



A Time of Respair: Act Like a Family and Work Like a Team

June 7, 2021

Wow! That is about the only word I can find to describe what we have all been through over the last 18 months. I am not sure that anyone of us could have imagined the roller coaster we were boarding when we left school for spring break in 2020, and now we are at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

I decided to share my thoughts of gratitude, appreciation and encouragement with you this morning because, if you are like me, you probably need it after all we have collectively and individually been through.

I recognize that we all have been impacted in significant ways by what we have been through over the last 18 months. Many of us lost family members, colleagues, friends and neighbors. For all of you, I pray for your strength, comfort and peace.

If you were blessed not to have lost anyone physically, it is highly likely you went for long periods of time without the fellowship of those close to you. I hope that in the days to come, you get an opportunity to reconnect to those who may feel forgotten.

I have learned that we all take way too much for granted and move way too fast through life. I challenge all of you to slow down and be intentional about connection. I now realize that even ultra-introverts like myself derive energy from smiles and interactions with others. As the mask mandates are lifted and we begin to move more freely about, I am reminded that it is the little things that are often unacknowledged that make the most significant impact. Take time for the little things.

Summer is upon us, and I realize that it will be shorter than normal. However, I still encourage you to rest and relax. **Most importantly – I wish for each of us a time of respair.**

If you are like me when I first heard this word, you may be wondering, what is respair? It is a 16th Century word that means **“the return of hope after a period of despair”** when used as a noun. When being used as a verb, respair means **“to have hope again.”**

Regardless of how you interpret this word, it is definitely what we all need. I recognize that the pandemic is not over. **But signs of hope are all around us.** Hope is a powerful and restoring force. I challenge each of you to focus on what is before us, the opportunity ahead and recognize that we are greater than what we have been through. And, in spite of the trauma, we are still here, we are strong, we are hopeful for a positive end and the greatest opportunities lie ahead.

As we prepare to enjoy the summer, please remember that our calling and mission in Crowley ISD is to create an educational experience that prepares our students for all of the choices and opportunities that will be available in the world they will inherit. A world that is much different now than it was just 18 months ago. I am encouraged this morning that we are still here, and I am convinced that our period of respair is in front of us. I believe that we were all prepared for a time such as this.

As we look to the start of the new school year, I am filled with hope and anticipation of what is to come. I believe that we have grown closer as a CISD family during this crisis in spite of the crisis. It's interesting how trauma either brings you closer or tears you apart. We are closer today, and I believe that we are more family now than ever before. I believe family is what makes us who we are.

The day we were born, we became part of a family. Whether it was biological, adoptive, accidental or purposeful, there were people (or maybe just a person) who chose us, cared for us, nurtured and protected us. They took life's journey with us and, through the years, we formed a bond with them. Some days we love them and other days not so much, but when we acknowledge that the relationship is beyond our feelings, we understand the true definition of the word family. We accept that they are a part of us and we are a part of them in perpetuity. When life moves us away, we remember them and wish them the best from afar. But, when we reunite, it's epic. With music, food and family, we find our happy place to reconnect and recharge for the days ahead.

It's an unusual organization that has the ability to wrap around its members and become that safe place for growth, learning, failure and success – especially in the midst of a global crisis. Over the last 18 months, **we have acted like family and we have worked as a team.**

As we prepare for the 2021-22 school year, our theme will be **Act Like a Family, Work Like a Team.** We will start the year off with a **Crowley ISD Family Reunion on Friday, Aug. 6** that will serve as our convocation. It will be a lot of fun, fellowship, games and festivities celebrating each other as we prepare to launch into our mission field for 2021-2022 school year.

Planning is now underway, and you will be receiving more information about how you can represent your school family on this fun and festive day. It will be a cross between a family reunion, carnival, showcase and friendly competition. It will be epic and it will be fun.

Some of the potential activities we're planning for the Crowley ISD Family Reunion include:

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| Barbecue | Obstacle Course | Horseshoes |
| DJ | Face Painting | Pin the Tail on the Donkey |
| Karaoke | Volleyball | Sack Races |
| Cornhole | Crafts | Greek Show |
| Dominos | Charades | Tug of War |
| Spades | Cake Walk | Trivia |
| Fishing | Dancing | Family Feud |
| Talent Show | Yoga | Board Games |

Please send us your ideas to help make the Crowley ISD Family Reunion an event to remember.

If you are here for the 2021-22 school year, prepare yourself to work hard and to play hard because, in Crowley ISD, we **act like a family and we work like a team.**

With respair,



Michael D. McFarland, Ed.D.
Crowley ISD Superintendent of Schools

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