

Consequential Challenges for Public Education!

MISSION POSSIBLE!

by Peggy Buffington, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, School City of Hobart



American public schools provide better, more diverse equal opportunities for ALL children than any other country. Our public schools' mission is to empower students and give them all the things they need to succeed in life. Yet, there are unprecedented upheavals in social, demographic, and cultural conditions that pose consequential challenges for public education, which cannot be ignored. Children face many critical issues in the 21st century. In the United States, most of the critical issues are similar. A snapshot of the conditions children confront in Indiana is provided in Figure 1.

Public schools are taking on the toughest challenges conceivable. The demands from this transformation have required adjustments and changes from schooling as usual. Remarkably, the challenges are being met by dedicated educators who never give up on what has to be done for children. The School City of Hobart knows that academic achievement for ALL students is impossible without addressing some of the most fundamental needs of students, including health, safety, and nurturing relationships. Schools face more of the responsibility

for providing the values and security of the family unit. Educators cannot ignore the charge of providing these basic necessities in life. The first priority is for the well-being of the child, and, in many cases, the academics take a back seat until we assist in taking care of putting "first things first"—our children's well-being. We have an awesome responsibility to fulfill our duties and make the MISSION POSSIBLE for the empowerment and success of our students. In this issue of *The Journal*, the School City of Hobart will share some programs that have made a difference in the lives of our students.

Challenge #1: Catch Them Before They Fall

One of the most revealing sets of data the School City of Hobart has studied over the years is that children come to us without basic skills and readiness for school. Kindergarten pre-screening assessments are used to reveal the most at-risk children to enter our full-day kindergarten program. In the late 1990s, ten percent of the incoming kindergartners qualified for an extended day of kindergarten. Fast forward to 2010, sixty-five percent of the students

entering kindergarten qualify for the full day kindergarten intervention.

This drastic increase in children coming to us without basic readiness has caused us to look differently at early interventions from the very beginning of life.

Parents are children's first teachers. Families face enormous stresses associated with daily living. The very act of trying to earn an income fuels family discontinuity and fragmentation. Unemployment causes more and more parents to face complexities that make nurturing their children difficult. Many family employment options lie in two or three jobs, leaving little time for effective parenting. In addition, the rise in the number of single parents, many of them teenage or never married, places heavy burdens on families and society.

As these dramatic demographic changes have occurred, so have the relationships between family life and child outcomes. For example, economically-deprived single mothers are more likely to abuse their children physically (Gelles, 1989), premature low-birth weight babies born into poverty have a poorer prognosis of functioning within normal ranges (Bradley et al., 1994), and family income and poverty are powerful correlates of the cognitive development and behavior of young children (Duncan et al., 1994). Conversely, we know that when the economic conditions of families are improved, or when services, such as parent education and support, are offered, outcomes for children, siblings, and families improve (Roberts & Wasik, 1990; Seitz & Apfel, 1994).

Solutions for Challenge #1—Catch Them Before They Fall

A. Parents As Teachers (PAT).

Parents as Teachers is a parent education and family support program serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten. Parents are supported by PAT-certified parent educators trained to translate scientific information on early brain

Figure 1 (Children's Defense Fund, 2008)

In Indiana:

- A child is born into poverty every 29 minutes.
- A child is abused or neglected every 25 minutes.
- A child dies before his or her first birthday every 13 hours.
- A child or teen is killed by gunfire every 6 days.

Indiana Ranks:

- 20th among states in per pupil expenditures.
- 27th among states in percent of babies born at low birth weight.

Child Hunger in Indiana

- Number of children who receive food stamps 279,973
- Percent of eligible persons who receive food stamps 71%
- Number of children in the School Lunch Program 734,476
- Number of children in the Summer Food Service Program 33,306
- Number of women and children receiving WIC (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) 140,891

Early Childhood Development in Indiana

- Percent of children under age 6 with all parents in the labor force 64.7%
- Number of children served by Head Start 14,213
- Number of children served by the Child Care Development Fund/CCDBG 32,800
- Average annual cost of child care for a four-year-old in a center \$7,001
- Percent of 3-year-olds enrolled in state pre-k, Head Start, or special education programs 9.7%
- Percent of 4-year-olds enrolled in state pre-k, Head Start, or special education programs 16.5%

Child Welfare in Indiana

- Number of children who are victims of abuse and neglect 20,925
- Number of children in foster care 11,401
- Number of children adopted from foster care 1,183
- Number of grandparents raising grandchildren 49,044

