

Dolinski off MPS board, announces Legacy Center

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By Amy Soper of the Daily News

Anyone following the steps of Richard Dolinski as he left his last Midland Public Schools board meeting Monday night would tread a path that continues to be devoted to education.

"Over the years the simple truth is our community has excellent schools because our community cares about them," Dolinski said as he shared observations about his 18 years as an MPS board member.

Dolinski exemplifies a community member who cares, others said. "He's been a mentor to us all for years. I think many people know he's not only served on our board for 18 years, but also has been on the Delta College board for many years," board president Rick Ohle said. "He's left a big footprint on education in this community. He's a Hall of Fame board member."

Dolinski has influenced fellow board members and inspired others to follow his path.

"One of the reasons I'm on the school board is this guy," said Gerald Wasserman, who was seated next to Dolinski. "To me Dick is the poster child for the board of education with his ethics, credibility and care. Someday, if I leave the board and get half the accolades he did I'll consider myself a great board member."

Although Dolinski no longer will be part of the MPS board, he'll continue to influence young minds.

"Many people have asked me what I'll be doing with my extra time," he said. Then he explained his plans, announcing the establishment of The Legacy Center for Student Success, a research-based organization focusing on improving learning for all children. The focus of the center will be research about outside-of-school factors that impede learning and then providing intervention.

"About 10 percent of a student's life from birth through high school is spent in the classroom. Consequently issues unrelated to school significantly affect student success," he said.

Dolinski will be president of the center's board of trustees. MPS Superintendent Gary Hughes and Denise Spencer, chief executive officer of the Midland Area Community Foundation, will be trustees. Karen Harbron will be the center's operations manager.

The center's first project will focus on improving students' reading through vision therapy. Research indicates that with the therapy a child's eye control and coordination are enhanced, leading to better reading performance and increased confidence and self-esteem.

The center, 3200 James Savage Road, will open after Aug. 31.

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