

## The Season for Giving Thanks

By David Truitt, Superintendent

I love this time of year. The weather is beginning to chill, the leaves are starting to turn and fall, football playoff games are being scheduled, and turkeys are being bought. Trojans everywhere are gearing up for a week of food, family, fellowship, and fun. Thanksgiving is time for everyone to pause and give thanks for the great things that are happening in their lives.

Across West ISD, we are constantly teaching our students the meaning behind Thanksgiving. This season gives us a chance to help nurture a sense of gratitude in our students and community. The Bible tells us in Psalm 107 and 100 to “give thanks to the Lord for he is good” and to “enter his gates with thanksgiving.” That attitude is often lost in our culture today when the focus tends to be on what we do not have versus what we do have. Encouraging and teaching thankfulness in children is no small task. We have learned that once our children understand what it means to be grateful, they begin to develop an awareness of all the great things happening in their lives on a daily basis, as well as learning to live a life of real contentment and gratitude for all that God has given us. For me, we must focus on Thanksgiving not just being one day of the year, but a way we can live our lives all 365 days of the year.

I read in an Online Devotional this week that gratitude is derived from the Latin word, *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness. I love this. I often think of Thanksgiving as gratitude in action. This very thought is what I want for our students. We have so much to be grateful for in West ISD. All three of our fall sports teams advanced in the playoffs, and our Trojan football team is set to play McGregor in bi-district action this Thursday night. Volleyball ended another outstanding season as Area Champions. Our Theater and Band programs have achieved unprecedented success on the marching field and stage. Our FFA program wins Grand Champion recognitions at every show. Our new Vex Robotics team made the finals in Southlake Carroll last weekend. The college acceptance letters for our senior class are rolling in.

With everything going on in our lives, I believe we must stop and “smell the turkey and dressing” and continue our new tradition of remembering the great things that are happening in the lives of the West Trojans. I know every staff member is working hard and loves working with their students, the current round of construction projects are just about done, we are trying new ways to engage our parents, and our students are achieving at unprecedented levels in the classroom, gym, locker room, lab, and barn.

Just recently, a Strategic Planning Team of over 80 parents, staff members, community members, and business leaders met for over a four-week period, hours upon hours, to discuss one thing... ways to make West ISD THE “Education Destination” for current and future families in West. The discussions were all about how we can make West ISD better and keep our vision statement of “children as our first priority” at the forefront of our work. From these meetings came 35 action statements that were all discussed, prioritized, and approved to be implemented at some level over the coming months and years across West ISD.

I am so grateful that we have a large group of parents, staff, and community leaders who were even willing to give up their time to talk about our work. I am also grateful for our Board who understands that we can never rest until we appropriately meet the needs of all our students. The first action statements are listed for possible approval at the next Special Called Board Meeting. We are ready to

make the dream a reality with work on a new track with a turf field behind West Middle/High School and the transformation of the 1967 gymnasium into a new maintenance and operations facility. Next up for the team is a comprehensive review of the West Elementary School building and how we hope to educate and grow our youngest and most in need learners and a discussion on the future of Trojan Field. Finally, the team will begin work on the other 31 action statements and be bold in crafting and implementing solutions for each.

This Thanksgiving, let's take a moment to remember and give thanks for the great things happening in West. We have wonderful students, staff, and parents. We have a supportive Board and community. Let's strive to model for our children a spirit of thankfulness and service for one another. Let's be grateful for what we have and all that is to come. Let's have a mindset of confidence and courage in our work every day of the school year. Enjoy your turkey and thanks for supporting your mighty Trojans!