

Greetings,

A quick recap from Virginia. The trip itself was great, minus the delayed flight on Sunday. With only one flight out of Roanoke, it turned into a very long five hours at the airport. I finally exhaled once I was in my seat heading back to LaGuardia. I also want to share my sincere appreciation to staff members who reached out in response to my last message. Those notes truly meant a lot.

It was wonderful seeing my daughter sing and, admittedly, a little less wonderful seeing my son's new 750 cc motorcycle. He earned it, and I have faith that he will treat it with the care and seriousness it deserves, but the thought of riding such a beast myself is absolutely horrifying. Some things are better admired from a safe distance.

One of the most remarkable parts of the trip was seeing about six inches of snow on the ground as the plane descended into Virginia. It was really quite beautiful, though I'm not entirely sure how I feel about the bit of snow we may be getting this weekend. I'm still easing my way back into snow call season.

Back here at home, I had the pleasure of attending three winter concerts this past week, and once again, I was reminded of the incredible talent of our students and the exceptional work of our music educators. Multiple instruments, so many students on stage, and an incredible level of focus and discipline. To this day, and as much as I've observed music instruction, I still don't quite understand how you get that many students to work in such perfect synchrony. The conductor's stick feels like a magic wand to me. A big shout out to all of the staff involved. What is especially powerful is watching the growth of our young musicians over time. I truly can't get enough of it. A special shout goes to the Critz teachers and staff for their wonderful rendition of The 12 Days of Christmas. It was simply a joyous moment. Another shout out to Santa Clark for spreading so much joy for the kids at Kremer, including alumni who came back for some good tidings.

Despite the challenges we are facing in our school community and the adversity many of us may be experiencing in our personal lives, this time of year offers us an important reminder. Over the years, I've also learned that the holidays can also mean very different things to different people. The season invites us to slow down, be present, and extend a little extra kindness and grace to one another. Sometimes that means listening more, checking in on a colleague, or simply offering patience where it is needed most. In a season that can feel busy and overwhelming, those small moments of care matter, so yes, as the saying goes, let's be good for goodness sake.

I'm looking forward to more music next week and making a few stops in our schools. Wishing everyone a restful, meaningful, and peaceful weekend as we continue into the holiday season.

And as always, it really is a privilege serving this community as your superintendent of schools!

Tony Santana

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