BACK TO SCHOOL SPEECH

FOR

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SAMPLE

Hello everyone!! (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**)…. and now for the words you **NEVER** thought you would want to hear when you were growing up…. **Welcome back to school**!! As I look at all of you I see a group filled with refreshed and eager faces. Hopefully you’ve had a relaxing and fulfilling summer. Rest and regeneration are as much a part of any career as the work itself and it looks like we have a room filled with colleagues that are ready to inspire our students! It is a privilege to work here with you in Rockdale 84!! I have looked forward to this day for quite some time and even with the various challenges we, or any teaching professional faces in the current educational climate, it will be a testament to our ingenuity, creativity, and willingness to find new and exciting ways to teach our students that will make this an awesome year. . As educators we have been entrusted with a very special mandate- to teach and **inspire** those who will form the future. It’s an **awesome** responsibility…. and a great opportunity, as I am sure you all know.

Education has become complex and we all have to adapt to new rules and regulations. From new standards, assessments and teacher evaluations to added budgetary challenges, it is up to us as teachers to work together to insure that each student is treated with respect and the attention and motivation they need. It is up to each one of us to maintain open minds and do our best to learn as we teach. The environment is ripe for you to demonstrate ownership as you learn and in turn you will lead by example. Now more than ever, change is inevitable and constant and education has become an organic, living, practice. My job is to enable you to continue to empower your students. Of course it is my intention for you to have the tools and resources to accomplish greatness, and even when we face challenges, we will work together to maintain an environment of empowerment for each student- that, after all, is why we are here. After all is said and done, it will be our collective creativity and dedication to our goals that will enable that condition of awesomeness!

We also must keep in mind the importance of growth and achievement. At this point we know that every student does not fit into the same mold. We have to really listen and observe and learn to leverage our students’ interests and passions, strengths and talents as inspired by Daniel Pink’s vision of Genius Hour. Albert Einstein said, “ Everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.” The truth is, in this day and age, we are smart enough and observant enough to realize that if we don’t play to the student’s strengths, if we don’t encourage a passion for learning, we end up with waste, counterproductivity, and even more obstacles blocking our path to achievement.

Here at Rockdale 84 we are committed to being **awesome**…. to set goals and to exceed them, to encourage students to reach further than they have in the past, and to find the tools within each one to make a habit out of accomplishment. Some will have a more innate ability while others will need more support, but we will find the way for each student to win at learning. Wouldn’t that be **awesome**??

You might be wondering, “How can we set such goals in an environment filled with challenges?” That’s the FUN part! We will work with each other and discover the tools and strategies that support our collective goals. Steven Johnson, author of ***Where Good Ideas Come From***, tells us of seven patterns of innovation found in nature and culture. Why not use his observations to spark our own ideas for innovative new learning models? And that’s just the beginning!

The coming year is ours to chart. We know that not every day will be awesome, but every day we will work toward becoming awesome, to produce results, and to inspire our students. Helen Keller said, “ Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing.” No one expects an adrenalin rush every day, but remember- we spend long days here. We are building the future through our students. Help them to **want** to learn. Encourage them to find the wonder in discovery. Make them feel like they belong to something really worthwhile. Fill your classrooms with a spirit of enthusiasm and alacrity. And in the process, let us know how **you’re** doing. Tell us what works and let us know if you need support in transforming something that doesn’t work.

It is my intention that all of the members of our community, Rockdale School District 84… and that includes teachers, administration, and of course our students, experience a school year filled with challenges, solutions, discovery and growth. Keep in touch- with each other, your principal, and with me. I’m very excited to be a part of the next chapter in the educational system of this school district, after all, remember- I have a vision for us… and it’s **AWESOME**!

I know we’ve begun to cover a lot of ground today. I want you to know we’re a team. Let’s face it, **AWESOME IS AS AWESOME DOES**. The late Andy Rooney said, “Most of us end up with no more than five or six people who remember us. Teachers have **thousands** of people who remember them for the rest of their lives.” Think of the mentors and influential people whose wisdom and example inspired **you**. Think of your teachers that were awesome and unforgettable. Let’s work together to inspire the next generation… Now it’s **YOUR** turn… **GO BE AWESOME!** Thank you all!