

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year!

It's great to be celebrating the new school year. We have new teachers, support staff, and administrators joining our Hereford ISD family...a big welcome to these new colleagues.

I know that you are all eager for the children's return to school. August 24, 2009 will be the first day of instruction, but there are a few important things to mention before that Monday morning arrives.

Hereford ISD is a quality school system. Highly qualified teachers and staff, a dedicated school board, caring parents, and students that excel in academics and extracurricular endeavors help to make Hereford ISD great. Each time you open your paper, listen to the news, or visit one of the HISD campuses, I want you to see the pride in learning. As the year moves along I hope that you will visit with our teachers and students and ask them what they did in school today...you'll be proud of their answers and proud of them.

The political climate of our state, along with the economic concerns of our nation, brings to mind the challenges before us. The Texas legislature has a tough task in funding the activities of the state, and I can think of no more worthy cause than our children. However, we are facing difficult decisions because the cost of education does not slow down...but our funding does. We are all looking into ways to save money, increase productivity, and raise a college/career ready graduate with the 21st century skills needed in today's world. I look forward to having discussions across our district where you can be a part of helping us shape our needs so that together we can be part of the solution in public education.

Accountability ratings are published in our papers, announced on the airwaves and posted on the billboards across this state. I fully understand the importance of comparison between schools, but caution you to look deeper. The accountability system of our state and nation uses a single test to determine the effectiveness of a school or school system. In Hereford our children mean more to me than their test scores. Each student has a special gift, and for some that gift is beyond measure by testing. Join me this year as we celebrate the children...not just the ratings.

Our theme for this school year is Stand By Me. This is not my voice, but our voices that call for collaboration, teamwork and community. When you see "Stand By Me" think about the four year old on the verge of counting to 100; think about the first year teacher that will mold her career choice on this first year of teaching; think about the parents who shine with pride at the successful report card; think about the bus driver warming the bus engine at 4:00am; think about the principal that is calling home to let you know that working together is making a difference; and think about the senior on the verge of dropping out or pushing through to graduation. Stand by them! Stand By Our Children to make 2009-2010 a year we will raise our voices and celebrate.