

A Note from the Board of Directors...

Ridgeview Classical Schools looks back fondly on our years with principal Terrence Moore. He has been an excellent leader for our school and is respected and loved by our faculty and staff. They, the students, and the school community in general will miss him a great deal. His new post at Hillsdale College in History and education reform is a perfect fit for his skills and intellect. Ridgeview has students at Hillsdale and they will no doubt welcome, with pleasure, their former principal. We are very sorry to lose his leadership and he will be extremely difficult to replace. Good leaders always are. The board of directors wishes Dr. and Mrs. Moore the very best as they move on to new opportunities and intellectual pursuits at the end of this school year. Education reform is one of the most important, pressing issues of our day. We hope that other schools and other communities will benefit as greatly from Dr. Moore's experience and vision as has Ridgeview Classical Schools.

Ave atque vale -- hail and farewell. Thank you, Dr. Moore, for your dedication and service to the school.

A Letter from Dr. Moore...

8 January 2008

Dear Parents:

This is one time when words really do fail me. For the past six and a half years I have had the pleasure of working to build a great school for your students. When I came here I was confident that if upon the foundation laid by the founders we put knowledgeable and smart teachers, great books, hardworking students, and supportive parents, Ridgeview could not fail to be a great school. As confident as I was, I did not imagine the extent of our success.

My leading criterion for success has always been whether when I visit a classroom I learn something new and important. Of the many hundreds of classes I have observed, regardless of grade level or subject, only rarely have I not been overwhelmed by the new and important things your children are learning every day. The second criterion for success has been whether the students are well-mannered and of good character. In fact, this second criterion has become for me in many ways more important than the first. As I told the faculty yesterday, this school began with a (then) young principal and many young teachers, most of whom did not have children. The idea was mostly to have smart people around young people to make them smart. As we have come to know you and your children, and to have children of our own, the idea has increasingly become, without obviously neglecting the mind, to have good people around children to make them good. With your tireless help, both these efforts have paid off beyond our expectations.

The success of the school and the notice taken of some of my own writings have given me the opportunity to know more about school reform throughout the country. I have been asked to help out other schools and have seen their struggles. I have also been able to speak to rather influential groups of people worried about the state of education in this nation. On one memorable occasion Senator Allard and Congressman Beauprez visited the school. Although right before the elections, this visit was no mere photo op. In fact, the press did not even end up coming, yet these two elected officials spent a good hour at the school and asked detailed questions about every part of its operations. They most wanted to know whether our little experiment here at Ridgeview was “replicable.” I said that it is replicable, with perhaps more assurance than reality warranted. My own perspective has increasingly become that Ridgeview’s experiment in education reform is not repeated enough and, when it is, often with not as much success. I am not a terribly patient man, and I have become rather frustrated with the pace of school reform in this nation. The reality is that many, many children are not getting the education they deserve and often long for. I know what it is like to be a curious kid stuck in a bad school run by the most uncurious people in the world. As such I have been exploring the possibility of whether I might find some way to be of greater help to more schools.

Recently, I have been offered such an opportunity. The offer has come from Hillsdale College. Hillsdale, as some of you know, is a small liberal-arts college in a very small town in Michigan that has a growing prominence in certain political and educational circles. For the last several years, under the direction of Dr. Larry Arnn, Hillsdale has been revamping its already solid curriculum and attracting some quite distinguished professors. It is about the only college in the nation, outside the service academies, that requires all students to take a class on the Constitution. Dr. Arnn’s laudable ambition is to turn Hillsdale into a much-needed model of liberal education for the nation. Hillsdale has also to some extent become a model for education at the school level. It has a K-12 school with its own curriculum that is used by a couple of hundred private and charter schools. This curriculum is based in part on the Core Knowledge curriculum. In addition, Hillsdale has an outreach program called the Center for Teaching Excellence, whose primary purpose now is to train secondary teachers of government and history in the same methods we use in those subjects at Ridgeview. My job at Hillsdale, which I have accepted, will be initially to join the history faculty and to begin work with the CTE. I would expect that my experience in running a classical school will be of service in furthering Hillsdale’s mission of improving classical schools throughout the nation.

I have no intent of leaving Ridgeview in the lurch. The vision of the founders as it has been implemented by the teachers and me for the last six and a half years must continue to govern the education of your children and remain a beacon for classical charter schools in Colorado and elsewhere. I want Ridgeview to remain a strong school and even to get better. To the extent that the board needs my help I shall do whatever I can to find an able successor as principal and to act as an advisor for the school in the future. We have six months left together to put things into place, so the transition should not be jolting. Whether your child is in high school or kindergarten, I have no doubt that Ridgeview will remain the school that you initially chose: one with a visionary board, great teachers, and an exemplary liberal-arts curriculum.

Your support over these years has meant a great deal to me. Above all, your children's willingness to learn has inspired all of us to do the best that we can in teaching them. Few things in life can be as rewarding as teaching a child to think and to be good. For my time at Ridgeview, I have been rewarded immensely.

On a personal note, I must say that my wife and I came out here, having only been married for three months, in expectation of a great adventure. Our expectation was far from disappointed. We have been blessed to have one child and are waiting on another to come any day now. We shall leave Ridgeview and Fort Collins with the fondest memories of profound happiness. We can only hope that such happy days await us in our new home.

I am very grateful to the board, the teachers, the staff, the parents, and your wonderful children for their tireless efforts. I promise ever to remain, if not in fact at least in heart,

Your principal,
Dr. Moore