

February 3, 2015

Working day in and day out, clocking in many hours per day, sometimes becomes so much of a routine that we tend to forget the need for reflection in our practices. Last week was one that took me down memory lane to my good old Navy days. I am specifically referring to our traditional "Hale and Farewell" celebrations. Traditionally, the appearance of a new officer on board a ship indicated the departure of another officer. This last week as I checked with principals regarding the distribution of the teacher computer [workstations](#), I was reminded that this was the last week for my Chief Technology Officer – [Mr. Casillas](#). As we celebrated his [career](#) and retirement, we were reminded that Mr. Casillas began his work with this District as an Instructional Aide, then Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, and eventually a part of the Central Administration [team](#).

During his Farewell celebration, Mr. Casillas noted that through it all, the most meaningful part of his career was as a teacher. He recalled how many of his former students have gone on to further their education and now returned to our community as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and even superintendents. Mr. Casillas' career is a prime example of the power of continued education. [Congratulations](#) Mr. Casillas!

Reflecting on this past week's activities, which ranged from [principal meetings](#) to sporting [activities](#), to campus visits, reminds me of how [exciting](#) our jobs are on a daily basis. I am thankful that part of my job involves seeing [students](#) participate in the whole [school program](#). It is especially rewarding to see how significant one student's [participation](#) causes others to build [school spirit](#).

However, it also reminds me of the long hours each one of us works. These days are especially difficult because we enter a long stretch of work days where we begin to consume ourselves with thoughts of assessments, no rest days until Spring Break, and possible changes for next year. It is essential that we always take care of each other, but especially during the months of February and March.

In order to serve our students in a manner that is significant, we have to lift ourselves and each other to higher levels on a daily basis. We have to be willing and able to show our genuine concern for each other. I encourage you to commit to daily fellowship with your colleagues and that this time of fellowship be dedicated to conversations that cause you to smile and not stress. Perhaps you can take turns preparing a lunch to be shared or a nice healthy dessert.

To wrap up the week, I stopped by C&I to visit with the Instructional Coaches (ICs). The work this group of individuals dedicates to curriculum and instruction, their own [professional](#) development, and the turnaround training to their colleagues is monumental for improving student success across our District. Partnering with teachers to help them find better ways to reach more students is one of many tasks our ICs partake in. The focus this second semester is one that can be seen as a transition from teacher support to direct student support through the means of this partnership.

If there is one thing to carry away from the task at hand, it is that the job of improving students' instruction is always evolving. We have to be cognizant that what we did last year may look different from what we did last semester, to what we journey into this semester and so on up the ladder of school reform/transformation. Thank you to our entire District's instructional team for being "momentum makers" through it all. I greatly appreciate your dedication to the success of our students.

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. – John F. Kennedy