

Greetings,

Here we are, the final Friday before the doors open and our halls come alive again. Soon we'll hear the laughter, the footsteps, and yes, the endless *"Where's my class?" "What's for lunch?" "Can I go to the bathroom?"* requests echoing through our buildings and it'll feel like we never left. But for now, we get one last quiet weekend, a chance to pause, breathe, and gear up for the incredible year ahead.

As I look ahead to the new school year, I've again been thinking about my own personal shift, as it relates to *"Shift Happens: Embrace it. Lead it. Live it."* Change is inevitable, but how we respond is up to us. For me, my shift will be about leaning into the challenges ahead and the unexpected, staying solution-oriented, and always keeping perspective on just how rewarding our work really is. We don't just educate; we inspire, guide, and shape the lives of young people who are counting on us — and that's something I'll be reminding myself of every single day. And along those lines, doing my best to foster a supportive and positive environment for us all despite what challenges come our way.

Again, our Strategic Action Plan will be our roadmap this year, helping us focus on what matters most: academic excellence, the student experience, and operational excellence. It represents the voices of our community, our staff, and our students - and together, it sets a clear vision for where we're headed. The charted path ahead!

And speaking of student experience, I'm really excited about not just pumpkin everything, but the start of fall sports! There's a special energy when we gather as a community to celebrate our student-athletes and the hard work they've put in. This year is especially meaningful as we mark the 50th anniversary of Bellport football - a proud milestone for our school and community. I'm looking forward to seeing our teams compete, our families cheering from the stands, and our Clipper PRIDE on full display across every field, court, and course.

Yes we are stepping into a year of big shifts and one of the biggest will be our new cell phone policy. I've heard the concerns, and I know there's some trepidation, but I genuinely believe this is a change worth making. A distraction-free environment gives our students the chance to be more present, to connect with one another, and to engage fully in learning. And while there will be bumps along the way, we'll tackle them together as we always do. I know we got this.

So, as we head into this weekend, take a moment to rest, recharge, and reflect on why we do this work. Tuesday morning, when our students walk through those doors, they'll

be looking to us - not just for knowledge, but for connection, for stability, and for inspiration. That's the magic we create, and it's why we're here.

Shift happens. But with Clipper PRIDE, teamwork, and heart, we've got everything we need to make this year one to remember.

It really is a privilege serving this community as your superintendent of schools!

Tony Santana
#clipperPRIDE