

BARNES, FAITH

8-18-17

From: LARGENT, JAMES
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2017 9:39 AM
To: GISD-Staff
Subject: Supt Weekly 8/18/17

Good Morning GISD!

First, thanks to a **great start to our school year!** We are off and running and things have gone very smoothly. This does not happen by itself. It takes much time and planning to have a great opening, and it also takes a great staff to implement the plan. So, thanks to all of you for what you have done to get us started in such a positive way. I was able to make it to every campus on Wednesday and I was amazed at how quickly everything looked just like a normal day of school with our 7,000 Pirates. **Plans, processes, and preparation works!!**

For those of you who are **new to GISD**, I try to send out a **weekly email each Friday**. In it, I will mention some **thoughts of the week**, things to **focus on**, and maybe some things I have seen on my **campus visits**. I also include portions of **positive emails** I receive throughout the week and will begin an **e-book study**, where we will go through a book or two throughout the year.

Please know that this is **not meant to be a comprehensive GISD newsletter or event calendar**, so don't be upset if I fail to mention a particular activity or event that you think is really important. **Jeff Meador, our communications director**, does a great job of getting out information on all GISD activities. If you have special activities going on at your campus or in your classroom, please send me an email and I will do my best to come by.

Legislative update:

The special session is over and a severely watered down school bill was passed this week. Our legislature spent a whole lot of time in the regular and special sessions on what I call "nonsense bills" and not nearly enough time on bills that would truly have made a difference in the lives of Texans. Here is how the **Texas Association of Community Schools** described it:

"I am sad, disappointed, and above all, I am angry. Chairman (House Public Education Committee) Dan Huberty is disappointed, and the 5.4 million students in Texas public schools, their parents, the taxpayers who fund the schools, and the 700,000 Texans working in Texas public schools should be angry too. The Texas Senate shortchanged our kids again and **we should be outraged all the way to the voting booth.**"

At convocation, I mentioned the group **Texans for Public Education**. Here is their website. <https://www.texansforpubliceducation.com/> If you go down the home page about half way, there is a button that says **"Our Ratings."** Below that, there is button that says **"House Ratings 2017."** By clicking on this, you will find how each member of the House voted on key education bills. My understanding is that **Senate and State Board of Education ratings will come later.** This group is bipartisan, not affiliated with any political party and you can see that there are R's and D's who are labeled as friendly and unfriendly to public education, based on how they vote in Austin. Like I said at convocation, it **does not matter what our elected officials say, what they post, or how many pictures with kids they take. What matters is how they vote on bills that affect public education.** I would encourage you to **connect with this group, follow them on Facebook, send the group's information to everyone you know, etc.** But, please do not post messages or send emails using your GISD accounts. You can certainly do this on your private email or social media pages as much as you want after school hours. In fact, it is encouraged!

Emails this week:

From District staff: I just want to let you know how impressed I was with **Mr. Ross and all of his staff** at registration tonight. Their willingness to help and assist parents is to be commended. They exhibited the **patience of Job**. A special shoutout to **Aimme Tolleson, Steven Weeks and Rebecca Weeks**. I witnessed all three of these people go **above and beyond for multiple families**, visiting with them, showing them around and making them feel comfortable in a new school. It was a **great night at GHS. Proud to be a Pirate!**

From District staff: During the summer, the **admin building didn't have anyone to translate.** I **called the high school numerous times** this summer and **Miriam Hughes** was always polite and **more than willing to help me.** This was essential in providing **good customer service to parents.** Even though she was busy, she took the time to help and had a positive attitude!

From a Parent: I want to send a huge shout out to **Anna Roe and the Acton Elementary staff.** We recently made the decision to move our family here and my three boys reluctantly left the only school they've ever known. With 833 students, it would be so easy for them to get lost in the mix of a new school, but **AES staff went above and beyond** to find ways to make sure they were comfortable and having a great first day. My oldest came home and said, "**Mom, Mrs. Roe made me feel like I was the most important new student in the world.**" And, I have no doubt that every other new student to the school felt exactly the same way. Words cannot express how grateful I am for **Anna and her staff's superhuman abilities.** I'm very **proud to have three of the newest pirates in Pirate Nation.**

From District Staff: Thanks to the **MANY** folks that stepped in and helped with **convocation!** **Amy Bush in Support Services** is next to none on any project! She has always been so willing to help in any way! **Patti Sanderson** is an **amazing problem solver** to ensure that things work well in the high school building! **Dwight Butler, Randy Leach, Wes Jones, and Ron Holmgreen** can mix some pancakes! They met me at **5am to begin the preparations** for our pancake breakfast and then jumped in on any other task as well! **Ruth Mordecai, Devin Thomas, Trisha Suitt, Cherie Myers, and Faith Barnes** stepped in without being asked to support anyway that they could. All of them ended up serving our faculty for the entire breakfast. Our **admin team is the BEST anywhere!** They all came to support and greet everyone as they walked in the doors. I appreciate the hospitality and servant hearts of all of them! The big finale.....**JC Campbell, Jerry Ables, and the Lion's Club.** There were several of the club members that were here at **5am as well to begin cooking for 900 people.** There are no words to tell them how much I appreciate them! **HEB also met us on Sunday afternoon to deliver items** for our breakfast. **They never fail to support us in lots of different events.** **Johnny Rositas** did an outstanding job of introducing our speaker for the students in the afternoon. He also was willing to step in and support the afternoon event. Thanks to **all coaches and sponsors for bringing their students to the afternoon production.** I think you summarized it well, **we are so blessed and fortunate to get to work for these incredible kids and this community.**

I will leave you with a **few thoughts** as we begin a new school year together. Do not forget that **you WILL make an impact** on every student you come in contact with this year. Do whatever it takes to make sure it is a **positive impact!** Go out of your way each day to try to **bring a smile to someone who needs it.** You never know when that one **positive word, compliment, or short conversation** can turn a bad day into a good one. **Gossip and negative talk** has no place in a **professional, caring, friendly, work environment.** Do whatever it takes to **make your classroom, office, or work environment an inviting and positive place to be.** As Confucius said, **"Find a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life."** I hope all of you are doing what you love, and I look forward to this being the **Best Year Ever!**

Enjoy your weekend and we will see you back on Monday.

Go Pirates!!

JL

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