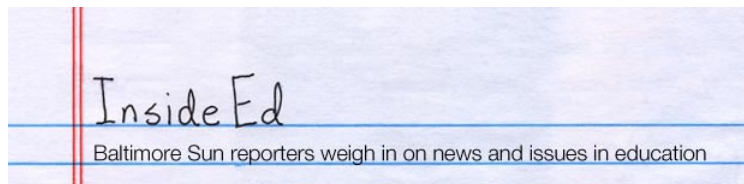


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« Milford Mill Academy and others reopening tomorrow | Main | Air conditioning in Baltimore County schools: It's getting hot again »

Alonso honored by Greater Baltimore Committee

Dr. Alonso started the day yesterday by giving Baltimore's Teacher of the Year Award to Nicholas Greer. He ended the day getting an award himself: The Greater Baltimore Committee honored him with the Howard "Pete" Rawlings Courage in Public Service Award during its annual meeting at the Hyatt Regency. This isn't an annual award; Rawlings was honored posthumously in 2004, and the only other recipient since was Sen. Paul Sarbanes in 2006. According to the GBC, the award is given on an occasional basis "to honor public officials who demonstrate exceptional courage while serving in an elected or appointed public office."

This is from the script that GBC president and CEO Don Fry read at the dinner:

Since he became CEO of Baltimore's public school system in July 2007, Andrés Alonso has gone about the difficult work of changing the culture of a troubled school system by challenging school principals to manage their facilities, and all system employees to accept responsibility for the system's outcomes.

Reflecting a straightforward, reform-minded approach that Delegate Rawlings was known for, Alonso has cut through the school system's traditional politics and focused principals, teachers and school employees on results and accountability, with no excuses. Under his leadership, city schools have begun a turnaround in student achievement that is capturing the attention of parents, business advocates and the system's many stakeholders.

Posted by Sara Neufeld at 2:35 PM in Baltimore City | Permalink | Comments (8) | TrackBacks (0)

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Most of us veteran stakeholders on the front line trenches of district public school primary/secondary education know some thing the GBC has overlooked, city schools resent and current results-driven increase outcomes have begun its turnaround before his arrival in 2007 for increase student achievement.

In that quote missing by GBC president and CEO Don Fry read at the dinner: that Alonso is capturing the attention of parents, business advocates and the system's many stakeholders is not all in a most responsible, or positive attention getting light.

Posted by: Interested & Engaged Parent of City Schools | May 6, 2009 3:31 PM

When are people going to realize that Alonso is setting up everyone underneath him in BCPSS for failure. Alonso gives principals, who are trained educators and not business managers, the power to choose how to spend their school budget but does not give them the power to discipline misbehaving kids. Who cares if you can choose what textbooks to buy but you can't discipline a student that constantly hinders the learning of others? Alonso is doing this so when a school fails he will not be the person to blame.

Alonso is all about numbers. Suspensions are down but we all know that incidents are not. He got dropouts to enroll in school but we won't hear how many of them dropped out again. It's all about the data looking good to the public and the media.

How many times have teachers on this blog written that, despite asking Alonso to come to their schools countless times, he offers no support? How many times have teachers on this blog said that the best they get is one of his useless lackeys sent to their school? He's afraid to see the harsh reality of the condition of many of the schools in BCPSS.

I could've told you that the schools that closed would close. Alonso doesn't actually care what teachers, parents, students, or neighbors think. Sure, he makes it appear to the public and the media that he is open to suggestions but he made up his mind and that was that. So much for community involvement.

Posted by: Ralph | May 6, 2009 3:35 PM

For those of you Inside ED public school stakeholders and classroom teachers in the BCPSS, may be before your time pre-SY2007 all teachers of the year honors program were hosted annually at Martins West by the Baltimore City Council of PTAs Inc. included each site school for our districts primary/secondary schools without funding resources from the school system budget hosted for 190 schools of more than 6,000 teachers in the city.

If the CEO is sincere in his quote: "Dr. Alonso really believes that in every school there is at least one great teacher" perhaps seeing at least one nomination would be a mandatory evaluation measurement implemented that could be used to judge principals school year personnel evaluation. If they don't know their staff members well enough to identify that one great teacher or if they don't respect their staff enough to agree that they have at least one great teacher than they are to be recognized as failing principals. Then have BCPSS host 2010 Teacher of the Year Banquet.

