

8/27/2007 A Good Education - On and Off the Field

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By Congressman Jerry Moran

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Drive across Kansas on any Friday night in the fall, and you will see stadium lights illuminating high school football fields and the hometown teams upon them. You will also see a wide cross section of people watching from the stands. Grandparents, alumni, young families, as well as the parents, friends and families of the players come together to cheer for a team victory. The support and encouragement of the community makes all the hard work preparing and practicing worthwhile for the teams and for a moment, they can bask in the admiration and positive atmosphere of the night.

The same game plan can be used for creating a quality learning environment for students in the classroom. In order to be successful, a school needs students who want to learn, dedicated teachers who are committed to helping each student reach their full potential, administrators who are goal-oriented, and supportive parents and community members who will reinforce the concepts and expectations that are being taught at school. Strong schools are the foundation for strong communities, which ultimately make for a stronger Kansas.

As students begin opening up textbooks this fall for a new school year and do their part, Congress must also fulfill its role in Washington, D.C., to ensure our Kansas students and Kansas schools have every opportunity to succeed. I will continue to look for ways to improve current legislation and make common-sense reforms to our federal education policies. In September, legislation to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act will come before the U.S. House of Representatives. In order to return control to the schools, I have introduced legislation to improve this law and to make sure the concerns of Kansans are represented and expressed. I will also focus on the needs of our special education students and work to see that loans and grants are available to assist students seeking a higher education.

Teachers matter so much in the lives of our students, but we must not overlook the fact that we all have a part to play in educating our children. Children learn best when they have a teacher who wants to teach and parents at home who reinforce the value of education. Community members that volunteer and are interested in supporting our teachers and students also play an important role in creating a positive environment that is conducive to learning. When all these important players are working together, the positive educational outcomes will be felt long after the crowds have gone home and the lights have been turned off.