Greetings,

To quote Ice Cube, today was a good day.

I had the opportunity to attend the high school's pep rally and it really was great, not to mention the weather was simply fantastic. It's always great to see our school spirit on display and more than that, to have over a thousand teenagers gathered with not one moment of tension or stress is even better. As a former principal, I still have that edginess, hoping that it all goes without a hitch. So kudos to Mr. Sottile, Ms. Della Rosa, and the entire high school staff who played a role in making today's pep rally such a success. I also loved the intro video that was produced by our high school students. Please check out the link below:

2024 Pep Rally Intro Video

I also got to stop by Frank P. Long for their PTA sponsored Trunk or Treat event which was lots of fun. Besides it being a great turnout, all of the kids and families were simply having a good time and I always love seeing kids off their phones, interacting and engaging in fun. I have the strong belief that school should be equal parts work and fun. Big shout to the Frank P. Long crew, as well as the Kreamer crew who hosted their Trunk or Treat yesterday. All good stuff.

At this week's board meeting we presented and discussed our assessment data which perhaps is more of the work part than it is the fun part. To cut to the chase, regardless of all of the mitigating factors that have an adverse effect on student learning, we're definitely not where we should be. So, what does that mean? Well, it's not a reflection of our collective efforts and it most certainly shouldn't be a reason to be down on ourselves. While we cannot control data from the last school year, we do have control over our response and the impact we can have on student achievement this school year. I see it as an opportunity to reflect and reset, let's look at our practices and see what we can do differently to help our students represent what they're really capable of. Let's also reflect on the role each of us plays in supporting our students and teachers so that we can keep chipping away at the achievement gap. In keeping with the theme of homecoming and football, I quote Vince Lombardi - "*Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."* We all have a role and responsibility in our learning community and let's be inspired to do our part to get the kids to really do their best. We have to move away from the mindset that assessments don't matter, though in truth they don't, but foster a mindset where we each of us, students and

staff, want to do our very best and always strive to get the best stats and the highest score! That is Clipper PRIDE.

I'm looking forward to our Homecoming game tomorrow and am hoping to see many of you there to cheer on the Clippers! We got this!

Best wishes for a great weekend and as always, it really is a pleasure serving South Country as your superintendent of schools.

Tony Santana

#clipperPRIDE