

October 3, 2016

It is hard to believe it is already the second six weeks! This is by far the fastest paced first six weeks of the year I have ever experienced. Although time has flown by, I do believe this has truly been a great start and we have a lot to be thankful for. We are thankful for the teachers who have implemented [Power Hour](#) and [Power Block](#), excited for our student's opportunities and optimistic about all our other initiatives (attendance improvement, student achievement, Leader in Me, Capturing Kid's Hearts, Planning Protocol Dashboard). And who can forget our Rams? Five & 0!!!!

This entire past week was one of those weeks that just makes you feel good about being in education. Tuesday evening I, along with some great [elementary students](#) and some [spirited high school](#) students, enjoyed a [volleyball](#) match between our Del Rio [Queens](#) and Laredo United. We fell short of a victory, but our girls played so well. Then on Wednesday morning, I started my day at Walter Levermann stadium where I observed so many students gathered around the [flag pole](#) to express their appreciation for their many blessings. Seeing students gather together in this manner gives me great hope for our city, state and country. I just can't think of a better way to start out any day. Later on in the morning I was invited to drop in on our [elementary](#) student [council training](#) and [awards assembly](#) at the Civic Center. It was so nice to see so many elementary [students](#) ready to take on [leadership](#) roles. Our future is absolutely in good hands. To end this perfect day, I was able to address our [Early College High School](#) students and parents at a "meet and greet" held at the SPC.

To say that the entire week was smooth would be inaccurate. We also had the opportunity to have some courageous dialogue about the financial future of our District and to answer questions about the recent salary cap. Unfortunately our District is now funded at lower levels by the State, our enrollment has not grown, health insurance cost have continued to increase and our migrant enrollment has significantly dropped. These very significant events have decreased our expected operating budget by almost \$2 million. Unfortunately very difficult decisions have to be made.

I am certain that in the weeks and months to come we will continue to have meaningful conversations about decisions that will allow us to continue to provide the services our students need. In the meantime, we appreciate everyone's candor and encourage your continued participation.

Three weeks ago I wrote about two campuses who had their attendance improvement efforts down to a science. Each of these campuses had personnel who ensured classroom attendance reports were submitted by 8:25 AM; the parents of absent students were contacted by 9:00 AM; and the parental aide was on her way to making home visits before 10:00 AM. It now comes as no surprise that the same two campuses had the highest attendance rates for the first six weeks. Congratulations to [NHE](#) and [SFMMS](#) for their great accomplishment. We will deliver your trophies this week and have a huge BBQ lunch before too long. Congratulations!!!

Before closing my blog, I want to give a huge shout out to Mrs. [Jonna Dewitt's](#) 1st Grade Class at Lonnie Green Elementary. This awesome group of 22 students set out to accomplish what few elementary classrooms have been able to accomplish. I was thrilled on Friday morning when I received a phone call indicating they had accomplished their goal [perfect attendance](#). An entire classroom with perfect attendance for an entire six weeks is something to absolutely brag about. Congratulations to Mrs. Dewitt and her entire 1st grade class! Well Done!

This next six weeks will come and go in what surely will be a flash. I ask that each individual continue to commit to the excitement and energy displayed the first six weeks. It is extremely wonderful to visit with campuses and see so many students loving school!

"Education is what remains when one has forgotten what one learned in school." – Albert Einstein