

January 20, 2017

Today my daughter and her friends boarded a bus (loaded with [middle](#) and [high](#) school cheerleaders) taking them to cheerleading competition in Dallas. I am certain that they are enjoying the trip and some [quasi-healthy food](#) on the road. We wish them the best luck, lots of fun and a safe return.

After the cheerleader send-off, I joined the attendance [celebrations](#) going on at Lonnie Green Elementary, [Cardwell](#) and [SFMMS](#). Lonnie Green received, from [Buena Vista](#) Elementary, the highest attendance trophy for the third six weeks. Way to Go, [Lonnie Green!!!](#) The competition amongst the campuses has seen the trophy travel from NHE to BVE, and now resides at [LG](#) Elementary. I wonder which school will be the first to keep it for two consecutive six weeks.

The next attendance celebration stop was at Cardwell. Our youngest students in the District, and their teachers, received the most improved attendance trophy. We are so proud of the encouragement and effort these students receive from their parents to come to school each and every day. It takes a lot of energy and lots of caring. Great Job Cardwell Cubs! Unfortunately, my schedule did not allow me to join the team at SFMMS. I want to congratulate them for their continued [success](#) and encourage their continued efforts.

This week I was pleased to know that [Coach Hefner](#), our girls' basketball coach reached an incredible milestone in his career. He reached his 1000th win as a coach. This milestone (which only a few coaches across the country can claim), came as our girls traded baskets with San Antonio Southwest. The game was exciting and a bit scary until about the third quarter. I was happy for Coach Hefner and happier to know that it happened in our gym and with our girls. [Congratulations Coach!](#)

I am extremely appreciative and sometimes can't believe the tremendous amount of community involvement in our schools, especially this time of year. Our elementary teachers and students have been super busy completing, displaying and explaining their [science fair](#) projects to many community members who have volunteered to be judges. [Mrs. Rizo](#) at North Heights and [Mrs. Melissa Neuman](#) at Lonnie Green indicated that approximately 12 and 27 [community volunteers](#) (respectively) participated in the judging. When we consider how many campuses we have, we can begin to understand the level of support we have from our community. I too was pleased to have an opportunity to [view](#) and judge many of the projects. I wonder if the one I scored the highest will win. Many thanks to Mrs. Rizo, Mrs. Neuman and all of the teachers who coordinated the science fairs at their campuses. We can only imagine the amount of work and tremendous amounts of hours that are involved.

This week we also finalized the Facilities Improvement Citizen's Committee process. This committee met over ten times and additionally visited many campus facilities and sites throughout the District. All their work will culminate in a presentation to our Board on January 25, 2017. I hope many of you will join us during the board workshop and become informed as to the construction needs of our school district and the possibility of having a bond election to fund these projects.

I want to take a few moments to talk about school safety and especially about perceptions of our school safety. First, I want to acknowledge that we live in a world where concerns, emotions, and frustrations exist. These feelings sometimes result in threats and even some violent actions on the part of individuals. Yet, I also want us to acknowledge that we have people and systems in place that are designed and trained to deal with these threats. The threats we experienced before the holiday break, whether they were real or intended to create drama, were swiftly dealt with because courageous students informed the campus administration. The administrators, in turn, worked with our police department to thoroughly investigate and address the matters. Unfortunately we did not communicate what had occurred to the community, and as a result, a lot of misinformation was created and glamorized.

To improve student awareness about our systems, we have designed a presentation which we will ask our teachers to share. I want to thank the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council for reviewing this presentation and offering significant ways of improving the presentation. I am hopeful that our secondary students will become aware of the importance of reporting matters, understand the gravity of promoting false information and appreciate the systems which have been created for their safety.

I want to close this blog by highlighting some [awesome teaching](#) at [Garfield](#) Elementary. Having visited our elementary schools implementing the Power Hour initiative, I can say with a high degree of confidence that the grade levels responsible for state accountability are doing a tremendous job with our reading initiative. Until I visited Garfield, I was worried about the success rate our reading initiative would have in the lower grades. The second grade teachers at Garfield put on a [reading workshop](#) on a daily basis. The students know the teacher's systems, they are [engaged](#) and are being challenged with high expectations each day. Learning is occurring at high levels!

**"It is not the beauty of a building you should look at; it is the construction of the Foundation that will stand the test of time."
— David Allen Coe**