

**Remarks by Huntington Superintendent James W. Polansky
Tenure reception in the Jack Abrams School Rotunda
June 4, 2012**

There are many historical and contemporary meanings of and contexts associated with the concept of “tenure.” Albeit similar, with all generally implying a degree of academic freedom, definitions and criteria vary according to level of academia and even locality. For example, every school district has comparable, but still slightly different expectations and standards regarding teaching competencies and the potential for professional growth.

In general, the awarding of tenure suggests that the Board of Education and administration have judged a candidate to have progressed in teaching and in serving students and the school community during a three-year probationary period. Nonetheless, “tenure” is a word that often takes on more significance than it should in the traditional context, which can, in turn, promote less than constructive criticism of the process and the perceived professional protection it supposedly provides. The more important aspects of the recognition we bestow upon candidates this evening, however, is our confidence in their beliefs and commitment. We are placing our trust in them because we are confident that they clearly recognize:

- that every child will walk into his or her classroom on the first day of a new school year with limitless academic and social potential;
- the importance of academic rigor and the “bar” that must be set at a high level for every child;
- the value in taking well-calculated instructional risks in an attempt to help their students reach that bar;
- the significance of establishing a dynamic, motivating, and engaging classroom environment, characterized by inclusive participation, student inquiry and productive discourse;
- the concept of college and career readiness and the need to prepare their students for entry as productive citizens into a dynamic 21st century global and technological workplace and society;
- the critical nature of helping every child to understand the importance of respecting others and respecting themselves;
- that they will learn from their students as much, if not more, than their students will learn from them, which translates to ongoing self-reflection and the drive to improve;

- the importance of engaging themselves in a continuous professional development program and maintaining their status as lifelong learners;
- their responsibilities in maintaining open lines of communications with their students, with parents, and with their colleagues and administrators;
- the ongoing need to exercise proper judgment, regardless of the specific circumstances;
- their critical responsibilities as role models for our students;
- that Huntington is a place like no other and that our students and staff are capable of performing and achieving at the highest of levels, once again, recognizing no boundaries.

This is a difficult time in the field – a time where money is short and educators are seemingly under constant scrutiny. The next several years are not likely to be easy, but I believe that our tenure candidates will remain committed to their students, to the profession, and to the Huntington School District. We are placing great faith in their abilities, work ethic and dedication.