

Building Futures Together in West ISD

By David Truitt, Superintendent

Wow, it's hard to believe, but the last day of school is just around the corner. This Saturday, May 19, 2018, at 2:00 PM, ninety-three West High School graduates will walk across the stage at Baylor University's Ferrell Center and receive their diplomas from Board President, Dr. Larry Sparks, and Principal, Don Snook. It has been quite the journey for the Class of 2018, but I know they are excited about turning their tassels and singing the "Spirit of West High".

As you may recall, the district-wide theme for the 2017-2018 school year was "Building Futures Together." Throughout the school year, students and parents saw "construction-themed" decorations, events, and slogans as we focused on our students and their preparation for the next grade level, school year, and even life after graduation. We recognized that our students were and still are constantly "under construction", and in need of the best possible ways to meet their many unique and individual needs. As I reflect on the school year, this theme helped me remember all the great things our students accomplished in in the classroom, gym, locker room, lab, and barn. Also, the construction side of the theme reminded me of all our hard work in helping rebuild West ISD.

First, this theme provided our District the constant reminder that we must prepare our students for the day after graduation. Whether the next step for each student entails a two or four year university route, a trade school certification, a licensing program, serving in the military, or a job, our hope is that each student is truly college or career ready. Nowhere is this goal more prevalent than with our senior class. I am very proud of our seniors, and all they have accomplished. They have left a true legacy at West High School. The seniors led us to uncharted territory in many of our extracurricular activities. This year, we sent more students to state-level competitions than ever before, and our FFA, Fine Arts, Athletic, and Academic teams, once again, achieved at high levels. Throughout the year, we had many outstanding individual, group, and team performances by the Dazzlers, Pride of West Marching Band, Technology Student Association (TSA), and Theater Department. Our One Act Play team advanced, and our Marching Band finished one place away from advancing to state. We had three state Power Lifters, and a Vex Robotics team state qualifier. Our Milk Quality and Livestock Judging Teams once again advanced to state. We had thirty state Top 10 finishers in TSA, and for the first time ever, our West High School Destination Imagination team placed second at state and advanced to Global Finals. We had much success in football, cross country, volleyball, basketball, golf, track, and softball, and our baseball team is now playing in round 3 of the state playoffs.

Next, this theme reminded me of our many construction projects across West. This year, West ISD rededicated the 1923 and 1957 buildings, began work on the new football and track athletic complex, completed the work on the baseball and softball complex, and finished the move to the new support services building. Our Strategic Planning Team met and presented thirty-five action statements to our Board in hopes to move our school district from good to great. Our vision and goal for a new West Elementary School came up short, but has invigorated our community to continue to discuss ways to best educate our elementary-aged students in West, now and in the future. We still believe the community of West can and should do more for our youngest learners. Our West Elementary School students and staff deserve the safest and best learning environment possible.

As you can see, we are blessed in West. The future lives of many students were ignited or refined throughout the year. We achieved many great things and have shared many honors and special

moments. Across West, I still believe the key to our success centers on the last word of the 2017-2018 theme. Yes, we build and have built futures, but we didn't do it alone or in isolation. We did it... together. For me, this is what makes our community so special. We have caring teachers, involved parents, and supportive community members and leaders working together for the good of our many Trojans. Congratulations again to the Class of 2018! Let's keep building exciting futures in West!