

LEARN BY HEART

Spotlight on Principal John Truesdell

As the 2021-22 school year draws to a close, Mr. John Truesdell, principal at F. C. Reed Middle School, reflects on the past few years and shows his commitment to taking care of people at RMS.

"John makes the wellbeing of others a priority," said Lori Graves, principal at Bridgman Elementary School. "He shows immense support and dedication to his teachers, staff, students and parents."

Mr. Truesdell notes that the resiliency and the positivity of students have been both refreshing and motivating factors during the struggles of the pandemic. When there were many discussions and debates about policies and procedures, he was amazed that the students never complained.

"Throughout the entire process, I don't think I ever saw a kid really complain," said Mr. Truesdell. "They have rolled with the punches. They continue to show up. They have their bad days, too. But in general, they have continued to adapt and show up and work hard and learn at a level that I don't think anyone would believe."

Taking care of people has been the biggest challenge for Mr. Truesdell during the pandemic. Safety and wellness were always priorities for the district but the pandemic made educators refocus their efforts.

"Our mission at RMS is to get students socially, emotionally and academically ready for high school," said Mr. Truesdell. "We list those in that order intentionally because we have to take care of people's basic needs first. We have to make sure students are emotionally secure and safe. And then learning can happen. It's the



**JOHN TRUESDELL, PRINCIPAL
F.C. REED MIDDLE SCHOOL**

same thing for teachers. It's the same thing for parents. If we are not taking care of families and taking care of people on a basic foundational level, it's hard to educate."

"As a parent, John encouraged me and challenged me," shared parent Cathy DeMuth. "When I was feeling so helpless, he provided hope and when I was profoundly sad about the way everything had changed with Covid, he listened. He helped us all survive middle school!"

Mr. Truesdell notes that the community has been wonderful in supporting the school socially and emotionally through the Learn by Heart program. In addition, the community steps up financially to support education through events like the recent golf outing hosted by the Bridgman Foundation for Educational Excellence.

"One of the special things about living in Bridgman is that when there is a need, Bridgman shows up," stated Mr. Truesdell. "That constant support from the community has been really helpful."

Thank you, Mr. Truesdell, for supporting our middle school students, their families, the RMS staff and the community overall. And thank you for helping our students Learn by Heart!