

Friday Reflection
6/7/18

Wow! The last day of school! For our seniors, this is it for their K-12 education. For others, it is a time to switch gears and take some time off from the rigors of the classroom and get ready for next year. Education is interesting that way. Each year has a start and a finish.

We are so proud of our seniors who are off to some exciting new adventures. Many of them will be attending a four year college in either California or beyond. More of them will be attending a two year college somewhere. Others will be off to military training and joining the armed services. Whatever their next adventure, we wish the Class of 2018 the best. It was an outstanding group of young people!

It is always a joyous time to reach the end of the push and calendar craziness, but it is also a sad time of parting ways. This week was particularly sad for some of our Tiller family because one of our students, Jordan (JoJo) Harris passed away on Tuesday. Even though JoJo, a junior, had some daunting medical challenges, her passing was a complete surprise and devastating to those who knew her well. It was neat to see the expression of love for JoJo and her family from not only members of her class and school, but also from other schools that she attended. Obviously, JoJo made an impact on her community. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family this week, including her twin brother Josh who is also a Tiller.

While this is a Friday Reflection, I can't help but think back on the year as a whole. What an amazing year it has been for me personally and professionally. The opportunity to work in such a warm, connected, and high-performing community is nothing short of a gift. It is truly great to be a Tiller.

Obviously, there was a great deal this week with finals and so many end-of-the-year logistics. However, for me, everything was overshadowed by graduation! I was so impressed with the organization of the event, conduct of the students and the energy of the adults. It was a respectful occasion honoring our graduates, and there were also glimpses into the personality of our senior class and some of the individuals of which it was made.

While graduation was a wonderful event as a whole, there were definitely some highlights for me. Watching our students file into their rows with their huge smiles is a lasting impression. I also cherish the conversation with Vianey Bernal while taking pictures with her and her new car. It was incredible that a student with perfect attendance won a new car, but even better when that person is such a quality Tiller like Vianey. Another graduation memory occurred when Citlalli Vergara took advantage of an opportunity to deliver her speech in full after getting cut short. It reminded me that while we plan, organize, and work to deliver high quality events, at the end of the day it is all about our students. I was so proud of how Citlalli handled the challenges of her first attempt with the same poise she delivered her second. She shared some powerful words, but more impressively, she did it with grace, confidence, and class. Like many of the seniors she represented, Citlalli is an amazing young person. Of course, I will also remember Sabrina Thorn speaking the words that signaled the hat throwing. And I will also remember Drew Donahoo leading his last "T-Town" Chant. And finally, there were all the hands I shook in celebration of earning a Tustin High School diploma. It was a good day. It was a good year.

Go Tillers!

Dr. Jon Tuin
Tustin High School Principal