

May 26, 2015

Our seniors are counting down the days towards "freedom." My daughter, [Corina Leah](#), reminded me today that she only has four days left of high school. Wow! How the year has flown by. It seems like it was just last week that our teachers were engaged in summer staff development and the administration was busy prepping a budget that would provide for all our needs. However, the reality is that almost ten months filled with lots of activity have flown by.

While these last ten months have been filled with lots of activity, I want to reassure everyone that through your perseverance we have built a foundation upon which we will celebrate the most meaningful educational reform our students and community are deserving of. Just this week we received our preliminary STAAR scores. While we are still waiting for our 5th and 8th grade retesting results, we can already guarantee significant increases. Although it is too early to declare that none of our schools will be "in need of improvement", it is absolutely clear that we have made tremendous improvement.

Our formula for reform is simple. Provide a meaningful curriculum by which to set a high standard for student performance; follow a planning process (Planning Protocol) which ensures adherence to a dynamic teaching and learning process; and provide teachers meaningful staff development by which they can improve upon that dynamic process. We are absolutely on our way towards full implementation of this three step instructional reform. This past week I was pleased to witness the tremendous amount of work involved in the [curriculum review process](#) – our curriculum documents become more meaningful each day. I am also enthusiastic with the staff development provided this past summer and even more excited with the staff development that is planned for the next couple of months. Finally, I am thrilled to have witness implementation of Step 5 of the Planning Protocol throughout the year. I am certain that our academic achievement gains have much to do with the guided teaching practices implemented throughout our District.

I want to dedicate the remainder of this blog to praise some of the end of year activities I have had the pleasure of enjoying. I want to first start by congratulating the teachers and administration at Garfield for putting on an awesome [Mother's Day celebration](#). It was wonderful to see students performing for their mothers and clearly sending the message that school is about Reading and Math, but also about raising kids to love their mothers. Very nice!

For the first time since I have been superintendent, I was able to join our cadets at their end of the year banquet and awards ceremony. [Lt. Col. Benavides](#) and his [cadets](#) put on a tremendous evening. It was especially impressive to see so many organizations travel so far (from Corpus Christi and the Hill Country) to come honor our cadets.

Although I do not have favorites and hate to compare, I have to say that the elementary choir teachers out did themselves this year! Their choir show was sensational. Our students showed [elegance](#) as they represented their schools, and were entirely impressive as they performed their rendition of [Annie](#) and [Grease](#)! I can't say enough about their show!

How about our band; they go strong the entire year. From marching at football games, to marching competition, to stage competition to multiple shows. I can't say enough about each of our band students that dedicates so much to [developing their talents](#), making [beautiful sounds](#), [working as one](#), and [building school pride](#). You are the Mighty Ram Band!

Although the end of the year shows are always filled with [talent](#) and [enjoyment](#), the part I find the most meaningful is where [senior students](#) and their parents are honored. It is heartwarming to see evidence of shared interest between the parent and school. This is one reason why our country is entirely awesome!

In closing this blog, I want to congratulate everyone for a wonderful school year, most especially those 48 individuals who were honored with their retirement ceremony this past school year. A special thank you to the [choir](#) who performed beautifully for our retirees. Although there are too many to mention, I did want to highlight just a couple, [Mr. Art Muraira](#) & [18-Mr. Celedon](#), that were in the classroom when I was a student. Although they may not have been my teachers, their presence was known and through their visible dedication, created a sense of comfort for the organization. Congratulations to each of our retirees and as the Navy saying goes – Fair Winds and Following Seas!

A man does what he must – in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures – and that is the basis of all human morality – John F. Kennedy