

Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing

April 8, 2019

As we enter the state testing season, I want to share a word of affirmation, appreciation and encouragement. I have seen many of you going above and beyond what is required in an effort to ensure that our students get off to a great start with this first round of testing.

I recognize that over the course of this year, we have stretched the limits and increased the demand on each one of you – and I am encouraged in how we have collectively responded. I acknowledge that what we have asked people to do may seem like a lot. To some it may have been overwhelming. To others it may appear to be too much, disconnected or unnecessary. Implementing new systems, structures and expectations is never easy and is oftentimes fraught with starts, stops and restarts. As in any change process, we must remember that continuous improvement is a process that is not always smooth and is not without stress, anxiety and pressure.

This weekend I was reviewing a podcast on organizational success and change management. The presenter was discussing the stages necessary for high performance. He mentioned that high functioning organizations that experience sustainable success go through the phases of forming, storming, norming and performing. It was interesting to hear that these stages are not always experienced in a linear fashion. As I reflect on where we are as district and a team, I believe we have been in the forming and storming stage. This is a trying period, but if we commit to the plan, the process and the procedures we are putting in place and normalize our actions and expectations across the district, then in a short period of time we will be performing at the level we all desire and our students deserve.

As our students prepare for testing this week, **I encourage you to speak life into them and let them know you believe in them.** Several studies have emphasized the fact that the students we serve respond more to relationships and expectations than anything else. It is not what they think they can do or what you think they can do that makes the most difference – it is what they think that you think they can do that matters most. Please let them know that you think that they can achieve success and that you expect them to do their very best.

The reality is for some our students, your words of encouragement will be the boost that they need to focus and do well. If we have established the right relationships, they will do more for us because we expressed a belief in them.

Thank you for your continued focus as we progress as a team through the forming, storming, norming and performing stages of development as an organization. I am so thankful to be part of a team that is pursuing high performance and committed to becoming the top educational choice in Tarrant County.

Have an outstanding week!



Michael McFarland