Youth at Risk in Indiana

- Percent of 16- to 19-year-olds not enrolled in school and not high school graduates 6.6%
- Average freshman high school graduation rate 73.4%
- Percent of 16- to 19-year-olds unemployed 15.1%
- Number of juvenile arrests 27,770
- Number of children and teens in juvenile residential facilities 2,616
- Ratio of cost per prisoner to cost per public school pupil 3.2:1
- Number of children and teens killed by firearms: 62; 41 homicides; 18 suicides; 1 accident; and 2 undetermined



Personal visits during which the parent educator will share age-appropriate child development and parenting information, help parents learn to observe their child, and address parenting concerns.



Parent group meetings, which are opportunities to share information about parenting issues and child development. Parents learn and support each other, observe their children with other children, and practice parenting skills.



Screenings to assess a child's overall development, as well as health, hearing, and vision.



Resource network that links families to other community services.

development into specific *when, what, how* and *why* advice for families. By understanding what to expect during each stage of development, parents can easily capture the teachable moments in everyday life to enhance their child's language development, intellectual growth, social development, and motor skills.

As a Parents as Teachers family, they receive personal visits, parent group meetings, screenings, and a network of resources.

Many parents in Hobart have signed up for PAT, and we continue to have waiting lists of families wanting to join. Why? Our Parent Educator Coordinator commented on the success of the program, "We need this program, and the people in the community of Hobart know it. They have shown their support in every way imaginable. Being a parent is the hardest job on earth. I don't think that anyone would dispute that. People are faced with parenting challenges every day. This community has embraced the program that we are offering and has allowed it to change their lives. Our educators have experienced several "AH HA" moments this year (see Figure 2) - a moment when they knew that they made a difference in the life of a child

How can school districts afford this type of early intervention program in such times of budget reductions? If it is good for children, your community will find a way to make it happen. PAT is totally funded by donors and grants in the School City of Hobart. During the recession, our Director of Curriculum came to me and spoke highly of her experiences in the program and expressed that she thought we needed it in Hobart. As Superintendent, I focused on every civic group and organization that I thought would be willing to hear the message and make a donation. The Director of Curriculum and I went on the road to present the benefits of the program. Through the Lake County PAT, there was a very generous philanthropist willing to match local community fundraising for the early childhood initiative. The Hobart

Educational Foundation was our first donor that permitted us to hire our parent educator coordinator. From our local hospital to local sorority chapters, we presented PAT everywhere. We started with one parent educator seeing five families in 2009. Today, we have a total of five parent educators servicing 129 children, with 45 children on a waiting list. We need two additional parent educators for the 2010-2011 school year. What a wonderful challenge to face—how to accommodate additional parent participation. Our incredible Parent Educator Coordinator along with our Parent Educators are dedicated ambassadors for the school district and demonstrate the value of partnering with the school system for healthy, vibrant children who are ready to learn.

Our parent educator coordinator sums this initiative up best, "It is the small successes that can change a way of life. We put ourselves out there. We said, 'We know this job is hard. Let us help.' As a community, we are trying to work together to build healthy families. Education starts at birth. It is the job of every member in a community to help that child grow up to be a responsible citizen. Our Parents as Teachers program is making that happen."

B. Ready, Set, Go! Early childhood education is vital to our community. Children need a strong early learning foundation to succeed in school and go on to be successful in life. Preschools, day care centers, kindergarten teachers, along with the Parents As Teachers

Figure 2

- A mother didn't understand the importance of literacy development. She never read to her child. After one month of visits, the child now gets read to several times a day. The mother noticed that the child gets upset when the routine is changed and a book is not read.
- Parents didn't feel that preschool was necessary. After our preschool open house and information was shared on the importance of preschool, the family decided to put their child in preschool.
- In a very stressful home where the parents had both lost their jobs, an educator helped the family by providing resources on how to get their bills in order and to use their money to purchase food for their family. Helping in a financial situation took away some of the burden and allowed the parents to focus on their children.
- After discussing with a mother what her "triggers" were for losing her temper and spanking her child, she was proud to tell the parent educator that she walked away and called on another family member for help before hitting her child.

Coordinator, have come together to collaborate on behalf of the School City of Hobart's youngest citizens. This "Early Learning" group meets regularly to share ideas to help meet the needs of our children in meaningful ways. The group planned the Week of the Young Child (WOYC) this spring, and the entire community embraced its youngest citizenry, from blowing bubbles and counting them in the park, to meaningful trips to the grocery store. Every day was filled with events to help the community of Hobart appreciate the importance of early childhood development.

