

He added that he's ready to finish out the rest of the school year.

"I'm still very motivated by what I do every day and I feel very good about that," he said. "I always wanted to retire before I felt the need to retire."

LOOKING BACK

Wimmer's earliest career move actually saw him leaving his own education under difficult circumstances.

As a junior in high school, Wimmer was expelled during the middle of his junior year, forcing him to move away from home to live with relatives and change schools. Because of the move, he lost his car and his girlfriend.

"That was a rough time," he said. "The good thing that came out of that was I got a new girlfriend and eventually got my car back and I didn't get into anymore trouble again.

"You could say I learned my lesson . . . and I'm still married to the same girl today after 43 years."

Wimmer said he's tried to use the experience for positive purposes in the school district.

One of these purposes was the development of the district's alternative-education program in 1972. Often after finishing his daytime duties, Wimmer would work with students in the night program.

He said he's always used his own experiences to motivate students who find themselves in a similar situation.

"That doesn't necessarily indicate they cannot go on from there and be successful," he said.

Wimmer said the key to any success in his career comes down to one thing—his education.

"My education is what opened the doors for those opportunities," he said.

Wimmer started his career with the district the same year Olathe Unified School District No. 233 was born. The district was formed in 1965 when five school districts—Countryside School District 103, Meadowlane School District 108, Mount Zion School District 105, Olathe School District 16 and Pleasant View School District 96—merged. After graduating from Pittsburg State University in 1965, Wimmer started teaching Spanish at Olathe Junior High School in downtown Olathe, where Millcreek Center now is.

He moved on to Santa Fe Trail Junior High School when it opened a few years later.

He received his master's degree in educational administration and curriculum from the University of Kansas and became assistant principal at the school in 1969 and was appointed director of personnel for the district nine years later.

In 1980, he was appointed assistant superintendent. Three years later he completed his doctoral degree in educational administration and curriculum, also from KU.

Wimmer was selected superintendent in 1991 after a nationwide search. As superintendent, he encouraged the board to join in a lawsuit against Kansas regarding school funding in 1991 and implemented a new school funding formula, which included the local option budget.

The major projects Wimmer stayed on for after his 1996 eligibility for retirement included four bond issues totaling \$314 million. He also saw 16 schools open, two district activity centers and other facilities.

During his time as the district's leader, Wimmer saw enrollment jump from 15,357 students to nearly 23,700 students, making it the third-largest district in Kansas. The district's staff has nearly doubled. It now employs more than 3,600 people. Wimmer's

awards during his years as superintendent include the Olathe Citizen of the Year from the Olathe Area Chamber of Commerce in 1997, Kansas Superintendent of the Year that same year from the Kansas Association of School Administrators and the Distinguished Community Service Award from MidAmerica Nazarene University in 2000.

However, what you won't find on his proverbial mantle is what he's most proud of—his relationship with students, parents and staff and his contribution to maintaining the feel of a small community within the district.

"I think it's critical to the climate of the organization," he said. "Everything we do is accomplished by people. It's important the person in my role have a good rapport with the people to maintain a positive climate in the school district."

While Wimmer has been superintendent, student achievement scores have reached all-time highs on the SAT, ACT and Kansas Assessment tests and the district's staff development methods were chosen as a model by the U.S. Department of Education. He said he's also proud of the district's reputation locally. A survey conducted during parent teacher conferences this fall showed 97 percent of the 1,900 parents who participated giving the district an A or B grade.

Wimmer cites the district's continued focus on excellence, which has led it to being dubbed the only district in Kansas to receive the Kansas Award of Excellence. A year ago, the district launched its 21st Century High School Programs in aerospace and engineering; e-communication; biotechnology/life sciences; and geosciences. The programs are now being studied nationally by districts seeking to find ways to engage students in academics and make classroom learning relevant.

"I think that's the most significant reform movement you would find anywhere at the secondary level anywhere in the country," he said. Staying in the same district for his entire career, despite opportunities elsewhere, is another achievement.

"I never started out to do that," he said. "A growing district provides opportunities for advancement. I have just been very fortunate to have all of my professional career aspirations met while I was in this district."

WHAT'S NEXT

As his education career ends, Wimmer said he plans on staying in Olathe, which he's called home for 40 years.

"I'm looking forward to being a private citizen," he said.

He said he plans to continue to be an advocate for children and public education. "I'm going to consider other options that might come available and continue to be involved in the community," he said.

He said he doesn't plan on pursuing any political aspirations.

"At one time I did, but at this point and time I do not. I don't like the negative tone of politics," he said.

Other possibilities for Wimmer may include doing some consulting work or even writing a book.

"I have some thoughts on what it will take for education in the future to achieve the higher expectations that are imposed on schools today," he said.

As for the district's future, he said the board now must determine what type of process it wants to utilize in selecting his replacement. He said he expects a special board meeting in the coming weeks to discuss the process and the road ahead. He said he expects the process to be completed by February.

He stressed that while he may assist in the process, he won't take part in making any decisions.

"That's entirely up to the board of education," he said.

Wimmer said he expects the board to accept his notice of retirement at its December meeting.

Wimmer said he knows he made the right decision and doesn't feel like he overstayed his welcome.

"I know I didn't wait too long," he said. "I hope I just didn't go too early and only time will tell."

Wimmer said he's going to miss the people he works with, the students and others he's come in contact with as superintendent, among other things.

"I went to the football game and said, 'This is something I'm going to miss,'" he said. "My wife reminded me that I can still go back to the football games. I plan on continuing to go."

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES W. CHERRY, SR.

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege to know Charles W. Cherry, Sr., a community leader and distinguished citizen of Florida's 7th Congressional District. I join many others from across the country in mourning the loss of this outstanding American. His passing is a significant loss to the City of Daytona Beach and to the State of Florida.

Charles arrived in Daytona Beach in 1952 during the height of segregation. As a civil rights activist in the 1960's and 1970's, he helped organize bus boycotts, fought for better wages at area hospitals, and advocated for better representation for the minority community in Daytona Beach. He became president of the Volusia County-Daytona Beach Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, later becoming president of the state branch and a member of the national board of directors.

In 1978, Charles founded the Daytona Times, a newspaper that has grown into a media company covering Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, with two newspapers and 11 radio stations. He was elected to the Daytona Beach City Commission in 1995, where he served five consecutive terms. As a commissioner, Charles was a strong supporter for new infrastructure and improved city services in black neighborhoods.

Charles W. Cherry, Sr. worked during his life fighting for the principles of equality, justice and opportunity. The City of Daytona Beach has lost a great champion for our community. I will always treasure his public service, his friendship and the example his life has set for so many.

My deepest sympathy is extended to his wife Julia T. Cherry, his son Charles W. Cherry, Jr., his family and his friends.

IN RECOGNITION OF NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLYMAN UPENDRA J. CHIVUKULA

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 20, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula of