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As I watch the Summer Olympic Games, I'm reminded of two things: success normally follows intentional preparation and time doesn't stand still. Both of these principles are alive and well at Guthrie Public Schools as we continue to prepare our students for the world ahead.

Intentional preparation is so important for anything where success is the ultimate goal. The Olympians have trained for more hours than anyone could imagine in order to get an opportunity on the biggest of stages, the Olympic Games. It takes me back to my coaching days. In practice, I intentionally pushed my basketball team far beyond the intensity of a game. While this provided long hours of grueling practice, it also produced teams with little fear of the opponent even when that opponent was more talented. Their trust in our preparation and confidence in the big picture of why we were practicing so hard produced an unbelievable "buy in." I can remember one opposing coach telling me following a game, "Your kids really enjoy playing together." Even today, I consider this the ultimate compliment because his observation showed the kids trusted each other and the adults. Many old school coaches use the phrase, "that kid will run through a wall for you." Trust and loyalty such as this can only be earned over time. Recently, I spoke to a small group of new teachers about the trust our school district has earned from the community. We continue to build on that trust by striving for improvement in every area of what we offer. We will push our students to succeed because high expectations are never a bad thing. Supporting our students in success and failure are what make public education the greatest investment our community offers.

The second observation is the sad reality that time doesn't stand still. Michael Phelps will finish this Olympic competition as the most decorated Olympian of all time. Most of the senior class at Guthrie High School were 2 years old when Phelps (15 years old at the time) competed in his first Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia in 2000. As I watched this competitor and thought of the highs and lows he has experienced in his life, I couldn't help but think about how hard he is fighting against father time. His first Olympic competition was 7 years before anyone knew what an iPhone was. Now television announcers ponder if his body can take the demands of two races that lack ample rest between them. I can remember Olympic swimming before Michael Phelps but this year's senior class cannot. This brings me to a question, how many of you realized that this spring will mark the 50th year of service for our current high school?

Our community is losing a true champion for public education. Robert and Shayla Simpson have called Guthrie home for the last 10 years. While Robert worked with the management team at the Lazy E Arena, his wife Shayla championed many causes that were geared toward helping children in this community. I first met her soon after I had been named Superintendent of GPS. She wanted to discuss the possibility of placing a Pre-K classroom in a nursing facility. To call her persuasive is a huge understatement. She became the driving force of what has been one of our most

celebrated initiatives known as our intergenerational Pre-K classroom. When the time came for volunteers to champion our bond proposals, she was leading the way. Many people can say they support your cause but Shayla speaks with her actions. Her persuasiveness on many occasions placed more than one merchant, voter or donor in the uncomfortable position of knowing you couldn't say no for her cause. Her servant attitude to help others will be missed in our community as their family relocates to Colorado for new opportunities. Once again, a sad reminder that time doesn't stand still.

We can now look to a new school year with anticipation as we begin the intentional preparation of tomorrow's leaders. Watching the Olympic medal ceremonies reminds me of those steamy May evenings at "The Rock" when our graduation takes center stage. That intentional preparation begins now and success is waiting. Welcome back Bluejays...time never stands still.