

March 6, 2016

On Sunday afternoon I took advantage of the beautiful weather and went on a slow, but long run with my daughter. Over the course of the run, I enjoyed my company and spent time thinking about the many teacher and student accomplishments I had witnessed over the past two weeks. These thoughts, as wonderful as they were, immediately reminded me that we are in the middle of the Spring Semester. During this time of the year, we enjoy Track, Soccer, decide on a guest speaker for graduation, congratulate those who have announced their retirement (but worry about how we will replace them), and begin to plan for the coming school year. Spring is absolutely in the air!

Before I go any further, I want to highlight an absolute profound experience I had during my visit at DRMS last Tuesday. Accompanied by Chief Maldonado, I took the liberty of walking into various classrooms. One classroom which I absolutely enjoyed is Mrs. Maria Sigley's classroom – both instructionally and aesthetically. I enjoyed to such a degree that I can easily label her classroom as the model classroom for our entire District. Chief Maldonado's first question as we walked out of her room was, "Do teachers get money to buy decorations for their rooms?" I answered, "Not those type of decorations. She has probably accumulated these over the past few years." She has absolutely taken incredible pride in the appearance of her classroom and ensured it is conducive to creating the best learning environment possible.

While the decorations provided a feeling of comfort, the visible student engagement was clearly on point! One hundred percent of her students were engaged in their work both independently and in a small group. Mrs. Sigley sat with the small group of students providing the extra support we have been encouraging through Step 5 of the Planning Protocol – guided learning practices – both at the elementary and secondary level. I reluctantly interrupted a student and asked her "Is this an advanced class?" The student responded, "This is 8th grade math." Awesome job Mrs. Sigley!

This past week I also stopped by Ms. Layne's English IV class at DRHS to congratulate Amiah Parson on her track and field accomplishments. She and her fellow classmates were so engaged with their writing that I didn't feel I could disrupt the class. Therefore, through this blog I want to congratulate Amiah Parson, a Junior, for setting a new High Jump record for Del Rio High School. On Saturday, February 27, Amiah cleared 5' 7" on her first attempt at the Uvalde Invitational meet. With this jump, she broke a 23 year old High Jump record previously held by Michelle Ricks. Congratulations to Michelle Ricks for setting such an awesome standard and congratulations to Amiah for rising up to the challenge.

Along the lines of rising to the occasion, it gives me great pleasure to dedicate some words to each of the following individuals for their dedication and career accomplishments while working for SFDRCSID. During our past District Leadership meeting, we paused and acknowledged some of our esteemed District Leaders who have declared their intention to retire this year. After 33 years of service Mr. Juan Nañez, Fine Arts Director, is choosing to retire. Mr. Nañez was lucky enough to make a career out of his hobby, and he absolutely enjoyed his ride. He was a high school band student, a high school band director, and a Fine Arts Director for the District. Congratulations to him! Also retiring after 43 years of service is the 2002 Texas Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Marta Galindo. Mrs. Galindo probably holds the record for being the most requested teacher by parents and students. For many years she set the bar high enough for modeling high-quality teacher and student expectations. Because of educators like her, we have a much better District. Congratulations to all our retirees!

In closing this blog, I can't help but reflect on the inspiring work of our students and staff. Webster defines spring as "to come into being, rise, or arise within a short time". Certainly, there is much to attest to that. I want to wish everyone a successful week and a wonderful Spring Break. Each and every one of you is absolutely deserving of the rest and relaxation that comes with this much anticipated week.

"When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts." – Dalai Lama