

February 23, 2015

On Sunday evening my family and I went to the movies and watched McFarland USA. In short this movie, which is based on a true story, is about the challenges a group of students faced and a science teacher/coach that pushed them beyond what they ever believed they would be capable of. Based on the attendance over the weekend, I assume everyone has been pleased with the storyline. As I watched the movie, I couldn't help but think about a connection from the story line to our own District challenges. More importantly, I thought about the real potential in each of us, through our work with students, to make this community a better place. I am cognizant that significant improvement always involves our teachers doing something different and therefore involves creating discomfort amongst those we depend on the most. However, I am hopeful that each of us will take time to understand the need for everything we must do and share a vision for providing each and every student a future worth telling.

I want to dedicate this blog to highlighting some pretty exciting student activities that I either witnessed (like that overtime [soccer shootout victory](#)) or heard about; as well as briefly discussing some programs our Board recently approved. First I want to share with you that the Texas Association of Soccer Coaches (TASC) has awarded All State Academic Recognition to two of our female athletes. Congratulations to [Marisa Yvette Cortinas](#) and [Kristen Nicole Torres](#) for their commitment in the classroom and on the field. Awesome job ladies!

I also want to share that our [Girls Varsity Basketball team](#) has reached the third round of State basketball playoffs. After [easily winning](#) in Laredo earlier in the week, our ladies went on to win a [nail biter](#) at the Durbin Center in San Antonio, TX this past Friday against Weslaco High School. Our girls, supported by their [classmates](#) who just happened to be in town for a softball tournament, held off a pretty dynamic team. As before, it was nice to see them so [graceful](#) in [victory](#). Best of luck to them as they travel to San Antonio Steele where they will face their nemesis – United South.

Beyond sports our students continue to excel in [CTE](#) and other academic competitions. For example, [Mr. Todd Townsend](#) will once again take his team of student welders to yet another State competition. It is always a pleasure to see how hard Mr. Townsend's students work. I bet if you happen to drive by their shop late on any given day or weekend you will be sure to see them still working.

How about our Middle School Academic UIL teams... I am sure there are some districts out there (although I know of none) that routinely take their kids to out of town weekend competitions where they stay in nice hotels, eat fast food, and let the state of Texas know about the academic prowess. This past weekend was no exception to their perennial championship existence. Our Middle School UIL students have brought more championships to our community than any other organization I know of. A visit to an Algebra I class at DRMS found various [first place winners](#) (Emilia Reyes, Alexandra Klay, Betty Lea, Akaza Flores, Michelle Ansic, Aaron Escort, Anissa Vasquez). Congratulations to a fine group of students and academic coaches.

Speaking of Middle School UIL, I want to take this opportunity to thank [Mrs. Griselda Martinez](#), long time Middle School UIL Director and Coach, for all her hard work and dedication to our school and students. Griselda has decided to retire this year and we wish her the best of luck. Enjoy your retirement knowing you have already improved the lives of so many students.

As I celebrate the [accomplishments](#) of many of our students I am always wondering how is it that so many of our students reach the pinnacles of [public education](#), yet others stay far behind. To many the answer is as simple as pointing to the home environment. Yet I refuse to believe that our students and teachers are predisposed to low levels of student achievement, especially when we have the opportunity to spend as much time with our students as our students spend in their home environment.

As optimistic as I am for the future of all our [students](#), I am equally certain that the cost of high expectations is ultimately paid by those who believe in our students. In advance, I praise you for your commitment to our students and thank you for your work and sacrifice.

Over the next couple of months we will be preparing to implement a new approach to our [bilingual program](#), rezoning our [elementary attendance zones](#), launching a new approach to [textbooks](#), and opening a Non-Traditional School – [Blended Academy](#). Each and every one of these programs is designed to give our students an edge on life and ultimately improve our community as a whole.

In the near future I will be making my way to each of the campuses to discuss these programs as well as listen to your ideas of other areas we still need to improve upon. I hope that in the meantime each of you will take time to view the attached PowerPoint presentations of the programs being implemented. Thank you again for your dedication to our students, the future of our community.

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.
– Martin Luther King, Jr.