In addition, the School City of Hobart hosts a Porter County Career and Technical Education Class: Early Childhood Development. This high school class offers juniors and seniors an opportunity to run a pre-school for our community's neediest children. The high school's supervising teacher and pre-school teacher says, "I think the most important thing that I see happening with our early childhood education programs is that our parents are allowed to take ownership of their child's educational journey as their child gains self-confidence and a love of learning at a very young age. Both of these present a win-win situation, because the parents trust us as educators and a school corporation, and that allows us to work hand-in-hand with them throughout their child's school career." They add, "When the parents are a part of the process, they take a vested interest in what is happening with their child on a day-to-day basis. I really do believe that having a relationship with the parents is key to a positive experience for our students."

C. Full-Day Kindergarten. The Early Learning Center will open in the fall of 2010 in Hobart to house full-day kindergarten for EVERY student, early childhood development classes for special needs preschool children, and Parents As Teachers. Full-day kindergarten for learners in the School City of Hobart will incorporate the components of what research has shown to be an effective program that includes the following:

- An exploratory environment with literacy experiences.
- Differentiation to meet the varying needs of kindergarten students.
- A balance of small group, large group, and individual activities.
- Assessments of students' progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students' work.
- Development of social skills.
- Partnerships with parents to share information about their children to build an understanding of parent and teacher roles, emphasize reading to children in school and at home, and set the stage for increasing parent-teacher partnerships.

D. Voice. The School City of Hobart will continue to be a voice for early childhood development and its youngest citizens. The government needs to hear from the advocates of children, concerned citizens, on the importance of funding programs for ALL children from the very beginning; in other words, Catch Them Before They Fall.

Challenge #2: Safe Children

Critical issues for keeping our children safe include poverty and childcare, alcohol and drug abuse, and bullying and harassment (see Figure 3).

The School City of Hobart's free and reduced lunch rate has doubled in the last 10 years with two of our ele-

mentary schools reaching 65% and 71%, respectively. We have seen our secondary student consumption of drugs and alcohol rise above the national level. In addition, our suspension and expulsion numbers were on the rise. These are dramatic changes, and our faculty has had to think in new ways. We spent two years being trained by Ruby Payne on how to understand poverty and what we need to do differently to help our students. We also committed ourselves to a leadership bystander training program called TeamLEAD. With the assistance of a community group called the Hobart Promise, and the Hobart Police Department, we went on a campaign to fight substance abuse. Below are examples of programs the district has implemented to keep our students safe.

Solutions for Challenge #2: Safe Children

A. Safe Places and Nutrition. The School City of Hobart has the goal of making sure our students have a safe place to go after school and during the summer months, along with opportunities for nutritional meals.

- The Hobart Family YMCA provides the greatest programs for our students through Y Care. From physical activities to academics, the Y treats every child uniquely and makes it fun to belong. We host latchkey programs at our elementary schools.

Figure 3

Poverty & Childcare

Critical issues come in the form of child care and nutrition including the following:

- Millions lack safe, affordable, quality child care and early childhood education while their parents work.
- Seven and one-half million children are at home alone without supervision, frequently after school when they are at greatest risk for getting into trouble.
- Close to 12 million children are poor, millions are hungry and/or at risk for hunger, living in the worst housing conditions, or are homeless. Almost 80 percent of poor children live in working households. (2000 U.S. Census).

(Source: Children's Defense Fund, www.cdf.org).

Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Substance abuse continues to pose a significant threat to adolescents and youth. Their overall health and safety are significantly impacted.

- One half of motor vehicle accidents in adolescents are associated with alcohol and other drugs.
- 30% of adolescent suicides are associated with alcohol and other drugs.
- Children and adolescents who abuse alcohol and other drugs engage in risk-taking behaviors.
- The younger the age of initial alcohol use, the greater the possibility of substance abuse in adolescence and adulthood.

(Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, www.samhsa.gov).

Bullying and Harassment.

