Greetings,

To say that I'm so looking forward to our upcoming four day weekend would be an understatement. This has been an especially tough budget season and an extremely challenging time for us as we've all been impacted in one way or another. I also do my best to be forward thinking and am confident that as it is with so much adversity in life, this too will pass and we will continue to do our best to support our learning community. Now it's up to the community to hopefully come out and vote in support of our budget so that we can continue to provide our learners with all of the amazing things we do as a school district.

As we move deeper into May, I continue to be amazed by the creativity and talent of our students. The spring concert season has been pretty fantastic. From our youngest musicians finding their rhythm to our high school performers delivering truly impressive pieces with poise and passion - the energy, the joy, and the pride at these events remind us just how powerful and impactful our programs are. I mean so many of our students participate in our music programs and have access to not only learning instruments and performing, but all of the cognitive benefits that come with music instruction. It really is all good and a huge shout goes to our music department for doing a fantastic job getting groups that are at times larger than 100 students to work in synchrony to produce beautiful music.

Our school art shows have also been a highlight! Hallways transformed into galleries, each piece telling a story, reflecting the imagination and dedication of our young artists and the guidance of their teachers. I really enjoy the different styles, mediums and the fact that I can identify some of the artists the students are emulating is pretty awesome. Getting kids of all ages to work with so many materials is also something I find amazing. Getting my students to work with compasses and rulers was challenging enough for me as a teacher, so it's impressive to see what our art teachers accomplish and the art they inspire their students to produce.

I'm especially looking forward to our District Wide Art Show on Tuesday, May 20. While the budget vote is always a source of tension and stress, the Art Show and the showcasing of some of our talented musicians is always a special event to me, bringing together student work from across the district and giving us a chance to celebrate creativity, collaboration, and expression on a grander scale. I hope you'll stop by and experience it for yourself! These events are such a testament to the importance of the arts in education, and I'm grateful to everyone who helps bring them to life. I'm also grateful for all of the wonderful things our staff does across departments and schools. There are a lot of fantastic things happening in South Country and I'm confident that we'll keep the momentum going despite the challenges we've faced as a community. We are resilient and committed. Still, I know we're all looking to a little reprieve next week as we roll into the final weeks of the school year.

Hoping lots of people come out to vote and support the budget! And wishing everyone a wonderful and restful weekend!

As always, it's a privilege serving you as your superintendent of schools!

And once again - **GO KNICKS!**

Tony Santana
#clipper**PRIDE**