

# What's the priority?

Business



Recently I overheard two school administrators chatting amidst the pre-bell rush outside my first period class. One asked how the start of the school year was going and the other responded, “ So far, very good. Everything is under control.

” Under control. The answer seemed reasonable enough, a run of the mill response. But when I sat down at my desk and deconstructed the statement, I realized the reply was indicative of the educational philosophy held by public high schools across the nation. A philosophy that, as a motivated student who loves to learn, I find very disturbing. To many educators, like the one I overheard in the hallway, a school year is considered “ very good” when things are “ under control.

” Not when students are inspired or driven or receiving a good education, but when they are controlled. Many teachers and administrators, either consciously or unconsciously, hold on to a similar mentality. They view their job as preventing the negative, like reducing behavioral problems and working against drop-outs, as opposed to facilitating the positive, like encouraging intellectual curiosity and a love of learning. The success of a school should not only be measured by how well students behave, but on how much they are learning, growing, participating, and benefiting from their education. I do understand that high school students can be rowdy and rebellious.

Keeping them under control, especially 3100 of them in the case of my school, is a remarkable job. Furthermore, to create a safe and productive educational environment where students can thrive requires both order and

discipline. But although educators are responsible for generating and maintaining a safe and “ under control” environment, they should be constructing this order and discipline with the greater goal of providing the best possible learning experience. High school is about inspiring, challenging, and encouraging students. When asked how the school year was going, it would have been great to hear that administrator say, “ So far so good. Everyone is receiving a great education.”