

Friday Reflection

2/14/2019

I suppose Valentine's Day is a made-up day to encourage business for cards, flowers and candy. However, I do appreciate the intentionality of acknowledging my partner in life of 33 years. I have been blessed relationally over the years, and in all our hard work in school to grow our students, what I really desire for them is to be happy and connected. Actually, I think the two go together.

I often spend time thinking about our students and staff and the significant accomplishments, experiences, and connections occurring over the course of the week. However, this week nudged me in more of a district perspective. Yes, there was a third round CIF soccer game that I will mention later, but there were also two significant meetings this week generated by district leadership. They reminded me of the context in which we work and learn as a school. I think this is important because while our focus is on students, we are part of a bigger TUSD team that adds tremendous value to what we do with students.

One district-initiated meeting I experienced this week was the monthly TUSD administrators meeting. This is an opportunity to hear from Dr. Franklin, the superintendent, and his team about information that might impact our work. They shared about the on-going plans to transition next year to new devices for the high schools. I was impressed with the depth of process to get feedback from the people who will be impacted most. There was also an import part of the meeting that addressed the budget challenges we face. More importantly, well-thought out plans were articulated as to how to address the challenges moving forward. Not all districts approach this work with such thought and foresight. It would be easy to make decisions out of fear, but our district leadership is making decisions based on what is best for our students, and what that looks like for years to come. All districts in California are facing these challenges. The state funds our students about a thousand dollars below the national average per state (which is about \$12,900), however I am confident that TUSD will navigate these challenging waters with integrity, thoughtfulness, and foresight. I was reassured this week that our TUSD leadership understands that our work is all about people and their growth.

Another important meeting the district held this week was in our Tustin High School cafeteria. The district is looking at the long-term facility needs of our schools, and considering our current budget challenges, this would likely mean a future bond initiative. The Tustin High School feeder schools were invited last night to look at our facilities and comment on long term plans being created to address important learning needs for students. Parents, staff, and community members were present to offer their input. Again, I was so encouraged to be part of a school district that thinks about what students and staff need to learn well and be connected. Because leaders and community members from years gone by had the foresight to address learning needs, Tustin High School, and other schools throughout the district, experienced significant upgrades that have helped to keep our schools current. TUSD is currently engaging in another wave of visioning so that future students benefit from updated facilities. It might mean that I will be paying some additional taxes someday on my TUSD residence after I am retired. I think of the

students just being born into our attendance area who I may never meet, but it is comforting to know that they could inherit a TUSD legacy of excellence like our current students. This is just the beginning of a long journey, but it is a necessary road. If you have an interest in seeing the thoughts to-date, please contact our office and arrange a time to see the designs before March 4th.

I mentioned the boys' CIF soccer game. The unfortunate thing for me was that this game was happening literally as we were looking at the facility plans. I was getting updates from Tom Giebe, one of our athletic directors. He reported into the second half the 0-0 score. Although I was miles away, I was starting to feel the tension. Then, with about 30 minutes to go in the game, I got the news that one of our players received a red card. That was bad news on many levels, but one of the scary outcomes for the team was that they would play the rest of the game with one less player on the field. Just a few minutes later, I received a text I didn't expect. We scored! About 10 minutes later, I got the text that they scored to make it 1-1. I could imagine that our players were getting tired trying to keep up. I expected the next text to be about the other team scoring. You can imagine my surprise when the next report came in saying that we scored with about 10 minutes left in the game. This go-ahead goal ended up sticking. In an unexpected manner, we advanced to the CIF Semi Finals that will be played on Saturday at 5PM at Rialto High School!

Soccer will join one boy wrestler, Jeff Valadez, and 4 girl wrestlers, Jazmin Segura, Paula Gavina, Giselle Barrera, and Jessica Ramirez, who will compete in another high-level CIF round of action (It is call Masters).

Go TUSD and Go Tillers!

Dr. Jon Tuin
Tustin High School Principal