

October 6, 2014

I think it is safe to say the first six weeks has come and gone in quite a flash. The speed of this previous week accurately described the speed with which we traveled through the entire first six weeks. As I think of why things move so fast, I am reminded of every activity our teachers and students are engaged in. From summative assessments to student performances to parent meetings, everyone has exhibited the strength of public education - our belief in our profession and commitment to our students.

I want to start this blog by first thanking the teachers who gave up their morning to visit with me over a cup of coffee. Next I want to reassure you that we are immediately addressing the issues which you have shared with us. For example, last week we agreed to do the following:

1. We will immediately establish a committee of teachers to select a new computer device for our elementary teachers. We hope to have our committee's selection presented to our Board for approval this month.
2. Our technicians will begin the work of replacing the elementary classroom student computers with newer computers that are faster.
3. Our technicians have been approved to work overtime until we are caught up on the existing work orders.

Expressing concerns may not always come easy for us, but taking the time to share and listen to those concerns is the best way to ensure continued progress. We will work diligently to establish this process as a norm for our District. Thank you for your willingness to participate.

Monday and Tuesday were probably the fastest days of the week, but also the most enjoyable. After a long Monday I was able to visit the tennis courts and watch some of our students square off against Alexander. The two top rated teams composed of junior, [Hattie](#) Cauthorn and freshman, [Angela](#) Vargas, along with junior, [Eusebio](#) Rosales and senior, [Jose](#) Morales, displayed tremendous [poise](#) and [teamwork](#). After thoroughly being impressed with their efforts, I moved on to DRMS for a quick [volleyball game](#). Our young ladies displayed hard work and lots of talent. Seeing them enjoy a [victory](#) is always a nice way to end a day.

Tuesday I started and ended my day on a great note. First, I started my day at Chavira Elementary where I was greeted by [Tiana](#) who escorted me to the library where I had the opportunity to meet with a group of teachers. It was great to hear from the teachers and especially nice to see so many students engaged in learning. After some more office work I stopped by Calderon Elementary to visit their open house. First I was greeted by [high school students](#) who were doing some volunteer work for Nurse Janna. They were wonderful and exhibited lots to be proud of. Next, I was escorted to the [Book Fair](#) room and then to some classrooms. I even managed to grab a [snack](#) from one of the Mrs. Favela who offered apples to her visitors. The special treat was seeing [Brandon](#) show off his work folder to his mother. Great job Calderon Elementary.

Next I moved on to DRMS for a [football](#) game. My soft spot for DRMS never seems to end. I always enjoy the number of students and parents that are on hand showing excitement. Having the [band](#), [Pom](#) team, cheerleaders, and football players come together always makes for an exciting evening. To end the day, I stopped by the high school to see our [volleyball](#) girls [celebrate](#) a victory over Laredo Alexander in 4 action-filled games. Great job ladies!

Thursday came and went, but Friday was again, fast paced and exciting. I started the day by visiting with the teachers at [Lonnie Green Elementary](#). Their insight and input was every bit as relevant and insightful as that which the Lamar teachers had provided the previous morning. On my way out of Lonnie Green I noticed a teacher who had exceptional control of her students. The principal informed me that [Miss De Los Santos](#) was a first year teacher who was a graduate of Texas State University and had been part of our Ready Set Teach program. It is so nice to see students who participated in our formative programs return to serve their community. [Terrific!](#)

As I made my way to Del Rio High School, I had the opportunity to see the [ROTC](#) students wearing the military physical training gear. It reminded me of my own days in the military. Hats off to our ROTC students and their commitment. This week I will return to Newport, Rhode Island (where I completed [Officer Candidate School](#)) for a National Superintendent's Conference. I was one of the lucky superintendents that was invited (all expenses paid) to attend. I am sure I will enjoy this tour of Newport a lot more than the [1990 tour](#).

While at the high school I also visited [Mrs. Bonita Gonzalez's](#) English classroom and Mrs. [Lauren Cardenas'](#) Math room. Observing them incorporate the Venue Pros (student laptops) into their instruction reassures me that we are providing our students with the [latest](#) and [greatest](#) instructional methodologies. Mrs. Gonzalez indicated that her "kids bring them every day like textbooks... All reports and essays are turned in via [www.Edmodo.com](#). The tablet makes it so much easier to grade essays by allowing me to annotate on the actual document without modifying their work. They are able to see my comments instantly. No paper."

In closing this blog I would like to encourage all of our teachers to keep up the great work. Let's remind our students that they once again get a fresh start - the beginning of the second six weeks. Thank you for all that you do.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more,
you are a leader. - John Quincy Adams*