Students' daily experiences with intimidation, teasing, and physical abuse are largely ignored. According to student reports, schools and parents provide "little or no support." Studies by a variety of groups report consistent data:

- One of every seven children reports being bullied in schools.
- In an average classroom of 20 children, there are most likely three children who are either victims or bullies.
- In a Committee for Children survey, 78% of children reported having been bullied "in the past month."
- In a survey of high school students by Knowledge Networks, one-fourth reported knowing at least one student at their school who had been physically struck by a person they were dating.
- While many victims reported self-isolation in response to bullying, one third reported plans for getting back at their intimidators.

(Sources: Committee for Children, www.cfchildren.org; National School Safety Center, www.nssc1.org).

- In addition, the Hobart YMCA, along with the City of Hobart, offers many camps and recreational programs in the summer. The School City of Hobart, due to its high free and reduced lunch percentages, is able to provide summer feeding programs in conjunction with these activities. Our high school students, who participate in Distributed Education Clubs of America (DECA), were asked to market these programs. The students decided to get involved on a deeper level and offer a jump rope camp at one of the sites.
- The district provides space for the Hobart Food Pantry. The local Kiwanis group, along with our Key Club and Builders Club, keep the pantry stocked for the community.

B. After School Activities. As an administrative team, we conducted the book study, *Failure is Not an Option*. This sparked the entire administrative team to adopt the goal of getting our students involved with a club or an extra-curricular/co-curricular activity. We are offering more clubs and participation is up in athletics. Sixteen percent of the middle school students joined the track team. Fifty percent of the high school's student body participates in athletics. Academic and hobby clubs are offered as well. One of the favorite after-school clubs at the elementary school level is called Mastery Club. These students get to stay after school and redo any assignment that was not above 80%. They feel special with the individual attention they receive and attendance is excellent. The faculty has learned that they have to be committed to regularly inviting students to make this goal a reality.

C. Drug Free. The School City of Hobart is vigilant in the pursuit of helping students make choices that keep them drug and alcohol free.

- A group of high school athletes actually made the case for random drug testing to the administration.



The Mayor of Hobart and the Superintendent of the School City of Hobart blow bubbles in the park during the Week of the Young Child.



Jump Rope Camp at the Summer Feeding Program.

Their message was simple, yet compelling: "Give us a way out and a way to say no." The athletes told us that the peer pressure is great and that athletic eligibility is a valuable way to say no to the weekend party. We applied for a federal grant to fund this initiative. The program not only offered a way to say no for our students, it also helped us reach students in need of counseling. Our data indicates improvement with our substance usage declining.

- Like many schools, we have had speaker after speaker talk on the effects and trauma caused by being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We needed a fresh approach. One of the most powerful programs that made an impact on the student body at the high school was *Every Fifteen Minutes*. The Hobart Police and Fire Department, along with the students and administration from Hobart High School, presented the nationally acclaimed anti-drinking and driving program, which focused on high school juniors and seniors. The program challenged

them to think about drinking, driving, personal safety, the responsibility of making mature decisions, and the impact their decisions have on family, friends, and many others. The program brought together a broad coalition of interested local agencies with the goal of reducing drinking and alcohol-related incidents among teens. Prior to the actual event, students representing a cross section of the school were selected as participants. On the first day of the program, the "grim reaper" entered classrooms every 15 minutes and touched a student. A local police officer would tell the class that the student who's been touched has been killed by a drunk driver. The officer read the student's obituary to the class. This continued until 20 students were pulled from class. The next day, a mock crash took place in the school parking lot. Local police departments, fire departments, and other emergency responders worked the crash. There were so many events happening during the presentation: the crash, police responding to the crime with sobriety tests and arrests, fire and rescue teams using the jaws of life and treating victims, helicopter lifts for the critically injured, parents arriving on the scene in hysteria, the grim reaper pronouncing the dead, the street sweeper and tow truck cleaning up the scene, and then the funeral. The two-day *Every 15 Minutes Program* was very dramatic and emotional. As an adult who was on the sidelines watching, it was gripping. The student body was in shock as they watched the dramati-



The Grim Reaper passes the crash scene during *Every Fifteen Minutes*.

zation. After the event, I was at the high school, and one of our students asked me if I brought the program to Hobart, and he shared that he had chills from the experience. You know that you have made an impact when the buzz on *Facebook* is about a program in your high school called *Every Fifteen Minutes*. Teenagers are constantly reminded about the choices they have to make involving alcohol and how many others are also affected by their decisions. They know the intellectual statistics. However, many teens share the belief that it will never happen to them. This program shattered that belief.

