Greetings,

The first week of school is officially behind us! I want to thank everyone in our learning community for making this week run as smoothly as it did. Sure, there may have been some hiccups, but ultimately all was resolved and it really has been great seeing everyone back in our school buildings. I especially enjoyed seeing how much some of our students had grown over the summer and watching our high school volleyball and j.v. soccer teams compete and experience some of that Clipper spirit. The weather even cooperated with relatively cool breezy days. It really was all good.

Still, the week was marred by yet another tragic school shooting. I hate the fact that I have to use the words *yet another* as these incidents happen way too often. Whether or not we may be aware, the recent school shooting in Georgia deeply impacts even us in South Country, reminding us of the need for safety, unity, and vigilance. Sadly, one of the educators I traveled with in Asia works in the county next to the location of the school where this horrific event occurred and I can't even imagine how impactful it may be to them, not to mention the families and employees of the Barrow County Schools. It simply is awful. While we mourn the loss and stand in solidarity with the affected community, we must reaffirm our commitment to ensuring the safety of our students and staff. Together, we can promote open dialogue, support mental health initiatives, and continue to strengthen safety protocols. By leaning on our Clipper Pride values—respect, compassion, and resilience—we will work as a community to provide a nurturing and secure environment for all our learners and staff. Let's stand together in strength and solidarity. I can't stress enough the importance of kindness and Clipper Compassion.

I remain optimistic and have faith in our community. And I remain committed to my continued support as we forge ahead. I want to again thank everyone for their efforts and want to wish everyone a fantastic weekend. One week down!

Tony Santana
#clipper**PRIDE**