

This past week I was away from the office for more than half of the week. Although I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in my own staff development, I am always eager to return to Del Rio and continue our work. The reoccurring theme in state and national conversations regarding school reform continues to center around technology. Everything and everyone seems to indicate that technology is the tool that will transform learning from a “sit and get” culture to one where students will explore, create, and develop critical thinking skills. Our challenge as educators is to transform a teaching and learning culture where the teacher works the hardest, to one where opportunities are created for students to initiate and collaborate in their own environment and strive to achieve challenging learning opportunities.

I am excited that we have started our 1:1 computing initiative at the Freshman campus and have plans to expand this initiative to our High School. Yet our challenge will be to expand the use of technology – beyond learning software – throughout all our grade levels. Every decision we make in terms of investing the District’s money, whether it be buying textbooks or adjusting/defining job descriptions, must be reflective of these future trends. I am excited for the future of my children and our students.

Returning to Del Rio this weekend I had the opportunity to catch up on email and all the wonderful activities that occurred this past week. Everything from conversations about Early Literacy to making plans for this week’s Exit Assessments at the High School appeared to be highly productive. I was especially pleased to hear about the wonderful Literacy Night at Calderon Elementary.

On Thursday, March 27th, Calderon Elementary Kinder – 2nd grade teachers hosted a Literacy Night for the Calderon family. HEB sponsored this very successful event by offering books for every child in attendance, a spaghetti supper and even bringing [H.E. Buddy](#) for pictures with the students and adults. Approximately [175 people](#) were in attendance for Calderon’s first Literacy Night. Parents and students chose three of seventeen [sessions](#) to attend on various [Early Literacy Topics](#). Parents were taught about [sight words](#), reading with your child at home and how to work with your students in [rhyming words](#). It was good to hear that so many parents were in attendance throughout the night.

I was also pleased to hear - and very thankful- for the progress the [textbook committee](#) has made over the past couple of weeks. The committee has looked through and met with a variety of publishers to select textbooks for K-8 Math, K-8 Technology Applications, K-12 Science and selected CTE courses. Committee members took a vote after they met with clusters/departments to share ideas about purchasing a resource that will be technology driven to support our District 1:1 initiative and push for technology enhancements.

Another initiative that has been high on my priority list is the implementation of a single Early Literacy approach. A quick study by our curriculum department has indicated too many [disjointed efforts](#). As discussed earlier, our approach to Early Literacy has to be singular and widely supported. Our goal is to solidify the practices of our K-2 teachers, who truly are the

foundation of our Reading and Writing success K-12. To this end, we have formed an Early Literacy committee tasked with building a system that strengthens the vertical implementation of this type of initiative. I was pleased to receive reports of their first highly successful meeting and to learn that the committee left energized and ready to take on the challenge.

Over the course of the year, we have worked to develop and implement rigorous learning opportunities for our students. However, as test time approaches, we must be mindful to support our students in every way possible. To this end, several of our schools across the District have provided additional support for students through the means of Saturday Camps. [Lamar Elementary](#) spent this past Saturday hosting a camp for 3rd and 5th grade students with a focus on [Math](#) and [Reading](#). Great job to all of our [teachers](#) who work diligently to ensure students are learning deeply.

My week would not have been complete if I had not experienced, first hand, some type of student activity. Luckily, our weekend staff development in Corpus Christi coincided with a baseball tournament attended by our [Rams](#). It was nice to take a break and visit with [parents](#) who traveled so far to support their student athletes. I am proud of how well our students came [together](#) and played as a team. Best of luck this season!

I can tell that the spring semester has us at a busy pace. Already, discussions have begun about Summer School preparations and the continuation of a focus for the start of next school year; Planning Protocol, Early Literacy, Early College High School, Writing Initiative, Technology Expansions and Bilingual/ESL. Nonetheless, I want to end this blog by thanking each of you for what we accomplished this school year and wish each and every one of you a safe and restful Spring Break! Thank you so much for all that you have done.

"School reform is a slow, steady labor-intensive process contingent on harnessing the talent of individuals." - Carl Cohn (Former Superintendent of San Diego Schools)