Afternoons **ROCK** in Indiana

- The middle level child experiments with drugs and alcohol as well. The YMCA teams up with the district to offer Afternoons R.O.C.K. Afternoons R.O.C.K. is an exciting after school drug/alcohol and tobacco prevention program that runs two days a week at Hobart Middle School. The course runs for nine weeks and is open to all Hobart Middle School students ages 10-14. Students receive homework help, get physical exercise, and work on an interactive drug, alcohol, and tobacco curriculum. The acronym “**R.O.C.K.**” represents the mission of the program to provide **R**ecreation, **O**bject lessons, **C**ulture and values, and **K**nowledge through focused and supportive prevention activities designed to teach youth about social and media influences, conflict resolution, and refusal/resistance skills, gang and violence prevention, and the structuring of leisure time to be free of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug useage. The program is funded by the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction and is free to students.

D. Bully-Free through Leadership.

The School City of Hobart, through the

generous sponsorship of the Hobart Educational Foundation, sponsors TeamLEAD. TeamLEAD is a bystander leadership group formatted as an extracurricular club. TeamLEAD promotes **Leadership, Empathy, Accountability,** and open **Discussion.** Mentoring, both formal and informal, is a vital component of bystander leadership. Upperclassmen from elementary, middle school, and high school are trained to become mentors to the younger students in their schools. In order to become a mentor, students must commit to the philosophy of TeamLEAD and sign a contract honoring their commitment to support and actively promote positive social norms.

The TeamLEAD Philosophy

To create behavioral change among children, they must take ownership of that change. Therefore, external components, such as teachers, parents, and even high school mentors, cannot affect the kind of massive social climate change we would like to create. Bystander Leadership/Support Groups have proven to be a key component in creating program ownership and student accountability in schools.

The district’s consultant is the Founder of TeamLEAD (<http://www.bystanderlead.com>), Denise Koebecke, M.Ed. She has been working with the district for three years to make a difference in our homes and our community by teaching us how to do the following:

- Recognize and respond to relational aggression.
- Foster empathy.
- Promote connectedness.
- Promote accountability.
- Become role models to one another.
- Provide a safe society for all.

Why Does Bystander Leadership and Mentoring Work?

- The majority of bullying occurs in the presence of other students; rarely are teachers present and rarely do they even find out what has happened.
- If bystanders ignore the bullying, the

bullying simply continues, according to a 2006 Australian schools study by Rigby and Johnson.

- Rigby and Johnson (2006) found a significant correlation between the tendency to intervene and expectations of friends; those who felt that their friends expected them to step in and support a target were much more likely to do so. (2006).



TeamLEAD Training for Hobart High School students.

What Do Hobart Students Have to Say About TeamLEAD?

- “When I was younger, I followed everybody else. Now that I’ve come to Hobart, I’ve learned how to be leader. I think it’s good to eliminate bullying in schools.” ~Juan
- “TeamLEAD has kind of changed my life, because I am actually getting better grades now. I am helping other kids stop making wrong decisions and keeping more friends out of trouble.” ~Gerald
- “TeamLEAD is a leadership group. It is a great way to be a better you, and you can then teach others how to be a better them. I would like to talk to other groups of children, like the YMCA, and share what TeamLEAD is all about.” ~Terry
- “We went Christmas caroling in the Hobart neighborhoods. One man told us we made his day. We are trying to stop bullying and want to teach kids how to respect others.” ~Briana

All TeamLEAD members meet periodically during lunch to discuss past and future TeamLEAD events and activities. An important part of the meeting is the sharing of instances when TeamLEAD has had a positive

impact on fellow students. All names and specific details are confidential between the student and TeamLEAD member, but discussing the general situation helps other members learn how different situations are being handled. TeamLEAD is showing that Hobart students care and want to make a difference. Through their efforts, TeamLEAD will help to encourage a positive atmosphere in the Hobart community.

Challenge #3: Nurturing Relationships

The School City of Hobart believes that a high-achieving school system is one where adults care about the kids, so the goal here is to build a culture where everyone genuinely cares about children. It is all about being connected through relationships.

Solutions for Challenge #3: Nurturing Relationships

A. Caring Faculty. “If you can believe it, you can achieve it.” “Make it a good and productive day.” Every student at Hobart High School can recite one of these lines. This is because their assistant principal tells them this every day at lunch as he interacts with them using a microphone. If you were to ask Hobart High School students about their principals, they would respond fondly, “They really care about us.” In the high school, they call it Mission Possible, and the signs are visible in the hallways and office areas.

