

November 3, 2014

As the superintendent of this District, I often find myself reflecting on the daily tasks that fill my day. With this, I cannot help but say that there are so many things that have me feeling excited about what is going on in our District. With a high degree of certainty, and in no particular order, I will share a few of these throughout this blog. The District's efforts to develop a viable curriculum, seeing the rigor we are developing in literacy (especially early literacy), and the tremendous success our students are having gives me great joy and absolutely makes this job the best ever.

For example, Tuesday evening I was invited to be a [celebrity reader](#) by Mrs. [Fierro](#) from Calderon Elementary. While some of us read to students, others engaged the parents in meaningful discussions that promoted literacy. Not only did I thoroughly enjoy the experience, I was also treated to a wonderful [dinner](#). To top off the evening I ran into some familiar faces who were doing some [volunteer](#) work as part of their Pharmaceutical Tech program. Being that this was not the first time I ran into these students, I asked for some insight into their volunteer experiences. This is what Nurse Jan shared with me:

"I understand you have run into my Pharm Tech students two or three times now as they have been doing some community service. I have a phenomenal group this year. It is critical for health care professionals to develop service and networking skills..... I am requiring all students to have a total of 8 hours of Community Service/Professional Development..... So far I have had students help with the Middle School Cross Country Meet, VVRMC Family Fair, Literacy Night at Calderon, Open House at Calderon, Andale Del Rio, Candlelight Vigil for Domestic Violence with BCFS, Business Fair at the Civic Center, STARR Camp at Calderon, and the Methodist Church Fall Festival. The students are doing a great job and will hopefully make this part of their lifestyle."

On Friday, I again had the opportunity to participate in another celebrity reader program at Ruben Chavira Elementary. This experience was also wonderful. [Victoria](#) escorted me to Mrs. [Cardenas'](#) fifth grade classroom and Mrs. Zaragoza's kinder classroom, where I had the opportunity to read one of my favorite Halloween books – [The Legend of Sleepy Hollow](#). These experiences make for superb learning opportunities for students. I truly had a great time. It is my hope that all campuses are promoting reading in this or other similar ways.

Last week I shared with you the incredible performance by our Mighty Ram Band at the area competition. This week was no exception for witnessing excellent performances. I had the opportunity to see our [Boys & Girls](#) Cross Country teams compete at the Regional level with many of our students qualifying for State Cross Country competition. But that's not all, our Girl's [Volleyball](#) team is about to begin playoffs and our [football](#) team is just one victory away from also qualifying for playoffs. We thank our students for representing our community with such pride and wish them the best of luck.

Thursday evening I traveled to Laredo to watch our students participate in a football game against Laredo LBJ. I must admit that I had concerns about our students traveling on a school night, but watching the band and [Sapphires](#), along with our [Belles](#) and cheerleaders participate with our [football](#) team in a [come from behind](#) victory was exciting and [rewarding](#). Our cheerleaders also made the extra effort to remind us that [Halloween](#) was upon us.

Saturday absolutely provided us an opportunity to celebrate students who exemplify true commitment and internal fortitude. Our Boys and Girls Cross Country team participated at the Regional Meet in San Antonio. From beginning to end, our students were [focused](#) and made sure they left nothing to chance. From [warming](#) up to the actual race, they gave it their all. In the end, [Paul Delgado](#), [Jesse Arreola](#), and [Diamond Gonzalez](#) qualified individually for State competition, while our entire Boys Cross Country Team qualified by finishing as the fourth place team in the Region. Paul and Jesse finished an impressive [fifth](#) and [sixth](#) place respectively among all Regional qualifiers. It was nice to observe our students [celebrate](#) the joy of victory while also remembering to be [thankful](#) for their gift. Best of luck to our runners as they compete in State this coming weekend.

I want to close this blog by expressing my sincere excitement for the work we are doing in the area of teaching and learning. I am certain that when our Curriculum Portal – SharePoint – is filled with the curriculum documents our teachers are currently working on, we will have a clear standard (we can continuously build upon) and strive to achieve with our students. It is through each and every ones commitment, as the leaders of our profession, that we can make our District the best it can be. With this, it is always important to reflect on the number one priority of our profession, teaching and learning for the sake of our students. In the meantime, it is essential that each of you contribute to the work in progress by giving honest feedback and sharing your expertise as we work to develop our curriculum. I am certain that together we can build the best learning experience for our students.

It is not difficult to see how challenging reversing a decline can be. It is not about one person and cannot be fixed overnight. It is about leadership, courage, and tenacity, and it must be done with a sense of urgency and strategic actions that demonstrate that failure is not an option. - The Turnaround Mindset