

Friday Reflection

Typically, I sit in my office early on a Friday morning to write the Friday Reflection, but there is nothing typical about the past 9 days. I have also never written a Friday Reflection while on vacation, but this week is nothing any of us have experienced before. I felt compelled today to not only reflect, but also project about life in the near future. I know we are in a very unique time, and it is unsettling because of all the unknowns. While I never would have wished this experience on any of us, I do see some positives that can come from our current situation.

While some students might initially have been excited about “no school”, and realize for most seniors, the current state is scary and upsetting. What about those athletes who put in hours and hours of work for this season? What about those dancers, cheerleaders and band performers who also sacrificed to prepare for upcoming events and competitions. Even if we come back to school on April 13th, many big events were canceled. For the seniors especially, I feel so badly. I am so sorry for your loss because that is exactly what it is for you, a loss. I would also say that years from now, we will all look back on this time as a major historical event. You will have a special connection with current seniors all across our country who experienced a similar dynamic. You will be among a special group of Americans who lived this unique period of history as high school seniors. You will go down as a special group of young people. It may always simultaneously be a source of pain and pride.

Reflecting on the communications from both Governor Newsome and Dr. Franklin, it is obvious that our district and school is currently operating in a whole new mode. The “safer at home” status has shut down our school site almost completely. The call is for everyone to stay at home unless absolutely necessary. (Monday through Friday lunch pick up service will still be available for those 17 years or younger.) These measures may seem drastic to some, but the focus is on slowing down the COVID-19 virus. This fast progressing virus has proved fatal for some, and it is in the best interest of everyone to follow the directives laid out by government and school leaders.

Dr. Jon Tuin

Tustin High School Principal

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Speaking of special, our district and school are in a unique situation due to our level of technology. District leadership has worked hard over break to develop a plan for how to move forward via distance learning. Teachers are already building their instructional plans for delivery and support over the internet. It is important that students stay connected using their computers to find out how to proceed. The idea is that teachers will offer mini lessons, activities and on-line support throughout the week. Teachers already have things posted on a Haiku or Google site for this week. Soon teachers will have more comprehensive plans for moving forward. Teachers and admin will meet virtually on Monday to plan for moving forward. I share this with you because I want you to know we are committed to continuing to support students during these challenging times.

There are so many unknowns, and it is easy to be disoriented by ambiguity. This is a stressful state of being for sure. However, something that helps me is to focus on what I know. I know that I am loved, and I have the capacity to love others, even during difficult times. It is heartening to hear about all the stories of people reaching out and helping others right now. It reminds me that I can be part of the solution. I would ask that we all be extra conscious of supporting one another.

I also know I am part of a dynamic team of educators. From district leadership to classroom teachers to support staff, we have some incredible people on our team. I know there is much to do and build in a relatively short period of time, but I also know we have competent and understanding people on our team. We will need to put our best efforts together, but more importantly, we will need to be compassionate and patient with one another. I also know that we have amazing families and students connected with Tustin High School. Everyone is in different places and circumstances during this time, and our goal is to reach out to connect with all our students. We will do our best to provide a reasonable education during our time away from the school building, but more importantly, we will try to be connected and supportive.

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Again, I never would have wished this whole coronavirus thing on anyone. However, in observing where we are as a society right now, I see some positives. As much as I enjoy being active and working hard on behalf of others, I see how slowing down and being still has value. I am as guilty as anyone when it comes to overscheduling, and I can already see how our whole society is being forced to slow down. It is a huge reminder as to how important it is to slow down and breathe from time to time. Yesterday, while working in my yard, I came across a baby humming bird, and I just stopped, noticed and observed. When this is all past us, may we never forget the value of slowing down and being still from time to time.

Another positive observed already is the emphasis on being connected. Like you, my wife and I have been home a great deal. When we have gone for walks in the neighborhood, it is interesting to see the energy others have for making a connection. (6 feet away of course.) It is easy to take for granted our opportunities to connect, but now that our connections are more limited, I can see the growing intentionality around connecting. Even connections made by phone or email feel more intentional and valued. I hope this is something else I don't forget when this is past us.

I say "when this is past us" because this virus will eventually go away. Life down the road will eventually morph into a new normal. I think we will forever be impacted by this time in history. Somethings will never go completely back to the former state, and I can see how that isn't necessarily a bad thing. May we learn together from our situation and move forward better people. I know that I am grateful for our students, families, teachers, staff and district leadership. I know we are going to get through this. I know I am looking forward to making the best of a difficult situation. I know that down the road, we will be better people as a result.

It is still great to be a Tiller!

Go Tillers!

Dr. Jon Tuin

Tustin High School Principal