

Are We Truly Setting Up Our Children For Success?

Together, let's figure out how to prepare our kids for life as well-rounded adults.

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volunteer, and they're understanding of differences. They excel in our schools, on our stages and fields, and in our community. The challenges our children face, and that we are tasked with, are real. We need a new way to approach them. I ask each of you to look back at the guiding questions I just listed, and take a few minutes to reflect on them. Once you do this, broaden your conversation to include your spouse, friends, colleagues and your children. You will be amazed at what they say. Answers only come about if you ask the questions.

In our community forum, we focused on developing empathy for all those involved

LET'S GET THE conversation going. The Ramsey public schools recently concluded our first One Book, One Community Book Club reading. We read *The New York Times* bestseller, *How to Raise An Adult*. Over 50 community members, parents and staff members came together to discuss the challenges of raising and teaching today's youth. We focused on the following guiding questions from the book:

- Why does overinvolved parenting hinder child development?
- Why must parents broaden their definition of success?
- How do we raise happy, successful children?
- How can the school/home connection help?

Parenting and teaching have always presented unique challenges. Today, these challenges are even more daunting due to the proliferation of social media, the pressure to get into a "good" college, the perceived need to earn a graduate degree, the explosion of travel sports, and the "high stakes" tests in our schools. With every challenge, there is a unique opportunity to make a change that results in a real difference.

Ramsey students are simply incredible, and we can not lose sight of this. They are kind, generous, they

and the need to be mindful of our practices. Is what we're doing truly setting our children up for success? Is dropping off the forgotten iPad for the third time in the last two weeks really helping a child? Is writing a note asking the teacher to postpone a test because a child was up "late" a help or a hindrance? Does e-mailing a coach asking why a child is not starting sending the right message? Is checking Real Time several times a day really healthy? (We have parents who check Real Time over 1,000 times in a semester.)

The instructional design approach that I have spoken and written about in the past is designed to have our students take responsibility for their learning. It asks them to think and use information to solve complex, messy problems. We're purposely designing the experiences, so students work through ambiguity and become independent problem solvers. In other words, rather than just "giving" the right answers and walking away, we're providing the strong content knowledge, skills, and context they need to face life outside of their school walls—as confident, well-rounded adults!

I highly recommend that you read *How to Raise an Adult*. If you already have, *The Gift of Failure* is an outstanding follow-up. ☺