



9-12

I can't tell you what a breath of fresh air it was to see Homecoming Week at WEM High School. From the "Meet the Candidates" Monday to Homecoming Volleyball Night to lunch kick-ball tournament to the Friday day of float making/door decorating, it brought me back to my own high school days where all students participated in the dress up days, celebrated each other's events and shown an overall excitement about their school and being a Buccaneer!

It wasn't a couple of days and we were at conference week where we connected with kids about the halfway point of grades and making sure all were on track to pass the classes we had started just four weeks ago. Great student meetings in the early part of the week with parent conferences towards the end made this a successful week of expectations and progress coming together. With a football/volleyball conflict, conferences were not attended very well, but for those that did show up, we had great discussions and hope that students would work hard to get grades up or stay the same. We will see as the quarter continues.

MEA week was then upon us and a nice short week was enjoyed by all. Upperclassmen were discussing schools they were going to visit over the break and underclassmen discussed how they were going to sleep in for the first time in months. As breaks usually do, it came at the perfect time for all and enjoyed by most. With Halloween/Quarter 1 ending in a few days, we are excited to see what next quarter brings and hoping we have all learned something this first time around. Personally, I have learned a ton and hope that our year will continue on this positive journey.

We recently reported to MDE about our A & I grant. We had three goals to accomplish in a three year span. Our first goal was to improve ACT test scores from a 19.8 in 2023 to a 22.0 by June 30, 2026. We did not meet our goal or even our baseline by students scoring a composite score of 17 in 2023 and that lowering to a composite score of 16.7 last year. We are going to monitor what we do for ACT prep, work with this year's juniors to come up with a plan to make sure that scores improve in some fashion and build into our school day, a way to assist these students in preparing for and accomplishing a goal of doing well for college prep.

Our second goal was to raise the students' feelings of being safe at school, from the 81% baseline to a 100% in the three-year span. From the School Perspectives survey given last year, it looked like 85% of the students did feel safe at school. Even though we are moving in the right direction, we are not gaining as many percentage points as we need to meet the goal. It is something I would like to find out from our student body, but feel school board approval would need to be agreed upon for a survey to be sent out to students.

Finally, our third goal was to hire and maintain a staff with some diversity going from 3% to 5% by the next school year. It was told to me that we have had a couple of part-time employees with a diverse background a few years ago, but they have since left the district with no new employees making up this category for us. We will continue to monitor applications and promote a culture of diversity allowing all types of staff to be hired across the district.

Brandon Tagg
WEM High School Principal