

**August 25, 2014**

[Welcome back!](#) The 2014/2015 school year promises to be exciting and fast paced. Our teachers have spent endless hours preparing for this school year and our students have been completely engaged over the summer and during these past couple of weeks as they prepare for their return. Just noting the performances at our [Convocation](#), our [ROTC](#), [marching band](#), [mariachi](#), [jazz band](#), [cheerleaders](#), [choir](#) and [drill teams](#) are in full swing. Our [football](#) and [cross country](#) teams already have their first competition this coming weekend, and our [volleyball](#) girls have already engaged in multiple tournaments. Not to mention the numerous students that participated in various [camps](#) over the summer.

For our [students](#), just like our [staff](#), the start of the school year indicates a new beginning, and with new beginnings comes lots of excitement. Students displayed their excitement this past week as they participated in large numbers at the various campus orientations and other traditional back to school activities. I was pleased to see so many students attend the High School Orientation this past week. Although the lines were long, it is nice to know that students will have correct schedules, and that their electronic devices have been issued and will be ready for use on the first day of school. Thank you to our technology department and to Dr. Zuniga-Barrera and her entire staff for their hard work.

In preparing to write this week's blog I did two things: First, I spent some time driving around town visiting our schools on Sunday evening and then, I came home and read the final blog of the 2013/2014 school year. I want to thank all the teachers that dedicated such a large portion of their weekend to ensure that their hallways and classrooms were ready for the first day of school. Officer Galata, our night patrol officer, reported to me that teachers at Buena Vista, Garfield, and Chavira Elementary worked past mid-night. Thank you for your dedication to our students.

As I reviewed the last blog I wrote, I was reminded of my encouragement for each of you to attend some summer training. As I think of all the [trainings](#) we had this past week, especially this past summer and the numerous teachers that attended, I cannot help but be entirely grateful and completely excited about the success we, and our students, will enjoy this year. Our high school teachers supported our 1:1 initiative by building a pool of knowledgeable staff (Trainer of Trainers model) that have already helped other teachers become more familiar with how to integrate technology in everyday teaching. So many of our teachers attended the ABYDOS Writing Institute that was held over the summer. Teachers in the ABYDOS training gave up three weeks of their summer to learn how to integrate reading and writing as well as become better writers themselves. A copy of each published anthology can be found at each campus that participated. I encourage you to read some of their writings. All of them are as exciting as this excerpt below.

"Coach Fern, did you always want to become *just* a teacher?" The infamous question reopens a deeply stitched, but superficial wound that pained me for years up until fairly recently. But every time I am now lucky enough to answer this question, I connect the dots that led me to my destiny:

*Excerpt from Diamond Dreams  
Ori Fernandez*

Other elementary teachers attended the [LETRS](#) Foundations and Modules 1-3 training to ensure a [unified Early Literacy Program](#), while other teachers attended the Leader in Me training. Your dedication to our students speaks volumes.

Finally, I want to welcome all of the [new teachers](#) and administrators who have chosen to make SFDRICISD their home. Our Human Resource Department was able to recruit Del Rio natives who recently finished their college away from Del Rio and have now returned to serve their community, as well as other educators who have job experiences in places as near as Eagle Pass and as distant as New Mexico. Thank you for choosing to make Del Rio your home and most especially for the hard work you will dedicate to our students.

*"If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes." - Andrew Carnegie*