

Monday, June 03, 2013

A three day weekend that extends into Monday makes for a short week. The short week, in turn, makes for an abundant amount of fast paced activities. Somehow, everyone managed to fit these activities into the four day week.

Tuesday evening provided a special time for the school board and I to discuss the district's vision and goals. The school board's focused work over the course of the evening provided clear direction for our administration and we look forward to embracing the challenges that lie ahead.

Wednesday gave me the chance to walk through my old elementary – Garfield. Although the campus is not the same, walking through some classrooms reminded me of the excitement for learning which teachers created then and continue to create today. When I entered Mrs. Jackeline Rodriguez's second grade class I observed students working on what appeared to be a writing assignment. As soon as I asked one student for permission to read their essay, four others pleasantly asked me if I would read their work as well. One student suggested that I read all five pieces and then select the best one. Clearly, he suggested we have an essay contest. Being an avid proponent for competition, I agreed and read all five pieces. Congratulations to David Underwood, the winner of our unofficial essay contest.

Thursday morning I visited Buena Vista's Fitness Day and was able to observe firsthand the organized excitement created for the students. Back in our elementary days, the field day events were mostly individual events where there were clearly winners and losers, a notion that is sometimes too hard for a seven year old to handle. I was pleased to see that most of the day's events (Basketball Dribble, Sack Race, etc.) at Buena Vista were centered on team activities. I imagine this created more work for Coaches Gilbert Martinez, Lee Jenkins, Codi Dietz, and Olga Alfaro. However, they organized the day to perfection and students and parents were treated to a variety of fun events.

I worried that the school year would end and I would miss the opportunity to see our high school students engaged in their Career and Technical Education (CTE) activities. Luckily, I was treated to a partial tour of our CTE facilities on Thursday and a detailed tour of our Welding program by Advanced Welding students Miguel Medina and Jesus Galindo. Jesus and Miguel both highlighted the numerous projects completed by their fellow classmates and were also quick to extend a word of gratitude to the community partnerships which had been formed by their instructor, Mr. Todd Townsend. They explained how these partnerships made their projects possible. A special treat was the opportunity to see the metal model train and airplane that had been designed and crafted by Miguel and Jesus respectively. Being able to observe this fine craftsmanship in and of itself is worth the tour through the CTE program. I highly recommend it.

That same evening various board members and I were treated to dinner with the ladies from the food service department. Out of 83 hardworking food service personnel, only one will be retiring this school year. Congratulations to Luz Angelica Leon upon her retirement – 20 years of service. Feeding children on a daily basis has to be one of the most satisfying jobs we are engaged in.

Friday morning Dr. Garza and I were invited to visit with Mrs. Janna Calk's first period Pharmacy Technician students at Del Rio High School. In the tradition of excellence they will continue to have a 100% passing rate. However, they will be taking their certification exam after the school year has concluded and we will not have the opportunity to formally congratulate them and their instructor. So we jumped the gun just a little bit and took the opportunity to congratulate them for bringing honor to our district.

Saturday afternoon I had the opportunity to treat my wife to a 1971 American musical production. Our high school students presented ***Grease***. What a performance! Under the direction of Mrs. Raquel Martine and Mr. Josue Gonzalez, our students brought to life the social challenges high school students faced in 1959. John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John, Jeff Conaway and Stockard Channing, along with the rest of the original cast are lucky that they did not have to compete with our own Zack Vazquez, Clarissa Martinez, Lou Zylka, Regina Rodriguez and friends. The musical play was so awesome that I decided to come back on Sunday and bring all our children. What a treat! I understand that the art department put in a lot of work on the set. Excellent support provided by Mrs. Morgan's art students!

In closing, I want to share a bit of good news from the state legislature. Our legislators have expressed commitment to supporting the Foundation School Program by restoring funding lost in the previous biennium as well as adding funding for the next biennium. SFDRCSID is projected to receive a total additional amount of \$3,333,948.00 for the 2013/2014 school year. As a school district, we will dedicate ourselves to being good stewards of these funds. Stewardship should include spending every bit of this money to ensure our teachers and students have the appropriate resources and support for learning. Working collaboratively we can and will ensure success for all students.

*"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." - Colin Powell*