

Building teamwork still a goal for former coach

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 12 August 2010 13:54 -



Hird now draws Xs and Os as school principal.

Bruce Hird says despite having to duck through every doorway and special order every pair of pants, he was blessed to grow to 6 feet, 9 inches tall.

Without his height, he may never have realized his career goals.

Hird grew up on a farm in Custer County, graduating from Litchfield High School. His family made ends meet, he said, but there was no money saved for college.

Luckily for Hird, his height and his basketball talent led to a college scholarship and eventually down the path toward a job as a school administrator.

“If it hadn’t been for basketball, I don’t know where I’d be,” said Hird, who began his duties as principal at Brady Public Schools on July 1.

After graduating with an education degree specializing in science, Hird spent 27 years in the classroom beginning at Grand Island Northwest with jobs at Elwood and Lexington to follow.

He coached basketball all those years with some stints as track, football and volleyball coach mixed in.

In 2007, after already having begun classes for an education administration degree, a late

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opening for Garden County High School principal enticed Hird to step into uncharted territory.

“I knew it was time to do something different,” he said.

Hird is glad now he made the change but his years in the classroom aren't far from his mind.

“I think the years I spent as a teacher are invaluable,” he said. “I can fully understand what teachers go through every day.”

And although this year will be the first time Hird has not coached at least one sport since his college graduation, he's not leaving those skills behind either.

“I started in this field to be a coach,” he said. “I'm still a coach, my team is just a different group of people.”

Making the education of Brady students a team effort is one of Hird's top goals.

“It's critical that we all have a common vision,” he said.

Challenges, he said, come in finding a good balance between academic success and extra curricular opportunities.

“My number one goal is that every kid achieves to his or her highest potential,” Hird said. “I want every program, academic and extra curricular, to be at the pinnacle and I want to help create an environment for success in everything we do.”

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Financial resources in the coming years could be a challenge as well, he said.

“But challenges are what life’s all about. You’ve got to find the best solutions while keeping in mind what’s best for the students,” he said.

That means the district may have to break out of its traditional mold.

“You can’t do things the way you’ve always done and still respond to a global environment we barely know anything about,” Hird said. “We’ve got to give kids the very best skills possible and that includes reading, writing and thinking.”

That only comes, he said, through a team effort from everyone on staff.

“It’s critical, especially in a small district such as Brady, that we get that done,” Hird said. “My big job is convincing everyone that’s the bottom line.”

That’s where Hird’s coaching passion will come in handy, he said.

“I’ve built a lot of teams over the years,” he said. “I’m not passionate in the same way I was as a basketball coach but I still have a lot of passion. Now it’s just directed at academics.”

Hird and his wife Connie have six adult children in a blended family.

The couple lives in Lexington but Hird hopes to sell their home and move to Brady soon.

In his spare time, Hird enjoys fishing.

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