

August 26, 2019

Thank you for all your energy, dedication to our students, and love with which you do your job. In the 7 years as superintendent, I don't recall a first week of school where I received so many positive remarks about our schools and our team. One of our Board members commented to me that on their way to work, they saw a [bus](#) driver interact with the family of a student they were picking up. The student, family, and the bus driver were all smiles. In another instance, I received reports that our [security](#) was doing an excellent job moving the traffic along at Lonnie Green Elementary. Other parents and grandparents complimented the work of our [Student Services](#) Department. They were highly appreciative of the care and concern for the individual needs of their students. Also, so many people noted the ease with which campuses opened up the new school year. Awesome job!

As I visited campuses, I too was thankful for all the work done by so many teachers - [bulletin boards](#) after bulletin [boards](#), classroom [decorations](#) after [classroom](#) decorations. So much [hard work](#) was easily observable. I must say that I was beyond impressed by a particular 7th grade math classroom. As I walked into Mrs. Sigley's room, I immediately noticed [calculators](#) at each desk. Each calculator was carefully labeled with a number that corresponded to the number on the desk. Next, I saw [pencil](#)/highlighter holders nicely organized on the wall, also with numbers. The pencil/highlighter holder seemed almost as if they were part of the wall [decorations](#). Then I noticed that the teacher's desk and the [document camera](#) were neatly positioned in such a way that it wouldn't obstruct a student's view of the lesson. Everything was placed in such a strategic way that it would [facilitate](#) the opportunity for students to see the lesson, and; promote the teacher's ability to see the entire classroom. I can guarantee you that nobody is getting away with anything; and that student growth will be maximized in this classroom. Dr. Fred Jones (Positive Classroom Management) would agree that Mrs. Sigley is the complete portrait of the "withitness" concept. The wall decorations were the [icing on the cake](#).

Teachers, you too, can have a classroom that is this well-organized. Here is all that you have to do: (a) draw a schematic of how you can organize your classroom in such a way that minimizes disruptions, while maximizing student learning; (b) provide a list of furniture/equipment needed; and (c) provide quotes from Fred Jones that supports the need for the furniture or equipment. If you do this, I will work with your campus budget, direct the District's furniture budget, twist the arm of our CFO (if needed), and prioritize the work of our technicians to get you what you need. Let's see how many are interested and let's see how many emails I get.

Besides being impressed by the efforts of so many, I also got to participate in some pretty nice activities. On Monday, for example, I joined Board Vice President Linda Webb, Board Secretary Diana Gonzalez and Board Member Josh Overfelt at Lamar Elementary for the presentation of some pretty neat school supplies. Mr. Xavier Rodriguez from Talecris Plasma Resources presented [Miss Daritza Hernandez's](#) second grade classroom with lots and lots of supplies. The smiles on the kids was incredible.

Later on in the week, I witnessed probably the largest [crowd](#) in the past seven years assembled for our [community](#) pep [rally](#). It was nice to see so many student [athletes](#) and members of our [spirit](#) organizations out on the [field](#). As educators, we are blessed to have so much [student](#) interest and so much community [support](#).

In the weeks to come, we will want to focus our conversations and our energy towards the surest way to make our students more competitive. More competitive, especially as they promote from one grade to the next and eventually promote to the world outside of Del Rio, TX. I am referring to making our students stronger readers. While we have hundreds of students that graduate with top honors, gain acceptance to Tier 1 colleges, or become immediate leaders in the work place or the military, we also have many other students who could enjoy the benefits of a more complete public school education. I am hopeful that our 150 Minute ELA Block at the elementary level will have the same success that our STEM 2025 plan is having. Thank you for the energy and focus each of you will dedicate to these district initiatives.

Also, we will very soon have many opportunities to talk about further construction – the Bond Election this November! But until that time, we are going focus on ensuring this year gets off to a great start.