

Superintendent's Report 02.11.14

The Governing Board and I would like to begin by welcoming the Mayor of Tucson, Mr. Jonathan Rothschild. He would like to make a proclamation that is of particular interest and importance to Tucson Unified School District.

Mayor Rothschild, will you please come up to make your announcement?

(MAYOR WILL PROCLAIM FEBRUARY AS NATIONAL MAGNET SCHOOL AWARENESS MONTH)

I would also like to mention that, due to the fact we did not have a second meeting in January, we missed officially proclaiming the week of February 3-7, 2014 as ***National School Counseling Week in Tucson Unified School District.***

The Governing Board and I would like to do that retroactively and thank all of our counselors for their contributions every day in guiding our students through to their successful graduation and post graduate opportunities.

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Next, the Board and I would like to call attention to an extraordinary employee.

Last Tuesday, February 4, a fire began in an Air Conditioning/Heating unit at the Duffy Center in a portable unit. This unit is located next to TUSD's Clothing Bank and is used for storage of items for the Clothing Bank.

Elga Torres, Clothing Bank Specialist, was in the building that morning and when she turned on the unit it started making a strange noise and then flames shot out. She turned off the unit immediately and got a fire extinguisher. Flames were still coming out of the unit. She notified the Tucson Fire Department and sprayed the contents of the extinguisher onto the AC/Heating unit. Elga was able to put out the fire and the fire department confirmed the fire was out, thanks to Elga, and disconnected the unit.

TFD brought in blowers to air out the building. Once the smoke cleared, it was obvious the unit needed to be replaced. The chemical clean-up in the unit was addressed by Mr. Harry Ain from Operations.

Thanks to Elga, there was no spread of the fire, injury or loss of inventory. The Clothing Bank is so important to our students and their families. Without it, many would not have proper clothing to allow them to attend school.

Elga has put in many, many hours in sorting inventory, taking donations, cleaning, stocking and aiding our families with little thanks. We would like to take the opportunity to thank her for putting out the fire, and for all of her hard work over the years in service to the district.

Thank you, Elga!

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Now we would like to recognize a couple of outstanding TUSD sports teams from our middle schools.

The Safford K-8 Magnet girls basketball team and the Mansfeld boys volleyball team were recently crowned City Champions.

The Safford girls basketball team are “back-to-back” champions – they also won the championship last year. As Coach Sonya Rashad tells us, this is a very special group of young women. This season they won most of their games by a margin of 30 points.

She stated the girls play with an up tempo style and were a very exciting team to watch. Though they have never been blessed with height, speed and pressure defense is their claim to fame.

The team defeated Fickett and Roskruge in the final four to defend the championship. Please help us welcome the Safford Girls Basketball City Champions:

Coach:

Sonya Rashad

Team Manager:

Jala Edwards

Players:

Esis Booker

Belen Cupis

Diamond Galindo

Gabrianna Gonzalez

Gisselle Gonzales

Carina Mendoza

Jazmin Nunez

Danielle Ochoa

Alicia Reyes

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Marissa Ronquillo

Mary Ruiz

Unice Ruiz

Angelica Somoza

Julia Sullivan

CONGRATULATIONS to all of you!

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Next, and equally as special, we are honoring the Boys City Champion volleyball team from Mansfeld Middle School. They, too, are back-to-back champs.

Coach Jodi Gutierrez states that they came off an undefeated season and knew they had their work cut out as a number one seed.

The team defeated Miles and Dodge to enter the semi-finals. In the semi-finals, they played CE Rose and lost the first match. The boys rallied to come back and win the next two matches.

During the finals they faced Magee.

The boys came out ready to play and continue their undefeated streak. As a team they got it together and won the finals in two matches.

Some of the boys have ended two seasons as undefeated in the regular season and city champions.

I think these back-to-back championships speak highly of the coaches and their dedication.

Please welcome –

Coach:

Jodi Gutierrez

Team Managers:

Madi Nash

Abi Nash

Team Captains:

Isaac Granillo

Adrian Samorano

Players:

Erik Barragan

Kort Breshears

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Wyatt Campos

Marcel Dean

Majok Deng

Brian Flores

Sergio Guillen

Martin Pham

Michael Ramonett

Dominic Rodriguez

Christian Sahagun

Chris Williams

Andres Yucupicio

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Our next honoree is Elizabeth Slaine, a teacher from Tucson High Magnet School.

Elizabeth was recently awarded the Teacher Excellence Award from Tucson Values Teachers and OfficeMax.

Each month, a K-12 teacher in Southern Arizona is selected by Tucson Values Teachers Board of Directors to win the Teacher Excellence Award, which is sponsored by OfficeMax. Winners receive a \$100 gift certificate and are featured on the Tucson Values Teachers website.

According to their website, “Tucson Values Teachers is a regional initiative determined to prove that we should not just talk about the importance of improving education, but must unify in action to retain, recruit and reward our K-12 teachers who play a central role in our region’s economic and civic prosperity.”

The person who nominated Ms. Slaine stated that:

“Beth is fearless. She takes on any challenge and continually works to improve herself and the opportunities she brings to her students. This semester Beth has taken on a huge community-based project that will give her students excellent real-world experience and 21st century skills. Beth is the type of educator that invests in kids and invests in our community!”

Please help us congratulate Beth and thank her for all of her hard work and dedication to the teaching of our students.

Thanks, Beth!

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Finally, the Governing Board members and I would like to recognize Ann Marie Condes, a teacher at Palo Verde High Magnet School. We would like to honor her for her commitment to the Engineering and Robotics programs at Palo Verde.

School Improvement Grant Coordinator, William Brock, explains that Palo Verde has made a recent transition to a STEAM magnet designation. The acronym STEAM takes STEM to the next level by adding a creative art requirement.

According to both Mr. Brock and Principal Janna Acevedo, Ann Marie has done an outstanding job at developing and promoting the Engineering program and the Robotics Club and putting the school “on the map” as a location where STEAM happens.

Dean Kamen is the founder of a non-profit charity called FIRST, which is an acronym for “For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.” He had a vision “to transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders.” Ms. Condes and the Palo Verde team embodied that vision when they recently hosted the 2014 Southern Arizona FTC Regional Robotics Qualifying Tournament.

There were 25 teams from Arizona and New Mexico that competed. Out of this event, eight teams were able to qualify to attend the State Championship Tournament. FTC is an exciting, global robotics program that ignites enthusiasm for science, technology and engineering.

The participating high school students designed, built and programmed their “bot.” Advanced robots operated autonomously to perform complex tasks. During competition, users operated their bot via wireless communication to collect blocks and distribute them into baskets atop a pendulum in an attempt to balance it. In the end game, observers watched as robots completed a pull-up maneuver on a centralized bar, or used a mechanical arm to raise the team’s flag.

According to Mr. Brock, as hosts, Palo Verde was not allowed to compete, though they have previously claimed team awards. It took months of planning and 65+ volunteers. There was no real reason to host other than to provide learning opportunities and unique experiences for all involved. The district and the school wanted to recognize Ms. Condes because she always goes the extra mile for her students and her students love her for it!

This sounds like a fun and rewarding experience for participants and observers alike.

Thank you for your service, Ann Marie!

