

The Necessity of Spring Break

By John Chapman

Spring break is nearly here. Allow me to speculate a little when I say that majority of non-educator public opinion might think spring break is a frivolity, when in reality, it is a necessity. Students of all ages seem to develop spring fever as the weather turns warmer, and the daylight hours allow more time for outside play. The teachers are pushing forward with all their might getting students ready for the TAKS test. The end result—everyone is just plain tired. Spring break comes at a crucial time in education. Administrators, staff and students need that one week of down time in order to finish the year more productively. The first portion of the TAKS test was administered last week to various grade levels. I have it on good authority that some students and teachers did not leave the campuses until after 5pm on the test day. That is dedication. Testing is very mentally fatiguing for both parties—students and teachers alike. Consequently, spring break is a necessary vacation which will hopefully enhance productivity and performance to all involved in education. When we return from spring break, all grade levels will be taking the TAKS tests in April.

Although there is a lot of emphasis on TAKS and for very good reason, there are also many other avenues which are very important within our school system. At the present time, the district is applying for several grants to enhance different parts of education. One of the grants we're applying for is called the *21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant* or *21st CCLC*. The purpose of the grant is to develop highly effective and rigorous after-school programs, preferably in middle and high schools. The primary goals of the Texas 21st CCLC after-school program are to: reduce the dropout rate; improve academics; improve attendance; improve behavior; improve promotion rates; and improve graduation rates.

CISD is also applying for three other grants—Counselor's grant, History grant and library grant. Each of these grants, in a nutshell, will enhance these three departments in order to provide top notch education in these areas.

As Easter comes early during spring break this year, please remember to be safe during your travels and also remember the true meaning of Easter—the sacrifice of life to have Life. We are so fortunate to live where we live and to possess the freedoms we have. I feel fortunate to have this job in a place where education is revered as fundamental to our future.