

**LOCAL**

**SUPERINTENDENT:** Bryant says students are like baseballs, they are all the same at the core

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the new leader of Bullard ISD. He said he wants everyone to apply excellence one student at a time.

"We want to move from mediocrity to excellence," Bryant said. "Not to say we are mediocre now... it's what we need to do on a day to day basis."

The goal he said is to raise the TASK scores in all areas. Although the test should not define a school, he said it is how the community, state and media holds the district accountable.

As the district gets closer to its goal of excellence - just like a trail to the top of a mountain- the goal becomes more difficult to achieve.

"You get to the point where you can see the peak but you don't see the trail," he said. "You see your goals but not how you are going to get there."

Bryant said when the school reaches the top academically, the view is amazing. But how does one get to that point?

The answer is found in a baseball.

Baseballs are all the same,



Photo by Jim Epperson

Fourth grade teachers Kimmy Watkins (holding baseball), Angie Branner and Teresa Green received a baseball as part of Superintendent Keith Bryant's speech during a district-wide Bullard ISD meeting.

but what makes them difference? Once unraveled all baseballs have a rubber core.

"Every kid that walks through a Bullard ISD school door is the same because their

heart and core is the same," he said.

"Some kids we may be the

first adults they see since they were dropped off by the bus at home," he said. "Some kids

may only hear 'I love you' from their teachers."

So what makes some baseballs different in value if their cores are the same? What makes some kids different if their core is the same?

What makes a Babe Ruth baseball \$150,000 when the baseball in a kids backpack is almost worth nothing?

"The touch of a human makes the difference."

Just as Babe Ruth made a ball better by his autograph, teachers have to decide what autograph they are going to leave.

Will it be a joke? Will it be smudged? Will it be fake? Or will it be authentic?

"You'll have an opportunity to be sure your signature is authentic on a child's core," he said.

Then he passed a Bullard baseball to everyone in the room. He said a student is going to need their authentic autographs this year. One student in one of their classes is going to need a teacher's authentic and he encouraged them to do so.

**APPRECIATION:** Churches honor local teachers before school starts

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teachers how much we appreciate them by setting up the lunch, cooking, cleaning up, whatever needs to be done. I'm here to serve the teachers and Christ."

Several churches around the area pitched in to help First United Methodist Church Bullard put on the luncheon, including Bridlewood Church and First Baptist Church. With a

multitude of home cooked food and free school supplies covering the tables, FUMC Bullard church member Martha Dinwiddie felt that today's lunch was about love.

"I was a teacher once, so I know how it is, going into a new school year and all," Dinwiddie said. "They do so much work for all the kids in the district and at Brook Hill and I think it's impor-

tant that they know without a doubt how much they are appreciated."

Brook Hill headmaster Rod Fletcher summed up what he hopes Brook Hill students and faculty will get out of the new school year.

"It's going to be a great 12th year for Brook Hill with the completion of the new buildings,

more than 100 new students and the newly hired faculty," Fletcher said. "I hope that my school will continue to be a college prep school centered around Christ."

At Bullard Primary School, teacher aide Nadine Hollingsworth and first grade teacher Gwen Dupree had a more specific objective in mind

for their students.

"Of course we're hoping for great things," Dupree said. "But for the upcoming year, every student is going to learn how to read. That's our goal."

New teacher Robin Ramsey from Jacksonville, who will teach fifth and sixth grade at Bullard Intermediate School, said that as the school year begins, she has

high hopes for her students, and thought the lunch was a great way to kick off the year.

"I want to make a difference in the life of a child this year," Ramsey said. "I hope that this year brings lots of friends and fun too. Bullard is an awesome place, and I can't wait to be a part of everything."

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