

October 12, 2015

Although I started the week on Monday with lots of emails and paperwork, I was able to end the day on a high note. Monday evening I stopped by the Little Theater to observe the new teacher training organized by our C&I Department. It was nice to see new teachers and their mentors enjoy the words of wisdom shared by retired teacher, [Griselda Martinez](#). Mrs. Martinez's words [energized](#) and prepared them to be active participants in an activity that followed. Our teachers learned that given a bag of balloons, when filled with "positive energy" required [team work](#) that was [fun and stimulating](#). But once even a small amount of ["negative energy"](#) was introduced, the work of the team became a more complicated task. Teachers quickly found out that team work is so much more difficult and entirely not enjoyable when weighted down by negative forces. I am hopeful that each of us will be mindful of how profound our verbal contributions to the organization (whether positive or negative) can be.

Although the week's routine did not "ease up" neither did the awesome opportunities to observe our students. On Tuesday evening, while on my way to a volleyball game, I heard beautiful notes coming from Walter Levermann Stadium. I wondered if the football team was possibly practicing to the sounds of concert music. Instead, I found our [Mighty Ram Band](#) practicing late into the night. No wonder they are so [precise](#) and [perfect](#)! Next, I stopped by to see our [volleyball girls](#) dominate their opponents. Although the game was [exciting](#) and culminated with a [victory](#), the most awesome part was seeing our [students](#) and [parents](#) come together and continue to create school pride. Our girls are ending the first round of District play with victories against United South, LBJ and Eagle Pass – absolutely a state playoff team. I encourage you to come out this coming Saturday and support our girls as they take on Alexander.

Wednesday I had the opportunity to visit Cardwell Elementary and catch up with our Elementary Principals during their October Principals' meeting. Although the principals' meeting was encouraging, the real treat was the [Cardwell students](#). I must say that I had quite the "aha" moment. On my way to the meeting, I walked down the Cardwell corridors and saw [students smiling](#) as if they had been accustomed to being in school all their lives. You see, the first day of school I noticed so many students crying and determined not to change their daily routine or leave their comfort zone. Yet this past week students were as [happy](#) as could be, [enjoying](#) every bit of their existence as prekindergarten students. Cardwell students modeled this past week that although change is difficult, it can also be a very good thing. There is absolutely so much to learn from observing the [young and innocent](#) minded students.

Although there are lots of great things happening in our District, I cannot turn a blind eye to other areas that absolutely need improving. While I am overjoyed by the success of many initiatives (construction, ECHS, Blended Academy, Flex Books, etc.), I am also cognizant that areas such as transportation have not been flowing as smoothly as we would all like. This coming week we will hold community forums to discuss some of the implemented transportation improvements and take note of their thoughts and ideas of other possible improvements. I strongly believe that independently each of us can identify shortcomings that perhaps others do not see; but I more importantly believe that collaboratively we can solve any problem, no matter the size. Finally, I wholeheartedly believe that confronting a problem, rather than making excuses or hiding behind a desk, is the first and most important step in arriving at a solution. Therefore, next week we will visit with community members at [Lonnie Green](#), [Calderon](#), and [Lamar](#) elementary. I hope you will encourage community members who have bus riders to attend.

No matter how long and difficult I have of a week, I can always count on the enjoyment of our Friday night activities. This past Friday was no different. Our Rams defended their home turf admirably and our [students](#) and greater community did not shy away from the potential rain. From the energy created by the [band](#) to the [half time entertainment](#) provided by our students, to the [touchdowns](#) on the field, we all had many reasons to [enjoy the evening](#).

Before I close this blog, I want to encourage our teachers to take note of the well-rounded education our students are receiving within our system. While the reading, writing, and rigorous academics are certainly a part of their preparation for their future, so are many other activities they participate in. As I consider what my Class of '85 classmates are engaged in these days and then trace these individuals back to our public school days, I absolutely find one common element – school participation. Some of our fine local doctors were band members (three that I can think of); our leaders in business and industry were athletes (so many to count); our attorneys, law enforcement agents, and educators were absolutely engaged in UIL Academics, sports, National Honor Society and Student Council. In supporting our students' participation in their activities we are absolutely building a stronger community for the future of Del Rio, Texas, and our Country.

**When we are no longer able to change a situation – we are challenged to change ourselves. – Viktor E. Frankl.**