

Monday, May 13, 2013

Returning to Del Rio as superintendent has been as exciting and as rewarding as my family and I always imagined. Everyone has been welcoming and congratulatory remarks have been in abundance. Although this week has been special, I must say that visiting the classrooms of teachers who taught me as a student has been extra special.

When I was brought on board as superintendent I promised to hit the ground running. I believe this is exactly what has occurred. During my first two days (Monday & Tuesday) I was able to visit most campuses and reacquaint myself with the district. Most importantly I was able to briefly provide the principals with an overview of the instructional direction we should move in. During the campus visits, I was impressed with so many new buildings in the district; I especially liked the gymnasium at Chavira Elementary and was entirely impressed with the completed construction at Lamar Elementary.

During the days that followed there were meetings with principals, cabinet members, families, and different community members. Each provided an important insight and enriched my first week's experience. There are two topics which were discussed during these meetings that I believe are worth detailing in these notes. The first topic is the notion of shared accountability for student success amongst all employees in the district. I hope I have made it clear that to increase student achievement we must rely on each other's combined expertise, understand that no individual decision can be perfect, and that only in discussing and sharing our expertise can we arrive at solutions for long lasting student success. The next topic has to do with the district's bilingual program. While there are different settings for serving bilingual students in an early transition early exit model, it should be made clear that a self-contained setting is not our default plan. This does mean that we will have to quickly explore strategies for certifications and staffing. However, we are committed to exploring and investing in options that will yield the strongest student success.

Throughout the week I had the opportunity to enjoy some student presentations. On Tuesday I enjoyed a theater production by Ms. Raquel Martine's first period Theater Production class - The Wizard of Oz. Under the direction of students Louis Zylka and Jennifer Pacheco, the theater was truly brought to life and clearly demonstrated the caliber of students we have in our school system. Wednesday I had the opportunity to join Mr. Roger Gonzalez, CTE Director, and all of the community members who are participating in the CTE Advisory Committee. We are thankful for the insight provided by the CTE Advisory Committee and look forward to continuously updating our programs to industry standards. Saturday night my family and I enjoyed the Fine Arts Dance Show at the Paul Poag Theater. Under the direction of Mrs. Diana L. Rodriguez, Ms. Brittney Brandenberger, Ms. Monica Favela, and Ms. Kayla Lopez, our

students performed over 20 routines. The costumes, choreography and performances were incredible. I doubt there was better entertainment to be found anywhere in the Queen City.

In closing I want to congratulate two of our employees and one of our board members who completed the yearlong Leadership Del Rio program. Mrs. Laura J. English and Dr. Diana Aguirre, along with Mr. Joshua D. Overfelt (school board secretary) became proud members of Del Rio Leadership Class of 2013. Attending their graduation banquet was both a treat and an opportunity to continue to become reacquainted with the many programs our fine community has to offer.

*"There are countless ways of achieving greatness, but any road to achieving one's maximum potential must be built on a bedrock of respect for the individual, a commitment to excellence, and a rejection of mediocrity." - Buck Rodgers*