

September 2, 2014

After a fast-paced first week of our new year, a three day weekend hopefully was enjoyable and restful for each of you. This weekend I spent some time reflecting on the summer activities. I thought a lot about how worrisome the summer months were for District personnel as they worked on setting up summer professional development. I recalled thinking about halfway through the summer that the new school year would soon be upon us. I worried about all the training that was being planned for and implemented; the launching of our 1:1 computing initiative, as well as the budget, construction, and hiring of all our new teachers. This past week, all the worries and concerns were put to rest. There is nothing better than seeing our teachers and our students make our hallways and classrooms come to life.

I started the week by visiting our [Freshman Campus](#). In the last couple of weeks of the summer we were inspired by Board Member, Amy Haynes, to give the Freshman Campus a [face lift](#) and I wanted to see the results. [Wow!](#) What a difference! Thank you to Ms. Haynes for all the [great ideas](#) and to Mr. Mike Salinas for making it happen in such a short time. Next, I visited the High School. Not only did I want to see our Flag Ship in operation, I also needed to deposit money in my own children's meal account. I hope [Corina](#) and [Orlando](#) eat well. As long as I was at the high school, [Mrs. Corbel](#) was nice enough to invite me to be a guest speaker on the first day of school. I thoroughly enjoyed my conversation with her students. Although every part of my day was reassuring, I was especially pleased to join Principal Mrs. Cindy Salas, and our board members for the ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open our [Buena Vista Gymnasium](#).

On Tuesday and Wednesday I made it a point to visit as many campuses as possible, and especially made it a point to visit some of our new teachers. At North Heights Elementary I was completely amazed with the cleanliness of the building and the [bulletin boards](#) were hard to miss. They clearly had a [nursery rhyme theme](#). I was especially impressed with one of our new teachers, [Miss Monica Aguirre](#). She had her classroom ready to go and had a clear command of her job. Hmm... Maybe she comes from a family of educators? Not to be outdone by North Heights was Lonnie Green Elementary. Their bulletin boards had a [super hero theme](#). They even took time to focus on one of our new district initiatives – [The Leader in Me](#). Lonnie Green Principal, Mrs. Jane Villarreal, was gracious enough to take me to [Miss Amanda Perez'](#) room. While she is new to the campus, she is clearly an asset. Welcome aboard!

The two highlights of the week came on Thursday. We started off by celebrating our second high school summer [graduation](#) and concluded with our [community](#) pep rally. It was uplifting to see so many family members of our graduates join in the [celebration](#). A huge thank you to our newest High School Assistant Principal, [Mr. Israel Carrera](#), for delivering the commencement address and to [Mr. Meza](#), District Trustee, for presenting our graduates with their diplomas.

The community pep rally provided a glimpse of so many [students in action](#) (the [drum line](#) always gets everyone going), and provided an opportunity for different [groups](#) from our [community](#) to come together and celebrate our [Ram Spirit](#). The [little cheerleaders](#) and [middle school teams](#) sent a clear message that our community will always have the pep rally leaders – our [cheerleaders](#). Comments from the community clearly indicated that they were pleased with the performances of our Cheerleaders, [Belles](#), and [Dance Company](#). Not new to the community pep rally scene, but definitely in new positions are [Ms. B. De Leon](#) and [Coach Smith](#). I appreciate their energy and am sure they will fill the big shoes of those that came before them.

The week ended with a family trip to San Angelo to see our [football team](#), band, Belles, and cheerleaders in action. Although our team fell a bit short of a victory, the crowds' opinion was unanimous – our kids are showing a lot of promise. I usually do not like to highlight individual players, yet I want to share that even the announcer from San Angelo was impressed with [Shane Creamer, #87](#). This young man took some hard hits after catching the ball but never seemed to drop it. There is much talent and heart in this young man!

In closing this blog I want to thank everyone for a successful week and especially to encourage each teacher that attended staff development to be mindful of what was learned during this past summer. Whether it was reading, writing, math, or the Leader in Me training, rest assure that our students need and are counting on you and your new skill set. Let's have a great year!

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." – Henry Ford