

September 8, 2015

I can clearly remember the plans we were making a few months ago. In May and June it seemed like we had an eternity to accomplish so much; but today, most of us are wondering what happened to the summer. It is already the third week of school! In a few days, teachers will be posting 3-week grade reports and some students will be celebrating. Others will be getting a wakeup call - summer is over; not to mention the parents that will be looking for some answers. Time flies...

Although students have been engaged and there will be some grades to post, I am also aware and thankful at how much time teachers have spent in preparing their students for learning. Aspiring teachers, going through a teacher preparation program, are always told that the best teachers spend the first couple of weeks ensuring students learn classroom routines. Observing Mrs. Rodriguez's Dance class learn their [warm-up](#) and [stretching](#) routines, as well as Mrs. Sandoval's prekindergarten class at Cardwell learn [morning routines](#), was clear evidence that I was in the presence of greatness.

I want to designate some lines in this blog and thank a special group of teachers who dedicated a significant amount of time to our digital textbook project. For the first time ever, Del Rio teachers have used available technology to create our District's own textbooks. Big name publishers have been reluctant to provide textbooks in PDF Format. Nonetheless, thanks to the efforts of our very own teachers, secondary students in select courses will be able to access their textbooks from a web page, download them to their electronic notebooks as a PDF file, or have a hard copy printed at a very affordable price. Because of their dedication, not only will students have quality textbooks (text, photos, diagrams, vocabulary words and guiding questions, videos, links to online resources, interactive flashcards and real-world simulations that explain concepts) at their fingertips, the District will also be able to reallocate monies which would have otherwise been handed over to textbook companies for other teacher and student needs.

The following Social Studies and Math teams led this year's digital textbook project: At SFMMS, [Mr. Joe Mancha](#) led the charge in creating the 6th grade Social Studies book while [Emily Vasquez](#) and [Luis Esparza](#) collaborated to produce the 8th Grade Social Studies book. The DRMS Algebra I textbook was created thanks to the efforts of [Mrs. Maria Sigley](#) and [Mrs. Gloria Castaneda](#); the Freshman Algebra I textbook was the labor of [Alejandra Rios](#), [Sarah Flores](#) and [Jec Castañeda](#); and [Melinda Costilla](#) did a wonderful job in producing the Geometry textbook. Finally, the high school saw some valuable representation, and now has a digital U.S. History textbook thanks to the efforts of [Mr. Rick Torres](#). I look forward to seeing the use of these textbooks and the continued efforts of our teachers to produce other textbooks. All links to these textbooks have been made available on the Curriculum and Instruction homepage, I hope you will visit and peruse the books; they are awesome!

Thursday evening was filled with excitement, entertainment and action. To start off the evening, I was invited to speak at the Early College High School's Meet and Greet. It was exciting to be able to [address](#) and spend some time with the first ever [Early College Cohort](#). I couldn't help but think that when our [ECHS](#) students graduate from high school, they may potentially also graduate from SWTJC with an Associate's degree. I shared with our students that I couldn't wait for their high school graduation night so that when we announced their names we would also announce the number of college hours earned - what a wonderful opportunity for our students and their families.

As soon as we were dismissed from the Meet and Greet, I walked over to Walter Levermann stadium where I saw our [Sapphires](#) perform and our [JV Boys](#) work their best against the Holmes Huskies. All in all, it was a wonderful evening.

Friday night was impressive. The [victory](#) was [fabulous](#), but the student [involvement](#) was beyond words. The [students](#), dressed in their camouflage outfits were on their feet the whole night, I almost thought I was at Kyle Field watching a Texas A&M football game. Next, I want to send a huge thank you to our ROTC unit. The Texas 66 makes their presence felt at just about every event. I have never heard them deny an invitation to post our colors. Thursday night they were at the [ECHS](#) event, and Friday they were at our football game [looking sharp](#) as ever - remarkable.

Walter Levermann stadium was definitely the place to be at for a Del Rio Friday Night. The [band](#) was amazing, and the enjoyment demonstrated by the [Nelía](#), concert bass drum player, gave us a crystal clear message - if you enjoy what you do, you can [move a crowd](#)!

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." - Martin Luther King