

October 28, 2014

For most of us, Mondays tend to be a day different from most others. It being a Monday of a School Board Meeting usually makes for a long and sometimes worrisome day, especially as we prepare for the meeting and some potentially difficult questions. This Monday, however, was not typical. Even though we had plenty of agenda items, we were mostly excited about the opportunity to recognize our principals. It was nice to see one educator from each campus come to the podium and say some pretty amazing things about their Principal. I have often said that the Yellow Pages are filled with many doctors and lawyers and lots of other professions, but in most communities there are only a handful of principals who are entrusted with so much – the education of our communities most precious resources. Thank **You!** To each of our **principals** for everything that **you** do!

If you haven't noticed, Tuesdays are filled with middle school and high school activities, and although they usually tend to be long, the excitement shared on this day couldn't be any better. I was so thrilled to see so many **teachers** at both the middle school and the high school events. I even ran into teachers serving at the McDonald's on Gibbs Street as part of a **McTeacherNight** fundraiser. Kudos to the teachers who make it known to their students that they care as much about the student as they care about the student's learning. There is definitely a special place in our hearts for our teachers.

The highlight of Tuesday night, and probably the week, has to go to our Queens Volleyball team. After a hard fought five game **battle** before a **packed** house, our girl's defeated the Laredo United Lady Longhorns. When the last point was earned the **students** who had been hoping and cheering for the victory joined the **celebration**. For the first time in Del Rio High School Volleyball history our **Girls' Volleyball team** will hold a piece of the District Championship.

Although Wednesday was quite the administrative day, there are three items worth highlighting. First, the district's financial adviser secured a 2.76% interest rate for refinancing of the Series 2005 Bond debt. The new interest rate translates to a net interest savings of \$2,179,308 or approximately \$185,034 per year. Not a bad deal for our taxpayers! Next, I met with a group named SCAN (Serving Children and Adolescents in Need). SCAN has committed to providing counseling services to our SGLC students (and their parents) and to some of our fifth and sixth grade students. We would love to be able to provide additional counselors for each campus, but in the absence of long term funding, we are thrilled to have an organization like SCAN provide these additional services. Finally, I was able to stop by the Freshman Campus and visit some Biology classrooms. It appears that students in Mr. Santillan's class are making use of their **laptops**. Good job Mr. Santillan!

The best part of working past the dismissal bell, is knowing that teaching and learning doesn't just occur during school hours. At Del Rio Middle School I witnessed some pretty amazing middle school **students** participating in the *Def Poetry Jam - Believe in the Possibilities*. It was awesome to see so many students reading some original and inspiring pieces of Poetry; and especially nice to see so many parents in attendance.

Thursday morning I took a break from the prep work for the Citizen's Committee meeting (which will begin analyzing the construction needs for the district beginning this week) to stop by the Ford Dealership and receive, on behalf of the booster organizations, a \$6,000 **donation**. Thank you to the Ford Dealership and to everyone who showed up in early September to test drive a Ford. Your time was definitely worth it. Before going home on Thursday evening I was able to enjoy some middle school tennis. It was a pleasure to see the smile on **Ethan's** face as he reported his victory to his coach.

Not having a football game on Friday was a bit unusual for those of us that like participating in the Friday night football activities. Nonetheless, the school day turned out to be very productive. I visited Lamar Elementary and asked the principal to show me something exciting. She immediately took me to Mrs. Villarreal's fifth grade science class where I saw students developing their academic vocabulary. Each time Mrs. Villarreal's [science](#) students demonstrated their understanding of words like "herbivores" and "carnivores" their fellow students clapped for each other. Because Academic Vocabulary is essential to academic success, it was especially nice to see 100% of her students, including early immigrants, demonstrate tremendous success. Every fifth grade science teacher should have the opportunity to observe Mrs. Villarreal. Great Job ma'am!

Before leaving Lamar, I had the opportunity to inspect the new playground [canopies](#) that have been installed at four (Cardwell, Lamar, Lonnie Green, and Ruben Chavira) of our eight elementary campuses. These canopies absolutely add a nice touch to our playgrounds. The remaining four campuses are also scheduled to receive similar canopies this school year.

To close out the week, I started my Saturday by visiting our elementary students participating in the E-Cadet [Robotics](#) competition. According to Mr. Reed, middle school CTE teacher, each elementary school was able to enter four teams consisting of four members per team. Excitement sure was present in the Robotics Arena! Weeks prior to the scrimmage, students worked diligently and built, [programmed](#), and tested their robots. The matches were video streamed, there was a live announcer, and the parents were able to see the competition on a big screen. It was obvious that so many teachers and volunteers worked hard to make this robotics competition a reality for our elementary students.

After the robotics competition, my family and I traveled to Eagle Pass to see our Girls' Volleyball team finish their District season, and then Laredo to see our [football](#) team compete against the United Longhorns. Although each team fell short of a victory, seeing our kids participate has been a tremendous honor and truly enjoyable.

The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand. - Vince Lombardi