

September 12, 2016

Someone reminded me this weekend that three week progress reports were already upon us and asked if we could just slow down a bit. I recalled thinking, I sure wish I could slow down, but I am already behind. Like every year, time sure does fly by. Truth be said, we are all for slowing down a bit and sometimes wonder how time would pass if we could focus on just two or three things at a time.

Although there are a lot of things to check off the list, we encourage each of you to prioritize what really needs to get done. As I mentioned in an earlier discussion, there are two main items we should focus on this year. Over the past three years, we have been faithful to district initiatives such as Planning Protocol and developing the skill set of teachers. As we begin to transition beyond a five year plan, a key to growth and success for all students academically is their daily attendance. So how do we move forward with increasing our attendance rate?

Often times, a lack of communication about school funding leads parents to believe that our sole goal is to put a monetary value to each child. Although this is a misconception that is hard to break, the true picture is that each time our children are present, the school has a greater opportunity to use funds to build a greater infrastructure, ensure technology enhancements, and provide classroom resources for the greater academic success of our entire District. In this academic school year, I challenge each school to make attendance a priority.

As I visited each campus to review their attendance improvement efforts, I noticed that each campus had some degree of success, although the efforts carried out by two campuses, [NHE](#) and [SFMMS](#), were exceptional. Each of these attendance secretaries ensured classroom attendance reports were submitted by 8:25 AM; the parents of absent students were contacted by 9:00 AM; and that the parental aide was on her way to making home visits by 10:00 AM. Impressive!

While I visited the campuses, I also took a few minutes to observe and enjoy students and teachers in action. At Buena Vista Elementary I stood in the [library](#) and watched how the Librarian provided the beginning of the year orientation. The students were attentive and eager to check out their books. At North Heights Elementary, Coach Paniagua took time to explain the different student rotations. It was nice to see students enjoying the [outdoors](#) and especially the running around the [track](#). I bet they are working on leaving their mark at the District's Elementary Cross Country and Track Meets.

Rounding out the week, one vivid image in my mind can be summed up with, how about our [Rams](#)! This past Friday was not only an opportunity for a [victory](#), which we had, we also saw a [helicopter](#) land at mid field to deliver the [game ball](#) and we celebrated parent's night. If the stands looked kind of empty at the beginning, it was only because so many parents were on the field with their [student athletes](#), [cheerleaders](#), [Belles](#), or [student trainers](#). Friday Night Lights is always a [class act](#) in [Del Rio](#).

In closing, I want to relay a bit of historical information I learned this past week. On Tuesday I was invited by the Mexican Consulate to the San Felipe Cemetery to hear an author speak at the graveside of a Mexican Revolutionary Hero – La Adelita. As it turns out, La Adelita, was more than a folk legend and almost as impressive a human being as the folk songs make her out to be. She was a nurse, sort of a Florence Nightingale, who years after retiring from revolutionary work, married a Mexican Officer who brought her to Del Rio where she is now buried (next to the same officer she married). Very impressive! It was also nice to see some of our [students](#) participate in the presentation.

“Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” – Abraham Lincoln