

Thompson ready to earn confidence



Jack Thompson

By Jana Alexander

Patient and determined.

That's how Jack Thompson, the new superintendent of the Snohomish School district describes himself. Patient with people — determined to make things work well.

And it seems that things work well wherever Thompson does.

"I've been around successful programs and have some idea" how those programs operate, Thompson said.

Thompson spent 27 of his 39 years in public education at the Renton School District. He aided the superintendent in Renton for 15 of those years and while there, two schools in the won recognition on state and federal levels.

Then Thompson was off to Ferndale School District where he worked as Superintendent and while there, schools in the district and the school board won recognition from the state.

Bringing about change

Thompson describes his leadership style

as collaborative. He relies on "vision and values" to make administrative plans.

Ironically, Thompson first set his sights on the Snohomish School district in the early 1990s — during the last superintendent search.

"I don't think you automatically get back trust and confidence. I think you have to earn that."

Then, he didn't even get an interview.

"The search firm didn't think I was a good fit for Snohomish," Thompson said.

Nearly a decade later, he was urged to apply for the Assistant Superintendent position, which he was chosen for this summer.

"I didn't come to be superintendent. I didn't have any idea the financial conditions of the district," Thompson said.

Thompson's experience includes a focus on finance. When Thompson earned his doctorate degree, he minored in business.

Thompson likes things to work well and is confident that Snohomish Schools are just facing a "temporary glitch."

His suggestion to district parents is to "be patient with us" through this short term correction.

The other experiences Thompson brings to Snohomish are drawn from other elements of his life

His reverence for extracurricular programs developed through his experience as a team member, coach and father of three sons who were involved in music, sports and drama in their school days.

Thompson said those programs are important because they teach about teamwork and allow students to practice skills they may use in a future career.

Working with strengths

The long term goal of the district is to re-focus on teaching and learning, in part, Thompson said, by getting through distracting financial difficulties.

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Schools have many strengths, sup says

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In the process, Thompson expects public confidence will restore naturally over time.

"I don't think you automatically get back trust and confidence. I think you have to earn that."

Thompson is confident in the district's improvement because all of the elements for success are present. Snohomish schools have high quality teaching and instruction, test scores prove that quality, and a staff that is very enthusiastic and dedicated, Thompson said.

And on the subject of stability, "the buildings are solid" and the population is "interested in seeing the district be successful."

Family time

In his personal life, Thompson has spent his off time with wife of 39 years, Glenda, raising three boys. The oldest, Scott, works for Pacific Car and Foundry in Denton, Texas; Rick is principal of Franklin Pierce High School in Franklin Pierce School District near Tacoma; Andrew is an officer in the Marines, and a graduate of the United States Naval

Academy where he also played college football.

As far as Jack Thompson's childhood, he was raised by two teachers.

"Between my mother, father, myself and my son" the Thompson family has 100 years of education experience.

Local connections

Jack Thompson was encouraged to apply for the Assistant Superintendent position that led to his Superintendent position by Dan and Darlene Huntington. Darlene Huntington served on the city's Design Review Board and has organized the Snohomish Historical Society Tour of Homes for many years. Bill Huntington, Dan's brother, was best man in Thompson's wedding.

And, Scott Thompson, Jack and Glenda's oldest son, was a football player for the Huskies who played with Curt Marsh and Jerry McClain. Marsh and McClain were both former Panthers.