

Friday Reflection

Wow! May 1st. We are in the home stretch of what has turned out to be the most interesting and historic year. No one could have predicted how this year is ending. What has impressed me this week is observing and participating in virtual experiences that demonstrate everyone's commitment to ending the year as well as possible under the circumstances.

Some examples of this commitment showed up in what were virtual banquets. A big aspect of gaining closure each year for sports teams, clubs and programs are banquets. These "banquets" are not necessarily formal, but they represent a great deal of intention around celebrating our students, their parents and the people responsible for leading. The major focus is always on seniors and their contributions to each organization, whether it is only for this year or all four years. Coaches and teachers have not let the current restrictions keep them from celebrating their students, and communicating their love and appreciation for these individuals.

Speaking of Appreciation, this was Teacher Appreciation Week! Again, we took to virtual avenues to communicate appreciation for our teachers. I would encourage you to reach out to a teacher today and let them know how much you appreciate them. I think this distance learning time has created an even greater appreciation for our teachers. I know teachers have expressed a heightened appreciation for their students. Doing school over the internet is helping make do for now, but you can't replace the "in person" connections formed in the classroom, in clubs and organizations and among sports teams. Those are connections that impact us for life. We all are looking forward to the day when those "in person" experiences can continue.

Speaking of in person experiences. Mrs. Boudreaux and Mrs. Russek have been working to arrange and surprise visits to the homes of seniors to distribute department awards. Teachers, administrators and other school personnel have gathered in small groups (with facemasks of course) to present a certificate and a medal for each award winner. One of the interesting aspects of the visits is seeing each student in their home environment. Students live in various areas of the Tustin community. It seems that no two live in the same vicinity. Tustin is such a rich and diverse community and visiting these homes is a great reminder of this dynamic. We are so proud of all the Tustin seniors, but in particular the students awarded the highest honor from each department. (Award winners so far – Monica Smith, VAPA; Savannah Thorn, MUN; Michelle DeLeon, ASB; Casey Gallagher, English; Natatlia Murrieta, T-Tech, Math & Science – might be why she is going to Stanford; Phi Nguyen, AVID; Hailey Adams, History/Social Sciences).

These award winners are awesome young people, and I am grateful for the teachers who inspired, led and instructed them. We are blessed to have so many incredible teachers who not only know what they are doing, but also care deeply. Each senior award winner would be the first to share their gratitude, and not just because it is Teacher Appreciation Week.

Knowing how important it is to find amazing teachers for our students, we conducted interviews for a teaching position this week. It required hours of combing through resumes and selecting what seemed like the very best options. The most important step was gathering a team of people from our school and interviewing candidates. In just a week, we conducted two intensive rounds of interviews to finally end up with our very best candidate. We generally do this process at least once each year, but this year was unique because it was all on-line. At the conclusion of the process, the team was so grateful for the opportunity to find the very best person for our students. Of all the roles I have as the principal, I am convinced this is the most important aspect of my job, finding the best people possible for our students. Thanks to the help of our interview team, I think we found another good one!

Go Tillers!

Dr. Jon Tuin

Tustin High School Principal