



GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER

From the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

1.25.08



The Power of Certificates

Most administrators during the course of their careers accumulate a lot of plaques, certificates and other awards. It seems that awards come with being an administrator, and are commonplace.

But for so many employees, students and parents, there is little recognition of their efforts. At an awards ceremony a few years ago, a group of parents volunteered to assist. Their efforts made the program possible. At the end of the program we recognized our volunteers and presented each with a certificate of appreciation that was also signed by each principal. The reaction was not anticipated as one parent explained that this was the first time anyone had ever thanked her, no less recognized her efforts with a certificate.

It also seems that whenever there is a **school recognition program for students**, parents make the time to come. While many of our contacts with parents are about negative events, we should all remember the real power of positive communications regarding student achievement.

Recognition is a powerful tool and almost always has positive effects on students, parents and teachers. That is why our Board of Education is interested in ensuring that we have a program for recognition and celebration of success. Certificates, recognition in a newsletter, on the P.A., and in programs for academics, athletics and service, are part of a strong culture of achievement in our schools.

Strong recognition programs send a very powerful message to our school community regarding the pride we take in our school programs and in student and teacher successes. They also communicate gratitude and appreciation for parent and community contributions. These are messages and attitudes we want to communicate on a regular basis.

Santana High School PTSA Honor Roll Awards Ceremony Celebration of Excellence Draws Hundreds of Parents

Wednesday evening was a special night at Santana High School. Hundreds of parents lined up outside of the gymnasium, waiting to check in for the **PTSA Honor Roll Awards Ceremony**. Braving the rain and cold, parents waited patiently for their child's name to be called and be recognized for earning a 3.5 GPA or higher during the fall semester.

The efforts of Santana High School PTSA and its President **Karen Keene** and Principal **Tim Schwuchow** point to a key component of any school program – academic recognition.



Santana PTSA checks in students and parents



Karen Keene addresses parents and students



Santana parents fill the bleachers

There is no question that we tend to recognize that which we feel is important to our school. A quick look at the banners hanging from the walls of our school gymnasiums attest to the importance of athletic competition. Last night, the parents and staff of Santana made a strong statement to the student body and community: **academic achievement counts!**

While it is important for each school to have an academic recognition plan, it's also important for the District to have one. We must continually recognize the accomplishments of our students, administrators and teachers. The **Education Innovator of the Month Award**, presented by our Board of Education to the educator who has demonstrated unique and innovative strategies to improve student achievement is one example of the type of recognition we need to promote. The Board of Education understood the importance of recognition when they established goals for the District last year. Goal IIID states "**Significant recognition and celebration of individual and collective achievements will occur.**" This spring, we will establish a plan that realizes this goal.



The Importance of PTSA Leadership

Another aspect that needs to be acknowledged are the **efforts of the Santana PTSA**. It was clear that PTSA brought out hundreds of parents and organized an important event that had significant impact on the school and community.

It was clear that their work was sincerely appreciated and supported by Santana parents and students alike.

In the coming months, we will be spending time highlighting and discussing how we can **support the efforts of each parent organization in our schools**. It is important that these efforts also be acknowledged and that every parent understands how critical their participation is to their child, our schools and the District.