

## Educating the Whole Child

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Each September, the Ohio Department of Education releases its District Report Cards. Each district is issued letter grades in various categories. Districts, including buildings within, begin to dissect the data to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. This is not a new or unusual practice. Long before the state report cards are released, schools are analyzing data, determining needs, and taking inventory of the quality programs that make them unique. The state report card serves as a source of accountability for the district. Everyone can agree that academic achievement is the driving force in education. If you have been following the articles from district leaders, you may have noticed a somewhat new phrase “educating the whole child”. What does “educating the whole child” mean? What role does this phrase play in our views of education?

Educating the whole child is not necessarily a new concept. In 2007, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) launched its Whole Child Approach. The Whole Child Approach served as a transition between a rigid focus on academic achievement and the long-term development of all children. The Whole Child Approach was based on five tenets, or basic beliefs. These beliefs revolved around the ideas that children should be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. In early September the Ohio Department of Education released its Strategic Plan for Education. A central focus for this strategic plan is educating the Whole Child. As we move towards a more holistic approach to education, we must take into consideration our own tenets of educating the whole child.

As a parent of three children in the Norwalk City School District, I too have a vested interest in what our schools have to offer. Do the schools offer a rigorous curriculum? Do the schools offer co-curricular programs that provide opportunities in the visual and performing arts? Do the schools provide quality extra-curricular programs that promote teamwork and leadership opportunities? All of these offerings are designed to meet the needs of the whole child. As a parent, I believe the answers to these questions are a definite “yes”. As an administrator, I accept the challenge to help provide these opportunities for all children who attend Main St. School.

If you have had the opportunity to attend an academic recognition program, athletic contest, musical performance, robotics competition, art exhibit, or benefitted from the community service projects of our students, you have witnessed the education of the whole child. These

accomplishments would not be possible without the help and support of parents and the community.

Schools are unique in their approach to education. You could probably say they each have their own brand. The Norwalk City School District is extremely proud of its students and staff. We are proud to proclaim that we offer a cutting edge, quality education. Many of you have recently received the Norwalk City School District's Quality Profile. The Quality Profile highlights the awesome programs that make each of our schools unique. You can also see our Quality Profile by visiting our website at [www.norwalktruckers.net](http://www.norwalktruckers.net). As we continue to grow as a district, our focus will always be to provide the best education possible. Academics are the centerpiece of our work, but the education of the whole child is just as important.