

Perhaps, Albert Einstein said it best, "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think." On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 the current class of Leadership Centre County had an amazing opportunity to see education at its best throughout Centre County. The highly informative day was filled with so many outstanding opportunities that this narrative can only begin to list some of the highlights.

The day began with the forty nine members of the class of 2017 meeting at the administration building in the State College Area School District. From this location, we separated into groups and first met with our hosts for the day. The following schools played host to the LCC class of 2017: Bald Eagle Area, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, State College, Philipsburg Osceola, and the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology. The ride together in vans to our host sites allowed us to begin our conversations immediately as our hosts previewed some of the things we would be seeing during this day. Needless to say, we could tell from the start that "school" is very different from our experiences when we attended.

One of the recurring and impressive aspects we saw throughout the county was the use and incorporation of technology in the everyday instructional practice with the students. A number of the schools have instituted a one-to-one approach to technology integration which means each student is assigned his/her own device. Specifically, students have a district issued iPad or Chromebook which is part of their daily educational tools. Nearly all classrooms had smartboards that are utilized in the lessons making the days of chalkboard, chalk and erasers long gone. The students' use of the technology was amazing, and undoubtedly their comfort level was way beyond many of us who have not grown up with technology. All of the districts are clearly preparing our students through the skillful art and integration of technology.

Another standout for all of the districts was the engagement of students at all levels. As visitors, we could see even in our short visits to the classrooms that students enjoyed their classrooms and teachers. Their enthusiasm for learning was inspirational. Students eagerly shared their ideas and learning with any and all who inquired.

We also learned that a significant part of what schools do for students is to provide breakfast and lunch. At many of the school locations, we had the opportunity to eat a school lunch prepared by the cafeteria staff, or meals provided by students in family and consumer science classes or by specialty classes at the technical school. The meals were quite tasty, and we now know that students have the opportunity to enjoy a nutritious and delicious breakfast and lunch every day in all of our schools.

On behalf of Leadership Centre County, we most assuredly can say that students are being given an opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment throughout the county. There is no doubt the schools are on the forefront of not only education but also in providing many different opportunities for students to grow as individuals and citizens. The opportunities that are being provided for our students in a safe and nurturing, school environment seem boundless. The foundation for the educational approach seemed to solidify Albert Einstein's ideals in each and every school we visited.

Submitted by James Orichosky Principal at Wingate Elementary and Director of Elementary Education for the Bald Eagle Area School District and a member of the Leadership Centre County Class of 2017. For more information about Leadership Centre County go to [www.leadershipcentrecounty.org](http://www.leadershipcentrecounty.org).