



Dear Administrators,

Welcome to a new school semester! I am excited about our possibilities together. This year will present many great opportunities for growth and greatness. Both will take courage from everyone involved.

During our board retreat and throughout the year, we will have an opportunity to talk about the past, present and future of SLPSD. I will focus my message on the four stages of greatness that will take us to the next level in education!

Preparation

Planting

Growth (including pruning)

Harvest

Two years ago (2016-2017), we started the preparation phase. During this phase, we did our foundational work (tilled the ground, fertilized it, decided which plants to plant) by reviewing and purchasing tier one (1) resources, identifying opportunities to improve immediately and improving processes and procedures.

Last year (2017-2018), we planted our seeds and produced a great harvest... a growth of 13 points on our DPS!

This year we must continue the growth process but look at ways that we can prune ourselves to see how we can maximize our growth, both academically and also financially. That may mean consolidating, reconfiguring or closing schools. Pruning is never exciting and requires a lot of work and challenges; however, it is necessary for greater growth!

In the book, *Water the Bamboo*, greatness or success is a process that requires patience and constant attention to the plants. *Water the Bamboo* is a metaphor for success. It's a concept based on a type of bamboo that grows like no other plant in the world. Giant bamboo timber can grow 90 feet in 60 days – that's a foot and a half a day! Some claim that you can hear it grow. Wouldn't you like to have that type of growth in St. Landry Parish Schools or your personal life?! However, what's even more amazing is that once it's planted, it takes at least three years to break through the ground. Timber bamboo farmers water the seed and tend to it faithfully, even though there's no visible growth for years. Sounds like children and the teaching profession to me. What are we going to work on that will require us to continue to tend it even when you don't see the results immediately!?

Just like in all things that are produced, it requires us to know when to plant and when to harvest. For a novice like myself, that requires a guide. The guide that my father used faithfully was the *Farmers Almanac*. It provided long-range weather forecasts, best days, full moon dates and times, astronomy information, gardening tips, home remedies and more. Our guide will be our strategic plan. It will provide us with a guide that will help us move intentionally and help us grow our Harvest beyond our wildest dreams.

I am looking forward to this week and our future success but more importantly our "Excellence in education for every student, every day." Success is often measured by comparison to others, Excellence, on the other hand, is all about being the best we can be and maximizing our gifts, talents, and abilities to perform at our highest potential. Pursue Excellence every day for every student!

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