

**September 29, 2014**

As I look at the calendar I am reminded of two exciting yet at the same time inescapable realities. First, the days sure have gone by fast! Second, whether we are ready or not the holidays will be upon us before we know it. This week marks the beginning of the Halloween month – October; then comes Thanksgiving; and before you know it the winter holidays will be upon us.

As fast as the clock has ticked, I am excited for what we have accomplished and what lies ahead. For example, this past week our Board of Trustees and some Central Office Administrators attended our annual Texas Association of School Board conference in Dallas. During one of the sessions I had the opportunity to share some thoughts, and then exchanged some text messages with [Michael Williams](#), our Commissioner of Education.

*... In just a year we have won two competitive grants - even though we don't have a grant writer; launched an early literacy initiative, writing initiative, and electronic curriculum repository for locally developed curriculum and resources; and a 1:1 computing initiative. All of these initiatives are supported through a daily common planning session and process we call The Planning Protocol – Beginning with the End in Mind. In addition, our Board has appropriated \$25 million for the construction of a CTE Magnet and an Early College High school. All of this has been made possible through purposeful decisions and lots of collaboration. Even though we still have a ways to go, our blue print for success has been laid out and we are on our way...*

While at the conference I also had the opportunity to congratulate the Superintendent of Laredo ISD, [Dr. A. Marcus Nelson](#), as he was named the Superintendent of the Year for the State of Texas. I can't think of anyone more deserving of this honor and I am proud he has been a friend and mentor to me. Awesome job!

Before leaving to Dallas, we had an extremely valuable and often times exciting 3 days. On Tuesday and Wednesday I visited with small groups of teachers at [Calderon](#) Elementary and Buena Vista Elementary. Each of the groups was represented by hard working teachers who were willing to share some of their concerns. We want our teachers to know that their expressed concerns help shape our course of action and most importantly our allocation of resources. It was made clear that we need to hire more technicians to keep up with our growing needs and to address the outdated technology equipment at our elementary schools. I guarantee you we will have a plan of action within a very short time.

Although I did not get to attend our Friday night activities at Walter Leverman Stadium, I did have an opportunity to participate with DRMS students on Tuesday and Wednesday. Tuesday I enjoyed watching our DRMS [volleyball](#) girls in action and Wednesday I attended a [football](#) game. I must admit that when I walked onto DRMS on Wednesday I got the feeling of being at a [carnival](#). Besides being very [well attended](#), the [Pom Team](#) set up an elaborate, and highly enjoyable concession stand. Not only did they wow the crowd with their phenomenal [dancing skills](#), they also served up a [darn good burger](#) and [funnel](#) cake for desert. Congratulations to Mrs. [Kayla Lopez](#) and her parent supporters.

Another highlight of last week was the opportunity to join [Calderon Elementary students](#) and our high school students ([class of 2016](#)) as they listened to a comedian and motivational speaker, [David Garcia](#). Mr. Garcia graciously included Del Rio in his [Live the Dream](#) tour which encompassed the entire Texas – Mexico border. His message was clear, "what has happened and what may happen are small and insignificant in relation to the inner strength each of us has within us."

Before leaving for Dallas, I stopped by the Civic Center and addressed a young group of leaders participating in the "Leaders R Us Workshop for [Student Council](#) Officers and Advisors". It was nice to see our Del Rio students flanked by Student Council members from Uvalde and Eagle Pass. It was especially nice to see four of our campuses ([Dr. Lonnie Green](#), [Garfield](#), [North Heights](#), and [Ruben Chavira](#)) be recognized by the National Association of Elementary School Principals for their outstanding efforts and hard work.

In closing this blog I want to highlight the work our Instructional Coaches engaged in this past week. Our [Instructional Coaches](#) dedicated some time to working alongside consultants, sharing their daily tasks and learned how to make the best of planning sessions. Most importantly, they dedicated valuable time in discussing and developing the mentoring process for teachers. Part of the process included coming together to learn from one another's experiences and set immediate goals. We know that enhancing our coaches' skills in the mentoring process will yield successful practices with each campus. Let's keep working together to make this district the best ever.

*Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting their own hard battle. – Plato*