learn without us. Some will need some nudging. Some will need critically focused attention.

However, all should benefit from our simple mission: to ensure that every child grows. Child didn't complete the homework? How will you ensure that the child still learns the material? Child didn't pass the test? How will you ensure that the child still learns the material? Child out on a long-term absence? How will you ensure that the child still learns the material? Child suspended from school? How will you ensure that the child still learns the material? Taught the lesson six different ways and the child still doesn't understand? Try a seventh way.

You see, our mission, our WHY, is simple: We educate children. We make sure they learn regardless of roadblocks. We go out of our way to innovate and give them the education they need. We expect success for every child and hold ourselves responsible when they are not. When you are mission driven, it's not about WHAT we do, it is about WHY we do it.



**We know that education = opportunity. We know that these education-driven opportunities are impactful to our nation's economy. These are our "WHYS."**

**In the last few months, I have asked that we all hunker down and focus on key habits. These habits include:**

- 1.) Ignoring the outside noise and focusing on the truths regarding student success and its relation to growth in math and ELA.**
- 2.) Finding your simple target and acting in line with that target with everything you do.**
- 3.) Setting high expectations for yourself and those around you.**
- 4.) Being a passionately aggressive learner.**

**This month, I ask that we use those habits already built to carry us forward successfully in our one simple habit for May: to be innovation instigators. Let's make this our new job title.**

**In situations where we find that a child may lose out on learning, let's find a way to ensure the child learns anyway through the use of creativity and innovation...and let's hold ourselves personally responsible for the learning of every student. Let's make sure that if someone approaches us to ask what we have done to add value to learning for every student, we can give a salient, powerful answer.**

### **Essential Question for May**

**Have I defined my mission that will feed the mission of the district?**

### **Essential Habit for May**

**Be an innovation instigator.**

**Once you define your mission, I challenge you to:**

- 1.) Get an outside view of where you really are...from a true critic who will not seek to patronize you will feel-good lies.**
- 2.) Research models that worked for others...fake it till you make it!**
- 3.) Approach all roadblocks with an aim to remove them...excuses feed failure!**
- 4.) Believe in your mission...if you believe in what you are doing, what you do is no longer "work."**

**Need inspiration? Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikAb-NYksel>**

**Be well,**

**Tammy Mangus  
Superintendent of Schools**