

Chicken Soup

for

Friendswood ISD

Life is like a book in so many ways. Each stage is a chapter that is either hard to read, one that you never want to end or one that you would prefer to flip through to see what is next. Nonetheless, we have chapters that are marked up and maybe even have a bookmark to look back and enjoy again. Those chapters for me and the ones where the Lord really makes a calling to something specific and bigger than a job or an assignment.

One of those chapters for me was when I was a head basketball coach in Haviland, KS prior to my return home to Friendswood. Haviland is a small, rural community west of Wichita. Tina and I went to college in that town and then got teaching jobs together in the local school system. This began a journey with a group of kids for me that began with teaching and coaching them in junior high and then moving up with them to high school. I got to coach the girls' varsity team for a segment of time and then ended as a boys' varsity basketball coach. As I look back and read this chapter, I realize now as these kids have become parents, coaches, teachers, administrators and even superintendents, how blessed I was to have been chosen to write in their book - in their chapter as they developed and grew. This year, one of those young men I coached who became a teacher, principal, and now a soon-to-be superintendent, came down to shadow me in Friendswood for a couple of days. As we debriefed after living through three days of the life of a Friendswood Superintendent, I realized as he spoke about his beliefs and approach to education and instruction how special that time was for me with Morgan and the other kids I got to be with during those 5 years. It was a special chapter for me. One that I like to look back at and smile.

Another chapter that I am in now that is one that I feel that I was called to write was being the Superintendent of Friendswood ISD. When I think about the beginning of this chapter, I did not pursue being a superintendent at any school district - I was called to Friendswood. This has been a challenging chapter for the last five years. It has taken a toll on me and my family. There have been many nights during hurricanes, COVID, and other things that we have faced, that I have knelt at the side of the bed and told the Lord that I did not feel that I had what it takes to finish the next page of the chapter. However, the Lord provides in those special chapters and He has done so in mine. This chapter has also provided the most joy for me as I see the work we do as a team - community, teachers, administration, Board, employees - positively impact the students of FISD and the culture of our District. There is nothing better than being at a concert, a robotics competition, a rocket launch, an athletic event, or a play and seeing the smiles and hearing the cheers directed towards young adults in the midst of formation and identity and knowing the impact that we are all writing for them. It is the best.

I have gotten a peek into a new chapter in my life that early on looks to be a special one. I am a grandpa. Peter Luke Thomas was born to my daughter Maggie and her husband Luke on March 18th, 2022. From that time, as I have gotten to hold him, give him a bath, watch videos sent to me and spend time on the floor with Peter Luke, he seems to be something I think about constantly. I am quick to talk about him and show a picture. This chapter in my book should have pictures for sure. So far, I feel like this young man has helped me gain some newfound perspective that was needed and also helped me to recalibrate what defines me and who I give that power to.

-Thad J Roher, FISD Superintendent