

Greetings,

March tends to be an extremely long month. Now I know in terms of days, there are only three months that are technically shorter, but March just seems to linger.

In terms of school, this is the time when we all start feeling a bit worn down. People who don't work in education can't really appreciate the feeling, especially considering that many of us have the summers off and breaks in between. There is just something about this time of year where we just feel it. On top of all this, the budget season is always intense as we push through the challenge of making projections for the upcoming school year, especially during a time when state funding is in doubt. I know we have been here before, but it just feels different.

For me March was forever changed in 2020. This week marked the four year anniversary of the start of the pandemic. I clearly remember the feeling on Friday, March 13, when schools were closed for what we thought would be two weeks. I probably shouldn't admit this, but at the time I thought we'd simply have to wait it out. A two week incubation period and this ^a too would pass. It was an unexpected break in the school year and a time to perhaps rest up and energize for the remainder of the year. I wasn't that upset by it. Then it felt not only was I living in some fictionalized nightmare, but that things as we knew it would never be the same. I was exposed at the time and so I had to quarantine with my kids. I was getting calls from the DOH or CDC with stark warnings, including a note that was a yellow door warning not to leave the premises. It was surreal. The following weeks were terrifying with the daily counts of people dying around the world and it seemed like every day or two, someone I knew lost a relative or worse, passed away themselves. Not to mention the emotional toll the pandemic had on us' mu o the

learning loss or the impact on our mental health, we have the ability to really make a difference. Well, at the very least, prepare our students to forge a better future ahead.

I'll admit, in many ways I'm speaking to myself just as much as I am to all of you. I too stress and yes, struggle. Life has a funny way of throwing things your way, never at the opportune time. But when do we live the life we want to live? When do we stop being passengers and take charge? I've said it before and I'll say it again, we have more power than we suspect. Let's work on making our amazing so that our future is even better. We got this. I know we do.

Make the best of your freedoms and of your health. Pray for those who might be less fortunate. Do for those you can help make better.

As always, it really is a pleasure serving the South Country community as your superintendent of schools. I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity and the capacity to really be impactful. Thank you too for doing your part.

Tony Santana
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