

I hope that each and every one of you is able to get excited about what you have accomplished this year. Because we are a teaching and learning institution, I tend to look at our accomplishments in terms of what our students, faculty, and staff have accomplished thus far. Just in the last couple of weeks we have seen students study and work hard in so many extra-curricular activities.

For example, Mr. Bill Davis and Brad Billeaudeau, along with all the high school staff, are celebrating a second consecutive qualification to the [Robotics](#) World Competition. This year they will be taking over 30 students to St. Louis, Missouri, where they will proudly represent themselves and our community. So many hours have been spent by the sponsors, students, and community volunteers [designing](#), [troubleshooting](#), and developing strategies. We wish them the best of luck in Missouri. Excellent job!

Just two weeks ago, our special education department hosted a wonderful [field day](#) for so many students in the life skills classes. From [racing](#) to cheering to [eating](#), everyone had a great time. Seeing the positive relationship formed between the staff and the students reminded me that success in our organization is almost entirely dependent on a positive and nurturing [relationship](#). It is clear to me that at every level, our students are more likely to perform above their own expectations when they believe they are becoming successful for themselves and someone else. So many times, that someone else is a teacher, coach or sponsor.

This weekend our girls track team won District in Laredo and our cheerleaders won [Nationals](#) at a competition held at St. Mary's in San Antonio. Mrs. Mancha, cheer sponsor, said, "The team did an amazing job! The first day we had one girl throw her knee out and another twist her back ([cheerleading](#) is tough). The group worked together changing the routine around for day two. I am so proud of how they united and stuck together to finish strong. Our girls stole the show; they flipped higher than the world!"

[Coach Limon](#) proudly communicated that hard work and dedication led to first place finishes in the Shot Put, 100 Hurdles, and 300 Hurdles as well as numerous points scored in the relays and other individual events. A coach once told me, "Track is where motivation and relationships are vital. All kids get is a pair of sneakers and a lot of track to run on. They don't get to shoot a ball, swing a bat, or hit somebody. They just run." Great job!

At Central Administration we are celebrating the recent award of the 2014-2016 Educator Excellence Innovative Program Grant (EEIP). The EEIP grant is a competitive \$2,000,000 grant awarded to only seventeen districts. Conversations with TEA indicated that well over 100 districts competed for the grant but only a handful were awarded. Many of the districts that won the award have dedicated grant writers or contract with someone to write the grant for them. We are particularly pleased because we did neither. This grant was written through a collaborative effort by our own staff and designed to address our needs.

Over the next two years we will invest this money in developing a district-wide Early Literacy program, help teachers obtain additional certifications and masters, provide competitive

stipends in critical areas, and provide for teacher development in a variety of career pathways. To guide the writing of the grant, I wrote an [executive summary](#) that I hope each of you will take time to read. I whole heartedly believe that the best days are ahead of us.

In closing, I want to thank and congratulate the many teachers who put in the long hours to plan lessons, stayed late, came in early, and/or worked on Saturdays to tutor students for their STAAR or End of Course exams. So much meaningful work was done across the District and I am certain that when it is all said and done, the results will be worth celebrating. Many campuses even held STAAR pep [rallies](#) to motivate their [students](#). A huge thanks to each and every one of you!

*"Our deep spiritual confidence that this nation will survive the perils of today... compels us to invest in our nation's future, to consider and meet our obligations to our children and the numberless generations that will follow."
- John F. Kennedy*