

# Friday Reflection

October 30, 2020

Almost 4 years ago, I was introduced to Tustin High School. Yes, I grew up in Santa Ana and was familiar with THS during the late 70's and even ran in the Tustin Relays as a freshman. However, I didn't know the people, and I never had a sense of the school culture. Tustin felt like a far away community. I helped my dad one summer working for a tree trimmer cutting brush in front of a Tustin house that appeared much nicer than anything I would ever own.

Fast forward to February of 2017 when I came to visit Tustin High School to learn about the THS AVID program. It was during that visit I gained a sense of the amazing learning community that existed here in the heart of Tustin. The teachers and staff didn't just seem positive, but also focused on growing and helping students. The students represented a beautifully diverse array of backgrounds. On top of all that, the facilities were exceptional. Another important thing I learned on that trip was the context in which this school operated. It was clearly an integral part of the Tustin Unified School District, and district leaders talked about the school with affection and pride.

Fast forward even further to this week, and I was reminded of my early observations I made as a visitor on campus. The mental nostalgia I experienced this week was spurred by two important events, the State of the Schools presentation and Dr. Franklin's visit to campus the very next day. Both experiences reminded me of the spirit I discovered and the perspective I gained during my visit almost 4 years ago.

In the State of the Schools presentation, Dr. Franklin communicated the challenges of our current context, including the greater pandemic and the fires from this past week. In addition to explaining background for recent district decisions and some data to describe our reality, he communicated the incredible ingenuity, professionalism and determination of our teachers and staff to prevail during these challenging times. (Teacher, Allison Lee, and student, Alshaun Redgers, contributed to his presentation in a prepared video.) Dr. Franklin also painted a picture of the students working hard to meet the expectations of not only their teachers, but their own future aspirations.

Then yesterday, Dr. Franklin came on a scheduled visit to Tustin High School. He observed firsthand the accuracy of his descriptions of our community the day before. He saw the challenges were real, just as real as the focus and determination of our students, teachers and staff. It was obvious that he was impacted by the positivity of the people in the midst of such barriers and obstacles. It just so happened that this week was spirit week, and yes, employees and students alike dressed to various themes throughout the week. However, beyond the dress, Dr. Franklin saw the Tiller spirit in how we do school.

For me, I was reminded of the supportive context in which our school functions. We are connected to a district and leaders who care about our students and our people.

Go Tillers!

Dr. Jon Tuin

Tustin High School Principal