Their philosophy is to spend as much time as possible with students and teachers to try and build those relationships. The high-profile presence of



21st Century Scholars applicants enjoy an ice cream social.

administrators and staff in the hallways, combined with a school culture of respect, has created a more positive learning environment. One sign of the school’s success is that student suspensions have dropped significantly. In addition, the high school puts every student in a Freshman Academy with a mandatory study hall. The study hall is used for a variety of activities, such as study skills, mentoring, and assisting kids so that *failure is not an option*. Office referrals and failures are at an all time low for freshman. The high school clocked over 22,000 hours of service learning hours this year. We have created an environment where kids are enjoying doing for others, and it has made them feel different about themselves and what they can accomplish,” says their principal.

B. High Expectations. First Generation College Bound. Reaching out to parents and students about college is a high priority for the middle school. No Excuses University is being implemented at the middle school to give students plenty of time to think about college, visit campuses, and learn the criteria to be accepted into a university. Many parents have not experienced college and depend on the school to help lay the groundwork. Paying for college is the next concern. With the free and reduced lunch count significantly higher, the goal was to sign our students up for the 21st Century Scholars Program. The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program began in 1990 as Indiana’s way of raising the educational aspirations of low and moderate-income families (see Figure 4).

The School City of Hobart doubled their enrollment for the 21st Century Scholars Program in 2010 and celebrated with ice cream sundaes!

C. Services. The School City of Hobart’s home school coordinators and counselors provide social services and counseling services. They connect families to outside resources, such as



The assistant principal hands out awards to the freshman academies to celebrate their success.



The athletic director speaks to freshman academy students to encourage them to join a sport at the Freshman Mission Possible Camp.

homeless shelters, outside counselors, area physicians, etc. They are key members of Response to Intervention Teams. Their goal is for every child to feel loved and to belong.

D. Mentoring. The School City of Hobart’s elementary students love high school students. We use this to our advantage. Athletes read to elementary school students regularly. The JROTC assists with field days. The National Honor Society students at the high school held a “Writing Kind of Day” for students, where they perform and supervise elementary students reading in the author’s chairs. Our Performing Arts Department does regular entertainment events for the elementary schools.

Figure 4

Twenty-first Century Scholars Pledge

- I will graduate with an Indiana High School Diploma from a charter school, freeway or other Indiana school recognized by the Indiana Department of Education.
- I will achieve a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- I will not use illegal drugs or alcohol, or commit a crime.
- I will apply for admission to an eligible Indiana college, university or proprietary school as a high school senior.
- I will apply on time for state and federal financial aid.



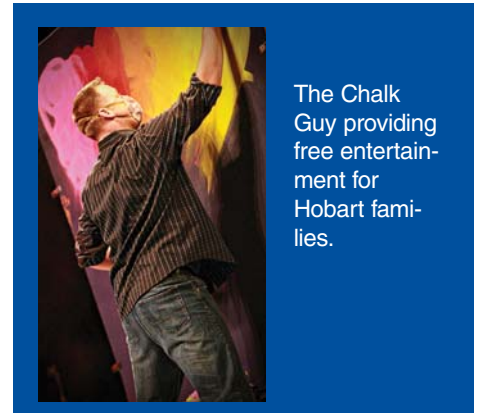
Hallway banners at Hobart High School display **Mission Possible** for students.

E. Families. The School City of Hobart has been hosting FREE events for parents to come and enjoy doing things together as a family. The favorite event of the 2009-2010 school year, sponsored by the PTOs, was The Chalk Guy. A night of free spaghetti and entertainment was had by all. The Chalk Guy spoke about how he worked to overcome his ADHD disability. He had families laughing and realizing that they could have fun

together while learning a thing or two.


Our public schools are taking on the toughest challenges conceivable; upheavals in social, demographic, and cultural conditions that pose consequential challenges. There is much to celebrate as students are being taken care of in ways that may have been unimaginable to educators in the past. Today's hard working educators know that without the health, safety, and nurturing relationships that public schools are providing today, our students' well-being would be questionable. The promise of empowering students to be successful is dependent on the care provided to children from every walk of life. Together, communities, along with legislators, school board members, and professional educators, can provide our children with the






excellence and equity in public education they deserve. Our ultimate success will depend upon the support the public schools are provided in each community across our nation. We are up for the challenge. **MISSION POSSIBLE!** 🎓



The Chalk Guy providing free entertainment for Hobart families.

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