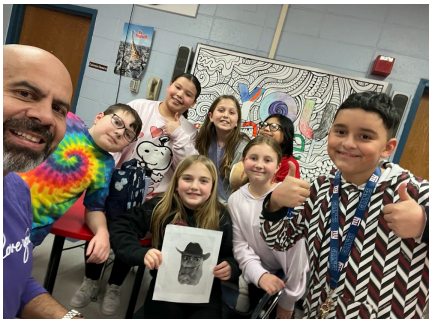
Greetings,

We were spared burning a snow day two weeks in a row and for that, I am grateful! It's my hope that we can get through the season without having to lose an instructional day and while we are only in mid February, I'm ready for the Spring. Like for real.

Today is also Valentine's Day and I've always had mixed feelings about it. I mean, shouldn't we be loving and appreciative always? Why do we need to designate a day for this? In truth, Valentine's Day may be the holiday of love, but it's also the holiday of overpriced chocolates and awkward dinner reservations. Here's another twist—its origins are way less romantic. Between the execution of St. Valentine and the St. Valentine's Day Massacre of 1929 (where Al Capone's gang turned a garage into a crime scene), this holiday has some serious baggage. Nothing says "be mine" quite like a historical backdrop of betrayal and bloodshed! So, while couples exchange sweet nothings, just remember: at one point, Valentine's Day was more about dodging bullets than dodging commitment. Ah, love; Pat Benatar was right—but love is a battlefield in more ways than one!

I guess the point is that multiple things can be true at once. Sure, St. Valentine may have been executed and roses cost way too much, but Valentine's Day can also be really special. This morning I had the privilege of stopping by Dr. Kucheryavenko's French class at the high school and her outpouring of love for her students was really moving and even included a cupid's wand which she used to spread love. On top of that, I got to watch some really cool videos made by her students that made both Beth Doyle and I laugh. It was really enjoyable. So was simply wishing students and staff a happy Valentine's Day and break. Everyone was just so gracious. I also got to stop by Frank P. Long and like the high school, folks were observing P.S. I Love You Day as well as Valentine's Day and kids were just in such a chipper mood, making love bugs and simply being kids. At one point I even hung out with a chicken nugget named "O" who apparently was born today. (Well, it was a print out of a chicken nugget in a cowboy hat.) As silly as it was, I too laughed with the kids and again, it was such a positive vibe. I'm sure the same was true in all our buildings. There is a lot of love in South Country and spending some time with students and staff was really the best way I could have spent Valentine's Day.



So that will be my message. As we enjoy the upcoming week off, (*big shout to Abraham Lincoln and George Washington!*), let's again try to cherish all of the things we are fortunate to have and do our best to support those who are going through strife. This can easily be done by spreading some love, no cupid's wand needed.

Have a great week off! Some of us will still be here and I just want to give a big shout to all of the staff who will be working, especially our custodial crew who may be dealing with a snow storm. Believe it or not, I may have to call a snow day next week! Ugh.

As always, it’s a real privilege serving this community as your superintendent of schools.

Tony Santana

#clipper**PRIDE**