

Hello,

I am Mike Strother, and I spent the last 14 years of my 36 year career in education at Southwestern Middle School. It was my good fortune to have worked with the best administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students during my tenure at SWMS. Being a Tiger is more than just a job or a workplace, it was a family. As you enter the campus, you can feel the caring that takes place and the most important part of all of this is the students. They are the core of the school.

The stories and memories that I have will be treasured for the rest of my life!

I have been called Dad by many students over the years, and probably in some small way played a part in their growth. There are many memories that I could write about but these two seem to stand out the most and are worthy of sharing.

The first memory is about a young man who spent a lot of time with me in my office, not necessarily in trouble, but just needing a positive male role model and guidance with his choices and decision making. He wrote me a letter upon receiving his Bachelor's of Science degree and was at the time starting to work on his Master's degree. He simply stated that he wanted me to know I had given him the time and space he needed as a young man to grow and make better choices and was very appreciative and thankful.

The second story relates to a troubled teenager. This young man, who was in trouble often had been sent to Euclid Learning Center to change his attitudes and was no longer at Southwestern Middle School. I had spent great amounts of time working with this student and his family about positive choices but the information was simply not clicking at first. During his stay at Euclid, I continued to check on him until his return to SWMS. At this point the young man had made the decision to learn and not only his demeanor changed along with his attitude vastly improving which resulted in a positive academic change and Honor Roll. The young man graduated and finished Trade School as a mechanic and is now working for a major corporation doing what he enjoys.

Over the years, I have had students come to tell me they have graduated, finished college, gone into the military, started families of their own, and are proud to have been a part of Southwestern Middle School.

The one rule that I always stressed to the students was "If you THINK it is going to get you in trouble, DON'T do it"! This has become my mantra. I always believed to get respect you have to give respect. Once you become a Southwestern Tiger, you are a Tiger forever!

Mike Strother
1996-2010 Assistant Principal