

January 11, 2016

Being back at work after a wonderful holiday break, although sometimes difficult, is always a blessing. Just as students were eager to reconnect with their [friends](#) and parents were ready for some mid-day relief, teachers were also ready to greet the many smiles of the students that make education a worthwhile profession. Maybe you were not ready for the early wake-ups and the daily regiment, but I am certain you were ready to return to the [joy of teaching](#). Welcome back! One of the inherent benefits of returning from the holiday break is the notion of getting a fresh start. Everything that a student did, or things someone may have done that we perceived as not having been entirely cooperative, or even something we may have done ourselves is all forgotten; and we all get a fresh start! I hope each of us carries the spirit of newness as we begin the New Year and work together to help our students achieve their [full potential](#).

It is my hope that with the newness of the year, each of us will recommit ourselves to the work we started at the beginning of the school year. Sometimes we cannot help but become overly concerned with the benchmarking and state assessments that occur during the second semester. Yet the concern over testing should not be cause for anxiety or panic that may instigate a "drill & kill" type of teaching. Our job as educators is to commit ourselves to rich and [rigorous](#) quality instruction, understanding that with quality instruction each student will make progress and sooner than later flourish as independent learners. I encourage you to continue to work collaboratively as you develop lessons, gather resources, and most importantly plan to individualize the instruction wherever needed.

Besides being the first week of the New Year, this past week was quite the normal week filled with all types of work, teaching and [student activities](#). Unfortunately, I missed [great soccer performances](#) on Tuesday and a tremendous [Robotics competition](#) this past Saturday. Although I was not able to participate in as many activities, I did manage to watch a [girls' basketball](#) game and a couple of [boy's games](#). Our middle school [8th grade boy's](#) showed that the future of Del Rio Basketball is on an upswing. Our [Varsity Girls](#) continue to display their [dominance](#) and are sure to make it back to the playoffs this coming year. The [Varsity Boys](#) enjoyed a full house of [support](#) from [fans](#) and [student groups](#) this past Saturday. While they were [superb](#) on the [defense](#), the varied moments of [brilliance](#) on the offensive side were just shy of a win. All of my outings were enjoyable, however, the highlight came this past Saturday during a JV basketball game. With less than 2 seconds left in the game, [Ozzie](#) hit a shot from half court to win the JV Basketball game. It was absolutely nice. Great Job Ozzie!!!

Keeping up with my desire to extend District updates to the community, I participated in very productive parent forums at SFMMS and Lamar Elementary. During these forums we continued to discuss the possibilities of a Block Schedule for secondary students and possibly a delayed start. Through the various meetings I have held at elementary and secondary campuses, parents who participate have been on board and look forward to the Block Scheduling. However, there are many concerns with the potential late start for secondary students. By having a late start we can very easily fix so many transportation issues that have existed for years. However, we will inadvertently cause issues for parents who need to maintain the 8:00 AM regiment they have come to depend on. I understand and am committed to the continued dialogue to ensure the best solution is arrived at and implemented.

I want to end this blog by encouraging all of us to make a conscious decision and recommit ourselves to the quality instruction we began in August. In doing so, we will in effect be reminding ourselves that teaching is done with the individual learner in mind. Some students need to be challenged beyond the norm, others need to be provided additional guided instruction (at all grade levels), and still some just need to be reminded that we care about their learning as if they were our own children and grandchildren.

Finally, this week will mark the end of the third six weeks and the end of the first semester of school. For so many of our students, this second semester will quickly become filled with activities marking the culmination of their high school experience and the commencement of the next stage of their life. Our seniors will be busy filling out scholarship applications, visiting college campuses, deciding on a school, a job, or a branch of the military. I am certain that the rest of us will be busy supporting and encouraging them as they prepare to begin the next chapter of their life. We are beyond blessed to have such an awesome career, with the opportunity to mold the future.

*"Write it in your heart that every day is the best day of the year." — Ralph Waldo Emerson.*