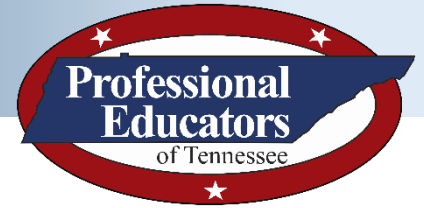


EDITORIAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IGNITE THE WORLD

We now have a new generation of students graduating high school and college. They are ready to strike out and change the world. Lynyrd Skynyrd asks in a song: “If I leave here tomorrow, would you still remember me?” That is a question we all ask ourselves, as we contemplate our purpose and meaning in life. Even the smartest among us seek answers to these questions.

The weight of indecision is in the air. Find a vocation that makes a difference for others, and you likely will live a life with a purpose and be remembered. Go beyond the call of duty to become an instrument of positive change. Be who you are called to be, but take your flame and ignite the world.

I encourage people to seek a career in public education. We need teachers. Never before in our history, have we needed the “best” and “brightest” to join the ranks of educators. Our greatest challenge now is passing the torch of knowledge to a future generation. You will find fewer occupations as challenging or rewarding. Teaching is a place where you find a higher purpose and work with other talented people. The pay isn’t great, but you won’t starve either.

Yes, it is a hard job. Educators are a necessity to every community across the state. You will get heartbroken a million times. It isn’t a job for everyone. You will build friendships with colleagues with whom you had little in common previously. You will learn bladder control. You will learn to project your voice so all can hear and forget to turn it off when you get out in public.

Every child has unique strengths and talents. You have to find them and help the child build on them. As an educator, you will be a hero to many and a villain to some. You will cherish the smile of a child when they learn something new or understand a concept. A smile is understood in any language. You have to be an agent of change, and a protector of a vocation that is honorable and respected. You will create the possibility for a better future.

In public education, we know we are living in a world on the edge of even more epochal change. There is genuine frustration with those who take great delight in the science of complaint and willfully avoid the art of solution. We must be committed to solutions that work and endeavor to bridge the gap between policy and practice. This will require bold, sustained leadership and input from classroom educators.

SUMMARY

Never before in our history, have we needed the “best” and “brightest” to join the ranks of educators. Our greatest challenge now is passing the torch of knowledge to a future generation.

Policymakers must engage educators and empower them to drive education policy. It is the best way to ensure every child has a chance to learn as it transforms education at the grassroots level by forging stronger partnerships between public schools and their local communities. The Beatles said it best: “And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.” Do you want to be remembered? Consider becoming an educator and ignite the world!

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JC Bowman is the Executive Director of Professional Educators of Tennessee, a non-partisan teacher association headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided that the author and the association are properly cited. For more information on this subject or any education issue please contact Professional Educators of Tennessee. To schedule an interview please contact communications@proedtn.org or 1-800-471-4867.