

September 23, 2013

Another wonderful week has come and gone. The rain may have slowed things down a bit and caused us to reconsider some roofing priorities in our repair schedule , but it was also refreshing and with it, has brought a sense of newness. With this in mind, I want to commend our teachers who, despite the unfamiliar yet beautiful sound of rain, continued their regular instructional days.

During the 2013-2014 district budget approval process, our Board of Trustees allocated \$25 million dollars for future construction. This past Monday, September 16, 2013, our Board of Trustees took the next step toward significant building construction by approving the formation of a Citizens Committee. The Citizens Committee will be presented with current needs and future opportunities for student educational services in our district and will recommend priorities for construction. Among the current needs is the overcrowding of some of our elementary schools. The committee will either recommend rezoning, to better balance the enrollment at each school or recommend the construction of additional classrooms. Because of the limits of a \$25 million dollar budget, it is doubtful that the committee will recommend the construction of a new elementary campus. However, a new elementary campus may also be an option to consider.

The Citizens Committee will also consider opportunities for future educational services. Among these opportunities is the construction of a Fine Arts Performing Center, a Career and Technology Magnet School, a Middle School Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Academy, or an Early College High School. The renovation of the “old eighth grade” campus will be central to these discussions, as it has the potential to serve a combination of these needs. Regardless of the outcome, I cannot wait to hear the discussions of the committee, as each of these opportunities is exciting.

Tuesday afternoon, I had the opportunity to present the new principal, Miss [Maryvel Flores](#), to the Lamar Faculty. Miss Flores has most recently served as the assistant principal at Lonnie Green Elementary. While at Lamar Elementary, I took the opportunity to visit with the teachers about the implementation of the Planning Protocol. The message I delivered to them is the same message I have been delivering to every elementary faculty this last week and will continue to deliver this coming week. I want teachers to know that the job embedded staff development that is occurring daily is tremendously important to our student’s success. I also

informed them that in the future, we will be able to restructure the daily planning, as all campus instructional leadership teams (Principals, Assistant Principals, Instructional Coaches, and Cluster Leaders) and teachers become experts at leading the implementation of the Planning Protocol. Finally, I want teachers to know that I understand each campus is unique and has individual needs, therefore, we will continue to allow Principals to make decisions that provide flexibility at their campuses.

Wednesday morning, I participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony where a local car dealership, Ram Country, introduced Operation KidSafe. Operation KidSafe is a free digital fingerprint safety program that provides parents, such as Leslie's, digital fingerprints, a color photo, and biographic information should an emergency arise. We encourage parents to take their children by the Ram Country dealership for this free service. Next, I took advantage of being away from the office and stopped by Ruben Chavira Elementary where I checked on the new entrance being constructed, visited with Kindergarten students eating lunch and then stopped by a fourth grade writing class. I was impressed with their expertise in sentence structures (noun, verb, and predicate) and remember thinking that these students displayed a readiness to take on higher writing challenges. I look forward to visiting them again in the near future.

Wednesday evening I had the opportunity to join our high school principal, Dr. Barrera, at a high school band fundraiser. Our band performed for customers at a local McDonald's where they received a percentage of the business receipts that night. Thank you McDonald's for supporting our fine arts programs. I ended my day as a guest speaker at the Knights of Columbus. Speaking in public about our programs gives me the opportunity to promote our mission, but also to stay in tune with the needs and perceptions of our larger community. I thank everyone who participated at the Knights of Columbus event.

Thursday was filled with office hours and trainings, but in the evening, my wife and I participated in the High School's Open House activities. Besides visiting with our children's teachers, I also had the opportunity to visit with some high school students who were willing to share their hopes and dreams. At the National Honor Society display, I met Aneya Torres, NHS Vice President, who told me she has plans to attend The University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. Also at the table was Fernando Meza, a future Aggie, and Cameron French, NHS President, who is considering Texas A&M or MIT. Truly an awesome group of students!

Visiting the Love Wing at Del Rio High School was a real treat. Not only were the teachers welcoming, but they worked hard to make their hallway environment just as welcoming. I have

grown accustomed to seeing awesome bulletin boards and door decorations at elementary schools, but what I saw at the high school equally deserves to be highlighted. As I expressed amazement with one [door](#), the students' enthusiasm encouraged me to see one [display](#) after the other.

Friday evening and Saturday were dedicated to enjoying athletic events. Friday evening I waited for the "all clear" call from our Chief Operations Officer, Mr. Mike Salinas, indicating the school buses had made it out safely. I then proceeded to San Antonio to watch our Rams compete against Breckenridge High School. Although the rain came down hard, it did not deter our team from competing or our Cheerleaders, Belles, Band, or Sapphires from [performing](#). We are blessed to have an equally committed group of [parents](#) and fans that joined us throughout the rainy evening.

On Saturday afternoon my son, Orlando, and daughter, Corina, joined me at the Carl Guys Gym to watch our JV and Varsity Volleyball teams win against United South. Our girls were clearly motivated by the fans and energized by the new sound system. It was nice to see fans in the stands cheering and kids showing their dance moves. I ended my evening at DRMS where I saw our Seventh Grade girls win our Invitational Volleyball Tournament. I later found out that our Eight Grade girls also won their bracket. Go Queens!

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." –  
Nelson Mandela