

June 2, 2014

Graduation Week! Whether you are a Pre-K teacher at Cardwell Elementary, work in one of our support programs, or teach English IV at our high school, this week is entirely exciting and impacts each one of us in some way. For some of us, it's exciting because we have family members who will be walking the stage. For others, this week is exciting because we have worked closely with one or more of our graduating seniors and can now celebrate in the closing of their K-12 book and the commencement of a new chapter in their lives. Also, for our entire Del Rio community, especially our SFDRCID community, this week is exciting because it truly does mean we have completed our mission.

The 568 students who will be crossing the stage this week had a meaningful life experiences over the last thirteen to fourteen years. I hope that each and every one of you will take a moment to reflect and be proud of your contributions.

As excited as I am for this week's activities, I cannot help but look towards the future. Today our graduates qualify for admission to the best universities, the most disciplined military, and the most advanced workforce. However, we cannot sit on today's accomplishments without anticipating tomorrow's changes. The graduates we send out over the next few years will be faced with further innovations in technology, higher university admission standards and higher demands in the workforce.

Working together, I am certain that we will continue to prepare them to compete and win at all levels. Over this past year we have worked to lay the groundwork for services to our students and will now focus all our attention on developing these initiatives. As we continue to develop these initiatives we will develop our own skill set and be more prepared to help our students compete in a more demanding world with:

1. Innovations in technology
2. A District Wide Writing program
3. An Early Literacy Program
4. A process for planning and delivering rigorous lessons – Planning Protocol
5. A Student Services Department that provides students with background to make sound decisions about their personal life as well as develop their own leadership skills

I am hopeful that each of you will find the time to participate in the summer development opportunities that will be provided for each of these initiatives. For our high school

teachers we will support our 1:1 initiative by building a pool of knowledgeable staff (Trainer of Trainers model) that will help teachers become more familiar with how to integrate technology in everyday teaching. Having successfully established an elementary writing program, we are now ready to build upon these successes with the Abydos Writing Initiative. The LETRS Foundations and Modules 1-3 training will ensure that our Early Literacy Program is implemented with consistency and fidelity. As a priority, we will continue to work closely with teachers to make improvements and enhance the Planning Protocol. Finally, the Leader in Me will be launched at four elementary campuses to promote leaders at all levels of each campus. Empowering students to take ownership and leadership of their school sets a foundation for success in all other areas by promoting growth in each individual. Although this may sound like a lot, there is actually something for everyone instead of everything for everyone. I hope we will all do our part and participate in our summer development.

This week I want to highlight one of our graduating seniors as well as describe the newly established Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. First, let me introduce you to [Edmundo Ramon](#). Edmundo has been competing in UIL Academics since the elementary grades. Although he has had his wins and losses, his final competition was clearly a win as he was declared the top speller in the state. It is impressive to know that a student from Del Rio High School competed against students from the entire state of Texas and came out on top. Although not surprising, it is absolutely impressive. Edmundo will continue to make his family and our community proud as he moves on to study Government at the University of Texas. All of the sudden, "Hook em Horns" doesn't sound all that bad.

To form our [Student Advisory Council](#), Principals were asked to select students who represent a cross reference of our student population. It is our hope that this group of rising 8th thru 12th grade students will meet with the Superintendent a minimum of once per six weeks. The student group will be asked to provide insight into items such as the bell schedule, methods of increasing attendance, cell phone policies, and other policies which affect student life throughout the District. We held our first meeting this past week and hearing them speak so passionately about what affects them on a daily basis was entirely reassuring.

In this final blog of the 2013/2014 school year, I want to thank each of you for your hard work and especially for the passion you bring to the job on a daily basis. Although I truly

want you to take advantage of the summer development opportunities, especially those provided through the EEIP grant, I mostly hope you will be able to take time and enjoy your summer and those beautiful Del Rio mornings; maybe sleeping a little later, enjoying your garden, or perhaps enjoying a morning walk. Whatever you choose to do, you have earned it, so enjoy! Have a great summer!!!!

"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer." - F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*