

Monday, May 20, 2013

I have always told students and teachers that we are in the business of teaching and learning. Our goal is to engage our students in the type of learning that will allow them to compete and win once they leave our hallways and classrooms. As serious as this task is, I also remind teachers and students that we should have fun accomplishing our task. Throughout this past week, I had the opportunity to see students engaged in rigorous learning and having fun! Our school district is on the right track and I am proud to be the Superintendent.

The evenings of this past week were filled with incredible fine arts performances. The district's middle school and high school mariachi groups performed at the Paul Poag Theater on Monday. Tuesday evening brought A Night of Jazz, followed by a Choir Concert on Wednesday, a mega band concert on Thursday, and finally a Band Banquet on Friday. Although individual students were impressive in their own right, what was most remarkable was the number of students participating in our extracurricular activities and the passion that ensued in their performances. It's important to make note that the amount of parent support available to the students surpasses our expectations. I believe I saw members of the Band Booster organization each night at each of the activities. Wow! The formula for success is evident: We start with fine Del Rio students, mix in energetic and gifted instructors, and add in parental love and support.

I also had the opportunity to visit some classrooms this past week. Congratulations to Mrs. Cathy Mejia's first grade classroom at Lamar Elementary. Seeing first grade students as orderly as this group was and reading with such confidence indicates a bright future for our community. As we walked out of the classroom, the principal and I commented on the importance of developing early literacy and how lucky these students are to have Mrs. Mejia.

In between meetings, classrooms visits, and evenings at the Paul Poag Theater I was able to visit the GT Fair at North Heights Elementary and Calderon Elementary. Abigail Perches, a fifth grade student at Calderon showed me a robot that she and her GT partner, Joel, had designed and programmed. Their GT teacher, Mrs. Meck-Fortunato indicated to me that the middle school robotics teacher, John Reed, has encouraged all elementary schools to have robotics clubs and compete with each other. Abigail and her fellow students are clearly being offered learning opportunities at Calderon Elementary that are preparing them for success. Congratulations to Mr. Reed, Mrs. Meck-Fortunato and all the teachers who are supporting by further advancing our students.

Next, and to close out this blog, I want to introduce a concept that will guide our teaching and learning reform efforts through the next school year, ***A Planning Protocol ~ Beginning with the End in Mind***. Although my goal is not to change any current, successful practices, I want to ensure the development of each lesson is guided by a process that will produce consistent,

rigorous and engaging lessons. In the next couple of weeks we will be discussing this planning process with our principals, planning staff development and ensuring that we have the appropriate structures to support full implementation. I will encourage principals to further elaborate on this process during their faculty meetings. My pledge to our teachers is that this Planning Protocol will not hurt and will not take additional time from your families. More importantly, I pledge this to be the only instructional reform effort. We will be focused and not be distracted. Let's have a great week at San Felipe Del Rio CISD.

"Spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours and ages that will follow it." - Ralph Waldo Emerson