

December 2, 2013

Welcome Back! I hope everyone had a restful Thanksgiving holiday. Somehow the events that occurred prior to the holiday seem somewhat distant; however, writing this blog has reminded me of the many activities that took place and just how thankful I am to be part of such a dedicated community. During the week prior to the holidays, we were engaged in either a Cabinet meeting, a School Board meeting, a Principal meeting, a community meeting, or some type of Thanksgiving festivity. Although it is reassuring to note that each meeting revolved around student needs and opportunities to provide for future student development, knowing that everyone gives so much for the School District's success also serves to increase the tremendous sense of responsibility that goes with leading our school district. It is my strongest desire to continue to work in collaboration with each of you and provide the best well-rounded education for our students.

After a Monday filled with Cabinet meetings and a lengthy but productive School Board meeting, I started my Tuesday morning at SFMMS where I had the opportunity to observe some science fair projects. Students explored everything from how to cook tastier [fajitas](#), to trying to understand [centripetal](#) force, and recycling [rain water](#).

Looking back, Wednesday very well could have been considered the official day to begin the Thanksgiving eating marathon. Elementary students across the district had the opportunity to have their parents, grandparents, and/or guardians join them for a Thanksgiving lunch. As I approached Buena Vista Elementary, where my daughter attends, I immediately discovered how important of an event this is for so many parents. While the cafeteria was filled with [happy students](#) and proud parents, the lobby area reminded me of Grand Central Station. [Parents](#) lined up to wait to be called for their turn to join their children. Kudos to the cafeteria manager and the staff who went out of their way to make parents feel appreciated. They clearly out did themselves.

On Wednesday evening, we once again engaged our Citizen's Facility Committee in discussions. These discussions are quickly leading to the prioritization of our many facility needs. Although the committee still has some work that will take a couple more meetings to finalize, they have begun to shed some light on what they are [considering](#) we immediately begin to build or remodel. Up to now, the construction of a CTE magnet school at the old North Heights campus, the repurposing of the old 8th Grade Campus on Griner Street for Central Administration offices and an activity center, providing security entrances at our elementary campuses, remodeling the bathrooms and concessions stands at Walter Leverman Stadium, and roofing repairs at various campuses seem to be taking priority.

Thursday we started our day meeting with secondary principals before we took a break to attend the [Bank and Trust Ram Field Ribbon Cutting Ceremony](#). It was nice to see so many community members come out and celebrate what our [School Board President](#) articulated so well –the communities collaboration. Having various [student groups](#) attend these types of ceremonies always gives more [purpose](#) and an immediate sense of gratification. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, I took time to visit DRMS, where the Cabinet and I were invited to eat a Thanksgiving meal with the faculty. It is nice to see a team that works so hard for our students take time to enjoy a special meal together.

Although I always enjoy visiting with our Elementary and Secondary Principals, I especially value the time I get to visit with our [Assistant Principals](#). Giving them an opportunity to develop their instructional leadership skills is tremendously important to the future success of our district. To this end, we are committed to meeting with them on a monthly basis. Judging from our assistant principal talent, I can reassure you that the next principal selected to lead one of our schools will be able to hit the ground running and continue to implement our instructional reform without any delays or distractions.

I ended the day Thursday by visiting the [high school science fair](#) where I was able to observe students present their projects to the various judges and observe so many students working in [teams](#). Congratulations to the teachers who guided their students and a special thank you to all the [judges](#) who volunteered.

Friday morning I again took time to view some science projects. This time, the School Board President and I reviewed science fair projects together at [Del Rio Middle School](#). Winning projects ranged from testing [running shoes](#) to testing [taste buds](#). I ended the day on Friday by finally getting a chance to see our [Boys' Basketball](#) teams compete against the San Antonio Southwest Dragons. Even though the holiday had officially started, and the night was cold, students were not quite ready to go home. The boys had excellent support from their [friends](#) and [fans](#).

Saturday morning was probably colder than Friday night. However, [parents](#) of our Boys' Basketball teams gathered at the High School student parking lot to [cook](#) some of the tastiest burgers and [assemble](#) meal bags for those who had contributed to their fundraising efforts. Congratulations to all our parents! Sunday afternoon I took a few minutes to visit the Robotics Booster Club in [Robocon](#) fundraising action at the Civic Center. While parents sold chicken plates, robotics students promoted their club by giving the community the opportunity to handle robots that among many abilities were able to [entertain](#), toss frisbees, or [stack cans](#). The event was a complete success!

Although the holiday week was filled with rest, we had the opportunity to see our students, their parents, and various school district supporters involved in various functions. On Tuesday before Thanksgiving, my family and I took time to drive to Uvalde and support our Boys' Basketball teams. Not only did we have an opportunity to see our son, [Orlando](#), play on the JV team; we also had the opportunity to see our Varsity team put on a nice [show](#) from the [field](#) and from the [line](#). Keep up the great work! On the Friday after Thanksgiving the neighbors around the Buena Vista area were woken up quite early. Contractors and sub-contractors were busy [pouring](#) the foundation for the future gymnasium. It was nice to see [progress](#) on my first construction project as Superintendent. As if we had not eaten enough hamburgers, chicken, turkey, and ham, we lined up on Saturday morning to support our [welding students](#) who teamed up with the Del Rio Host Lions Club to sell Bar-B-Q sandwich bags. A special thank you to everyone who supports and assists in adding value to our student's lives.

In closing this blog I want to refocus our teaching staff on my commitment to continuously visit with teacher representatives from our elementary campuses and discuss any needed adjustments to our planning protocol. I want to reassure teachers that I am committed to receiving and acting on their input. After visiting with teacher representatives from each elementary campus, I will visit with each campus faculty to hear additional concerns as they relate to student assessments, tutoring, bilingual program adjustments, and of course the eight instructional periods at the secondary level. As indicated earlier, it is my strongest desire to continue to work in collaboration with each of you and provide the best well-rounded education for our students.

"One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation." - Arthur Ashe