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Superintendent Challenges Employees to Strive for 100 Percent Success Rate in 2009-10

Plano, Texas, August 26, 2009—Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto challenged his 7,000 colleagues to strive for nothing less than a 100 percent success rate for all students, during his keynote speech at Convocation 2009, an all-employee pep rally held on August 18 at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano. Event sponsors were Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano, a four time sponsor of the event, and THE HEART HOSPITAL Baylor Plano, a three-year sponsor of Convocation.

His address to employees centered around the district's 2009-10 school year theme, 'Leading Edge Education.' "I love this profession," he said, before sharing his vision for the 2009-10 school year.

Plano ISD must position itself on the leading edge of education, "and we must never, ever rest on our laurels," he told employees. "We must maintain non-negotiable goals for student achievement and effective instruction.

Quoting statistics from Jim Collins' book about high reliability organizations, Dr. Otto emphasized keys to succeed, including adopting a system wide approach to instruction, investing in professional development; and nurturing strong instructional leadership.

"Post-secondary readiness equals job readiness and/or college readiness," Dr. Otto maintained. "Plano ISD must continue to confront achievement gaps, and every teacher must ask himself or herself with every lesson, 'Is this lesson preparing students for post-secondary readiness?'"

His message was simple: Raise your expectations and leave your comfort zone. "It's up to all of us to build student/teacher relationships, to help turn students' dreams into reality and to help students better understand how to prepare for college," he stressed. With an emphasis on acknowledging and addressing student deficits, Dr. Otto said, "High reliability organizations have a commitment to excellence."

Dr. Otto also humored employees with his annual "Top 10" list. In Letterman fashion, he counted down the ways to know if your superintendent is "losing it." Employees howled with laughter.


Dr. Otto concluded his speech by challenging each employee to carry out the district's vision statement, adopted by school trustees in the 2008-2012 strategic plan. "This pretty much says it all," Dr. Otto remarked about Plano ISD's vision statement, which reads as follows:

Participating in Plano ISD schools empowers students to be able to adapt to new learning opportunities throughout their lives, collaborate with and contribute to the global community and be creative and disciplined in their thinking.

Dr. Otto's speech highlighted a morning filled with inspirational performances by students and staff.

Drill team students from the three senior high schools pumped up the audience, wearing caps and gowns and dancing and singing to "We're All in This Together," a theme song from the hit show "High School Musical." They were joined on stage by students representing several ages and grade levels.

Accompaniment was provided by the talented Plano ISD Staff Concert Band and Plano ISD Staff Choir, directed by Jeff Turner and Kathy Kuddes, respectively. Earlier in the program, the groups performed the "Star Spangled Banner" and the song "Give Us Hope." The Plano West Senior High School JROTC presented colors prior to the singing of the National Anthem.

Approximately 70 Plano ISD alumni who are members of the school district's faculty and staff represented their 500 peers districtwide by joining Beth Webb, Plano ISD Education Foundation president, on stage to kick off the program. They were also featured in a pre-event [alumni video presentation](#) .

"We're Plano Proud!," was their unanimous shout out from the stage, before they joined the staff choir in the choir loft to enjoy the program. At the program conclusion, the alumni joined in a celebratory cap toss. Ms. Webb, also donning cap and gown, opened Convocation with greetings and a message from the [Plano ISD Education Foundation](#). She explained the Foundation's new alumni initiative which will include an annual newsletter, website and an alumni challenge to raise funds for the Foundation's programs to support students and staff.

Four lucky Plano ISD employees won door prizes secured by the district's academic and technology services team.

Beginning Teachers of the Year Ashley Jones, Jackson Elementary, and Thanh Duc Nguyen, Carpenter Middle School, helped Dr. Otto make the following presentations.

- West Cluster - Jan Mucha, Mitchell Elementary School second grade teacher, Asus Eee PC Netbook
- Central Cluster - Stacey Noble, Mathews Elementary School librarian, Asus Eee PC Netbook
- East Cluster - Jeanne Dean, Murphy Middle School seventh grade math teacher, Asus Eee PC Netbook
- Support Staff - Diane George, Career Education Department secretary, Samsung 23" LCD 1080p HDTV sponsored by Verizon

The Plano Independent School District (Plano ISD) – <http://www.pisd.edu/> – endeavors to foster the highest level of student learning. The mission of Plano ISD is to provide an excellent education for all students. Plano ISD is located 20 miles north of Dallas, Texas and serves the residents of approximately 100 square miles in southwest Collin County, including 66 square miles in the city of Plano, northern portions of the cities of Dallas and Richardson and parts of the cities of Allen, Parker and Murphy. Plano ISD employs 7,000 faculty and staff members who serve more than 55,000 students in 70 schools and 11 service facilities. Participating in Plano ISD schools enables students to adapt to new learning opportunities throughout their lives, collaborate with, and contribute to, the global community and to be creative and disciplined in their thinking.