OPENING DAY OF SCHOOL

SPEECH

FOR

KELLY FALLON

Hello everyone and welcome to the 2012-2013 school year!! (**If there is anyone in particular you’d like to thank, do so here**). I’d like to take a moment to thank a few people who really work tirelessly to support this school district and all of its constituents. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and of course \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I’m glad to see you all made it through our long hot summer, but I have to say that although the summer never seems long enough, I think you would all agree that the adrenalin, energy, and enthusiasm generated in this room, in anticipation of the coming year, is a palpable and **ho**t commodity! I know that I am thrilled to be here, standing on the precipice of another term of educational adventure, and I am also proud to be a part of the strong faculty and administrative teams we have. Each one of you has an impressive history and your work helps to make our schools leaders in the educational community. Every school year brings us a slightly different scenario and blend of students, faculty, issues, and opportunities, and the first day of every year, to me at least, represents all of the possibility we hold in our hands. We have been entrusted with precious cargo and the mandate to prepare our students to inherit the legacies of family, community, and professional responsibility. I bet that each one of you can remember the influential teachers that inspired your lives and informed the way you do things today, and I would imagine that some of the reasons you chose a career in education are a direct result of the interactions and influences that motivated you as a student.

We are all here united in one clear goal and that is to teach, inspire, and encourage the success of **all** students. Every student that enters our schools is a unique and special person, and it is up to us to cultivate the best in each pupil with whom we interact. I am here to support each one of you in honoring the students, creating partnerships with faculty and administration, embracing change and actually celebrating it, acknowledging and honoring diversity, and really discovering the potential in each one of the “future adults” that we have been entrusted to educate. The first day of the school term is the most perfect time to think about those reasons that influenced you to have a profession in education, and to set and recommit to accomplish goals for yourselves and your students, as you have never done before.

This past summer, we all had the opportunity to watch the summer Olympics. Whether we were mesmerized by the participants in track and field events, amused by those in synchronized swimming and diving, or dumbfounded by Olympians in weight lifting and other gravity defying categories, one common thread connected all athletes across all disciplines, and that is the focus, practice and determination required to compete in a very challenging microcosm that is the Olympics. Of course the athletes have extraordinary abilities, but they are human-just like us!! The part that really inspires me is their willingness and determination to learn, train, “give it their all,” focus, and believe in their skills and **themselves**. They also would not be able to learn how to focus, how to train, and what perseverance really means without the constant input and conditioning by their coaches. The truth is, each one of you has the ability to inspire each one of our students to be great. Bob Beamon was a record-breaking track star that competed in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. About his participation in those Olympic games, he said, “If my dreams can happen to me, your dreams can happen to you. Champions are not made on the track or field; **champions are made by the things you accomplish and the way you use your abilities in everyday life situations**." When we believe there is a champion somewhere within each one of our students, we open the doors to the possibility that every one of them has the ability to achieve-maybe not on a grand Olympian scale, but with encouragement, enthusiasm, self-confidence and perseverance, they all have what it takes to go further than they ever have before. Whether in academics, sports activities, or activities involving the humanities, each pupil in our charge **can** achieve beyond their dreams. I want to invite each one of you to dedicate this school year as “The year of Encouragement, Positivity and Possibility,” and truly believe that we can encourage our students to be greater than they might have ever imagined.

To inspire others to greatness, particularly with regard to scholastic achievement, we have to really be in touch with the inner technology that gives a person the will to succeed. **WE** have to believe in endless possibility and **WE** must inspire those in our charge. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we remain open minded and receptive to change, because it is going to happen whether we like it or not! We can see how technology has affected our lives and livelihoods. We can see how fast information moves and we can all see how much information each one of us is expected to synthesize and pass on to others. Although young people have more of a facility to absorb information-think about how quickly a child has the ability to learn a foreign language- our students will need to be grounded and guided and taught how to learn in new ways more adaptable to the times we live in. I remember reading about what life was like in the early 50’s with the advent of television. Back then; there had been some discussion about the “seven minute attention span.” Some people believe that is the time limit at which a child can pay attention, possibly based on the theory that that was the time span between commercials in the early days of television-others believe it is more primal than that and can be traced back to the cave man era-(**If you want to be funny, you can say**) and then again, some people may think the advent of the television era harkened a return to the caveman era-but I digress… (**Wait for the laugh**). Technology now conspires to really play with our concentration more than ever. Everyone in this day and age is getting more and more conditioned to accept sensory input and information bytes in constant and rapid intervals. Multitasking seems like a naïve concept in today’s overly tech obsessed society. Now we “Mega-super-uber-multi-task!!” How many of you observe you friends and family and their simultaneous interactions with their blackberries, iPhones, iPads, laptops, TV’s, gameboys…and on and on and on? Remember the good old days when people would speak in full sentences? I get nostalgic thinking of it!! Now we speak in acronyms! JK!! LOL!! (**Wait for the laugh**) Just as technology advances with the times, people adapt to technology, and we as educators must devise new and creative ways to celebrate innovation while mentoring and guiding our students, and believe me, as we teach, so will we learn, and vice versa. To that end, I encourage all of you to remember to focus, and to encourage your students in positive ways with encouraging techniques, to remain focused. I think awareness is the first critical step to conquering the tendency to drift from the focal point, and I know I will try to be conscious of this, and I hope you will be as well.

In a few moments, we will be off to take our places in the offices and classrooms of our schools. We will work with students we have known and we’ll meet new young people who, whether they know it or not, are hungry for knowledge. I know that you will all “cook up” new and exciting ways to inspire these youngsters to **want** to learn. We also know there will be challenges and I also want to invite all of you to embrace those challenges-they will teach **YOU** more than you would have imagined you would ever learn. Remember that as we teach, we too must be willing to learn and remain open to new ideas. Remember to think of this as “The year of Encouragement, Positivity and Possibility,” and remember that no one in this room is alone. Now more than ever, consider your colleagues as partners. If you have a question or a situation on which you may need an opinion, look to each other for mutual support. It is not ironic that we chose to live our lives surrounded by the opportunity to learn. Knowledge is the greatest gift any one of us can receive or give and I encourage each one of you to maintain an open mind, a dedicated focus, and a positive and encouraging attitude as we make this school year the best one yet for our students and ourselves. Congratulations on being a part of this very special team, and I am honored to work alongside of each one of you as we all do our best to insure the future of this community, this district, and the world around us.

Thank you all and best of luck!