

Superintendent's Monthly Message
January 2014

Ready or not, 2014 has arrived for all of us. I hope that everyone had a very pleasant and restful break with your families and friends. In keeping with one of our great traditions, you have probably made one or more New Year's Resolutions. Some have claimed that the idea of New Year's resolutions started about 3000 years ago in ancient Babylonia, when the Babylonians promised their gods that in the coming year they would pay their debts and return borrowed items. Of course today, making New Year's resolutions has evolved into making general attempts at improving one's self and/or to effect change in some form. But, according to one recent survey, 40 percent of those who made a resolution said that they had so many other things to do that they couldn't keep their resolutions. Another 33 percent said they weren't really committed to their resolutions to begin with. As I reflect back on my many resolutions, I can say that I have not done a good job at keeping my resolutions. And I am sure that I am only one of the millions who have broken their resolutions since the Babylonian times. Do you intend to keep your resolution? And if you do, do you intend to work at keeping it?

Aside from your personal resolutions, have you made any professional resolutions? For our profession, the New Year's Resolutions usually comes at the beginning of the school year and not the calendar year, where we resolve to do a better job keeping up with our grading, to do more professional reading, to get more organized, etc. For students, teachers and administrators, the New Year it is a mid-year opportunity to recommit to best practices and for getting our professional and educational lives back on track. This year, let's not hang our heads when the promises we make to ourselves fall by the wayside. Instead, let's vow to make changes we can all get on board with. Let us resolve to *'Do Whatever It Takes'* to make our District a premier small school district in California.

Public education is changing. It needs to change and it must change. But how we build a better educational system must change to meet the demands of our students, families, and communities, while maintaining our core values. We live in an ever-changing world. Everything we know transcends into everything we once knew. We will at some point need to make a choice. We either fall to mind-numbing activity or continue to operate with little to no productivity. Or we can choose to embrace change, and begin to imagine the possibilities beyond what's immediately apparent in order to engineer our way toward more meaningful and productive organizational outcomes. If we are going to remain relevant, we must have a constant flow of creativity, innovation, and imagination. If we care about our District, our students, families, and community, we will let go of our need to keep everything the same, and in doing so we will have kept our promise to our students, families, and community. Truly great organizations understand the difference between what should never change and what should be open for change; between what is genuinely sacred and what is not. Organizations that enjoy enduring success have core values and a core purpose that remain fixed over time, while their organizational strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world. These organizations continually question their structure and revamp their processes, while preserving the ideals embodied in their mission. This should be the basis of our professional resolutions.

Welcome Back and Happy New Year,

Dr. Matthew W. Ross