



ATWOOD-HAMMOND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT # 39

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Kenneth Schwengel
Superintendent

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Our small, rural school district, Atwood-Hammond CUSD #39, had the rare opportunity to have a nationally known speaker address our staff on Friday, August 31, 2007. Mr. Steve Gilliland was motivating, uplifting and basically inspired us to "enjoy the ride" while curing our "destination disease."

Steve Gilliland did an outstanding job! It was a Friday afternoon and typically our staff would have been allowed to leave at 3:15. On this particular day, at 3:30, they were glued to their seat and focused on Steve's message. Steve's ability to relate his story and his beliefs to that of the classroom teacher was outstanding. It's rare that a district-wide staff development program is so well-received....from pre-k staff to high school staff. It was a program our teachers and board members will remember for a long time.

Steve was willing to go above and beyond...meeting briefly with our student body before their dismissal. Although he only spoke for a short time, he had senior boys approach him afterward, seeking his autograph, asking him questions, genuinely interested in his message and experiences.

My only concern is "how do I top this in the future?" I may have set the bar too high for future staff development programs. I would highly recommend Steve Gilliland to any district, any size. Steve was pleasure to work with. His personal assistant, Sherry, was attentive to every detail and was a delight to work with as well. They were very accommodating to the needs of our district.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Schwengel,
Superintendent