Posted by: Interested & Engaged Parent of City Schools | May 6, 2009 4:17 PM

IEP - While I'm a bit hesitant about the "mandatory" recommendation, I think this is a fantastic idea. Maybe an internal media blitz to schools asking them to consider nominating a teacher for a selective event.

Also, the CEO's Office does want teacher-input. His office created the Summer Teacher Fellowship so that roughly 20 teachers will be paid to work in the central office to help influence policy-making throughout the district's departments. This is a significant expenditure, and the major purpose is to ensure that policies reflect teachers' input. All teachers had to confirm that they plan to continue teaching the following year, and from what I've heard, the admissions process was extremely competitive.

Posted by: Bill | May 6, 2009 4:31 PM

(Inside Ed post @ Bill)

"Mandatory" puts teeth in to the level of high priority. If it is not made mandatory the administrators/principals will not do it. An experience fact based outcome in this school systems historical/present background and demonstrated in current behavior tendencies speaking. That's why inserting the word "mandatory" is so powerful. You recognize don't you!!

My on-line search of the BCPSS web site did not reveal any links for data/document regarding a 2009 CEO Summer Teacher Fellowship?? Any way the school systems operations divisions lead by the CEO and his executive directors, staff does not develop nor establish school system policy-making that is the duty of the governance body the Board of School Commissioners (BOSC).

From my school system background and involvements with both the operations/governance, the operations are limited to providing input, recommendations to advise the BOSC regarding policy. But for, teaching and learning academic programs models, curricular and instruction planning initiatives, staffing models, testing assessment standards, and those types of guidelines are handled by the operations. "Fill me in if I stand in need to be corrected" then so be it.

Your quote: "The size of the expenditure for the summer program and the major purpose for being is to ensure that policies reflect teachers' input. All teachers had to confirm that they plan to continue teaching the following year, and from what I've heard, the admissions process was extremely competitive." All that is moot if the school systems culture and climate remains unchanged!

Posted by: Interested & Engaged Parent of City Schools | May 6, 2009 7:23 PM

IEP is correct. The PTA did do a huge celebration at Martin's West. I was the recipient from my school several times. One word of distinction, though. This event did not lead the the CITY and STATE Teacher of the Year. That was another group of nominees and examiners. I was part of that also. The city/state event involved an application, interviews, judging etc. The PTA teachers were chosen in various ways within each school; the principal, a vote by all the teachers, PTA involvement etc. Both were/were wonderful events but were definitely different. The state event is very strenuous.

In any event, all posters who suggest that administrators should be able to nominate at least one (if not more) teachers to any such event are correct. We need to celebrate all deserving teachers. Teachers, parents, community members, and those who supervise principals should encourage nominations. It is a great way to not only reward excellent teachers but also promote the field!

Posted by: wise educator | May 6, 2009 8:57 PM

IEP - I see your mandatory point. I just worry that it dilutes the effectiveness when the principal is forced to participate. Again, though, your concern is valid.

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True, our definition of policy was not the same. The Board does approve policy - you're absolutely right on target there. However, with each policy there are regulations that the Board does not approve. I

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guess I meant helping in the creation and operation of the implementation of the policy through the policy regulations.
I believe they took down the job posting once the executive office completed interviews.

Posted by: [Bill](#) | **May 6, 2009 9:36 PM**

@ Ralph

I don't understand....if Alonso made all of the decisions and all of the principals in the city were nothing more than glorified ISTs, wouldn't everyone complain about how decisions about money are made so far away from the kids without regard to individual school needs? Furthermore, maybe we SHOULD be challenging the idea that principals need to be educators...after all, isn't that what we teachers are for? Principals should be excellent personnel managers and motivators and strategists. They should be making decisions about resources and acting as a liason between the school and outside stakeholders. I think probably too many principals treat their teachers like their students, imposing their will rather than working as a partner.

No one has taken away the power to discipline kids...principals have just been told to find a way to discipline students without removing them from school. Doesn't that sound like a good thing? More kids in school for more days? And for every story you tell me about some kid who was just a total disturbance and was never removed from school, I'll tell you one about a kid who acted out because he was falling behind in class, got suspended and came back even farther behind which led to more acting out.

Lastly (although I reserve the right to come back to some things), I'd say that sending an email to request that the CEO of schools come to visit your school and getting him to send a representative is actually pretty responsive of him. Did other CEOs do that?

Posted by: [Simon](#) | **May 6, 2009 11:57 PM**

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