

Last week I mentioned in my blog that we, as a District, can develop an educational system that will breed success for each of our students in each of our classrooms. As I reflect on this past week's staff development, intervention workshops, and learning walks, I am pleased to note that so many teachers have been hard at work developing this very same system. On Monday, each one of our teachers engaged in impressive [staff development](#) led by Region XV and our C&I Department. We are thankful that Region XV has partnered with us in such a strong manner. [Teachers](#), along with instructional aides, discussed everything from writing strategies to [differentiation strategies](#) to [formative assessments](#) to [questioning techniques](#). By Tuesday, so many teachers were already working to implement what they had discussed at Monday's Staff Development.

On Tuesday, most of our District's third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers came to the C&I Building for a math intervention [workshop](#) – *Teach Like a STAAR*. Our Instructional Coaches [worked hard](#) to analyze benchmark data; and then worked harder to develop necessary [intervention strategies](#) indicated by the data. Thank you to the teachers for coming to the workshop, especially after having worked a long day with our students. We are clearly on the [right path](#).

On Thursday, the teachers at SFMMS and DRMS experienced their first District Learning Walk. It was all together impressive to hear and see how far our teachers have come in collaborating with each other. We all know that instructional reform takes three to five years to implement, but there is already so much to celebrate. I am going to go out on a limb and predict that each of our schools will see significant improvement from our students this year. However, I am going to go out a little further on the same limb and predict that the middle school students will see the largest increase in achievement this year. Challenge!

As much as I love teaching and learning, I must admit that my job wouldn't be completely meaningful if I didn't get to participate along with students in the total school program. This week I enjoyed traveling to Laredo to see our [Boys' Basketball](#) team compete in the playoffs. Even though they fell just shy of a victory, I felt privileged to be amongst the many [Ram fans](#) that traveled to support our team. On Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Garza and I visited the High School to see our students [getting ready](#) for the [UIL Solo & Ensemble](#) competition. As long as we were at the high school, we took advantage of the nice afternoon and observed some [track](#) and [baseball](#) practices.

Thursday evening, we again stopped by the High School to see CTE students showcase the many career development opportunities to the parents of the rising freshman and sophomore students. Hoping to come across some treats, we first stopped by the [culinary arts room](#), then proceeded to [aircraft maintenance](#), and finished the tour in the [electrical trades](#) classroom. The evening ended at Plaza del Sol where we saw Mr. Cepeda direct our [orchestra](#) students in a concert enjoyed by parents and other lucky shoppers. Our orchestra is preparing for the UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest in San Antonio this coming Wednesday. Best of luck to them!

I usually highlight a teacher as part of my weekly blog. However, this week I want to highlight the Student Services Department. Since the beginning of the school year, they have been hard at work researching, developing, and implementing programs that will soon be part of the everyday life of our students. Most recently they developed a [Drug Awareness](#) PowerPoint to complement the [elementary](#) and [secondary](#) Anti-Bullying training that is already in place. Next, the Student Services Department will be rolling out a leadership program that will be offered to all of our students via the counseling department. It's exciting to know that we will have a district-wide leadership program that will build on the previous year's experiences. Thank you to Mr. Valdez and his entire staff for working so hard to add value to our students' experiences.

With Spring Break just around the corner, I want to encourage everyone to continue to stay focused on the work we started in August. Be proud in knowing that our greatest resource, our students, are deserving of your gifts and talents. I hope you have a great week!

*"Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource." - John F. Kennedy*