



# GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER

From the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

## **Learning From Schools**

As I discussed in last week's Newsletter, I am meeting with students, teachers and administrators throughout our District. In addition to building relationships with our community, I am also fashioning a strategic plan to be presented to the Board of Education in February. My schedule is as follows:

Valhalla High School – November 20<sup>th</sup>  
El Capitan High School – November 27<sup>th</sup>  
Mount Miguel High School – November 28<sup>th</sup>  
West Hills High School – December 4<sup>th</sup>  
Helix Charter High School – December 5<sup>th</sup>  
Foothills Adult Center – December 6<sup>th</sup>  
Steele Canyon High School – December 7<sup>th</sup>  
El Cajon Valley High School – December 11<sup>th</sup>  
Monte Vista High School – December 14<sup>th</sup>  
Santana High School – December 18<sup>th</sup>  
Grossmont High School – December 19<sup>th</sup>

## **Recognizing the Stars Among Us**

Sometimes it appears that the media only reports the negative in public education. Unfortunately, we seldom focus on the positive stories that are reported, and the negative always receives more attention.

I want to be sure as we move through the coming months and years that we explain to our parents, legislators, business leaders and community both what is positive and where we have challenges. There is so much to be proud of in Grossmont and we will be informing you about the many events, activities and examples of student achievement that define the Grossmont Union High School District.

Furthermore, we'll report when we have fallen short of expectations and the specific steps we will put in place to address these short-falls. As the public, you deserve nothing less from your school district.

## **Expanding Opportunities for Students Lessons from Chaparral High School**

Last week I had the opportunity to visit Chaparral Continuation High School. Chaparral is our Alternative Education program. The school addresses the needs of students who have not been successful in traditional school programs. **The school is led by a great principal, Lucia Washburn and a strong support services and teaching staff.** It is very clear that each teacher is committed to the success of each student.

There are as many reasons why students may not be successful as there are students. Each student is an individual. Instead of these students simply dropping out of school, there is a powerful program available for them to refocus their lives. From visiting classrooms to talking with teachers and administrators, it was obvious that Chaparral is that powerful program. **Classes are personalized with strong student counseling and support services** personnel working with both the student and their family.

The school has 280 students who are engaged in making up credits and courses and working toward graduation. The school has a waiting list of students seeking an alternative educational path. Presently, there are not enough seats, programs or schools to address the needs of these students. **Any strategic plan needs to address this issue either by developing new programs, building these programs with traditional schools, or a combination of both.**

Over the next two months, we want to identify current programs within traditional high schools that have been established to address "at-risk" students. We will review our adult school program as well as programs at Gateway East and West. We will want to understand how our Regional Occupational Program meets the needs of many students at-risk and how they can be organized to better address those specific student needs. Finally, we want to ensure that our District and school policies all support keeping students in school and providing additional non-traditional learning environments.

Congratulations to the staff at Chaparral for making a difference in the lives of so many students. We have to explore how programs such as Chaparral are supported and expanded to meet the great need in our District.