

By ELLY GRIMM

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Education has always been considered an important part of a successful society. In order to achieve that, the school's quality of education must first be positively reviewed.

A recent Gallup poll showed that in Kansas, 78 percent of those surveyed said they frequently rated the quality of schools positively, and Liberal schools are no exception.

Lisa Hatcher, a Site Council officer and the parent of four children currently in the Liberal school system, said leadership is a big factor in the positive feedback she's heard.



"I think we have really good leadership, not just at the central office but within each building," she said. "I think the fact they have instructional coaches that are able to work with the teachers one-on-one, there must be some continual staff development opportunities."

Hatcher added she feels even more positively about the quality of the education giving students needed attention even with the deterioration of current school buildings.

“I think they do a good job with the facilities that they have, and I think they get kids engaged in learning,” she said. “I like the small group learning. I just think they do a really good job with focusing on students and individual students’ needs.”

And it’s not just students and teachers who are engaged in education. The work of the Parent Teacher Organization at MacArthur Elementary in students’ schoolwork and activities also helps positive feedback come to the schools and the P.T.O.

“People are usually wondering what P.T.O. is and ‘why do we have P.T.O.’ ‘why do we have fundraisers?’ and ‘what is the money going for?’ and the best way to find those answers is to actually come to a meeting,” said P.T.O. president Lesha Morlen.

Hatcher said the district’s work with students at an early age to help the graduation rate is also very helpful.

“I know that as a whole the district always focuses on making sure students are successful very, very early and trying to get them engaged as early as possible to help with graduation in the end,” she said.

Hatcher said the district is always looking to the future and added the new bond issue will also increase the schools’ quality, according to Hatcher.

“I think the fact that the schools have done such a good job with limited space and limited facilities says a lot about the quality of education we have here in Liberal,” she said. “When we’re going to be provided the facilities that are necessary, what they’ll be able to do, I think, will be incredible. I think it will allow a lot more opportunities for teachers and students to achieve even more.”

Both Morlen and Hatcher encourage those with questions or concerns to visit either district officials or the P.T.O.

“Come to a meeting, get involved and ask questions, and we will find the answer to the best of our ability,” Morlen encouraged. “If we can’t answer it, we will definitely point them in the right direction of who they can contact to get that information.”