



**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2011** Last modified: Thursday, September 22, 2011 1:59 AM EDT

## **Murphy: Expand mentoring program**

**To the editor:** Recently I hosted a round table discussion of the ways the Attleboro community interacts with, and benefits from, the Attleboro schools. Participants included parents of current and former students, civic leaders, and alumni.

When we sat down my hope was merely to have a lively discussion about how interconnected the quality of the schools is with quality of life in Attleboro. By the end, I had gained a fresh perspective on how imperative it is for Attleboro's schools to succeed, and a renewed sense of confidence that, with the community's support, they will.

The conversation covered everything from the profound impact quality schools have on property values to the unique partnership that must exist between Attleboro's families and the schools.

Participants saw great promise in the mentoring program at Attleboro High School. They spoke of their experience as mentors and the tremendous potential they saw in the young program. I came away eager to learn how the mentoring program might be responsibly expanded so that more students - and more members of the community - can benefit. Among the ways would be to incorporate mentoring at the middle school level, establish a more comprehensive training program for adults interested in serving as mentors, and develop flexible mentoring opportunities that allow adults with various demands on their schedule, and students with various types of needs, to participate.

In addition, there are businesses and organizations within the community that should be contacted to see if they might consider partnering with the schools to increase the exposure students have to potential career paths as well as adult role models.

Establishing the Attleboro schools as the cornerstone of the community is about action, not just alliteration. Effectively expanding the mentoring program would be a good start, and I hope to be given the chance to work with the administration to do just that. I'll start by signing up myself.

**David Murphy, Attleboro**

**THE WRITER**, a candidate for school committee, is conducting a roundtable series on the Attleboro schools called "Topic Tuesdays," every Tuesday from 7 p.m.-8 p.m. at Attleboro eateries. The schedule is at [www.murphy2011.com](http://www.murphy2011.com).