



NORTH EAST CONNECTIONS



A Publication of the North East Independent School District



A young student and his parents practice inhaler use at the most recent Asthma Blow Out! Health and Education Fair.



Superintendent of Schools Richard Middleton joins thousands of families at the district's annual community health fair.

North East ISD promotes culture of health and wellness

For more than three years, North East ISD has taken a proactive, integrated approach in addressing the health of its students and employees, as it focuses on disease management, physical activity and nutrition. School staff, including administrators, teachers, cafeteria workers, coaches, and nurses, coordinate their efforts to help make this possible.

The district also provides thousands of parents and community members with valuable information on asthma control, obesity prevention and healthy lifestyle choices. In fact, NEISD took the lead by developing curriculum specifically centered on healthy lifestyles that is now a required course for all of its high school freshman.

Reinforcing the message at home, in the classroom, cafeteria and school gym is key to creating positive behavior change. Below you'll find some additional achievements that have helped create a culture of health and wellness at NEISD.

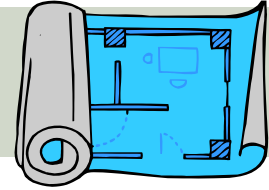
- ★ In 2010-2011, NEISD and H-E-B partnered to launch a pilot program in 10 schools to teach students the importance of health and wellness.
- ★ In 2010, NEISD is awarded a three-year, \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to implement the "Wellness in North East" project.
- ★ NEISD reaches out to thousands in the community with outreach events such as health, mental wellness and Asthma Blow Out! education fairs.
- ★ NEISD, Discovery Education and Discovery Education's Chief Spokesperson for Environmental Education Philippe Cousteau teamed up to promote healthy lifestyle choices, 21st century digital learning, personal responsibility and the environment.
- ★ NEISD Superintendent of Schools Richard A. Middleton was selected as the 2010 Texas Health Champion Award winner by the Michael and Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living at the University of Texas and Live Smart Texas.
- ★ NEISD develops Healthy Lifestyles curriculum for high school students. The curriculum is currently being evaluated by Texas legislators as a potential tool to implement across the state.

Inside this Issue

■ Bond 2007 Project Update ■ Dellview Scholars ■ School Nutrition Web Resources ■ District Diversity ■ Technology in the Classroom

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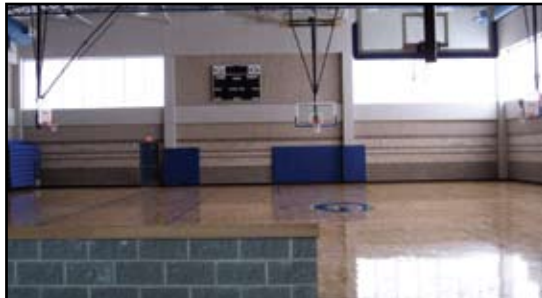
North East ISD 2007 bond dollars at work: Transforming the district, enriching education



East Terrell Hills Elementary Classroom Addition: This new building replaces 22 portable classrooms and adds two teacher resource centers, a music room and administrative offices.



Garner Middle School Gym Replacement and Fine Arts Addition: This replaces the 30-year-old auxiliary gym with a new competition gym and adds a new facility for choir and orchestra.



Agriscience Magnet Program: Additions include a new instructional facility and four new project centers for goats, lamb, swine and cattle.



A Sample of the 2007 Bond Projects and completion dates

Elementary Schools

East Terrell Hills (Aug. 2010)

El Dorado (May 2010)

Jackson Keller (Dec. 2010)

Larkspur (Aug. 2010)

-- new classroom additions and gyms

Middle Schools

Garner (Aug. 2010)

-- new gym, fine arts addition, HVAC upgrade

White (Feb. 2010)

-- fine arts addition, roofing, HVAC upgrade

High Schools

Agriscience Magnet Program at Madison

(Nov. 2010)

-- new instructional facility, show arena, animal project centers, administrative offices

Churchill (Feb. 2011)

-- new gym, fine arts addition, soccer field and tennis court replacement

Lee (Apr. 2010)

-- new gym, JROTC facilities, roofing

Madison (Dec. 2010)

-- new gym, fine arts addition, outdoor courtyard, parking lots, outdoor concessions

For a detailed list of 2007 NEISD bond projects, pictures and updates go to www.neisd.net/constr/bonds/2007.

Putting it where it counts: NEISD maintains efficiency



School districts across Texas have had to make difficult financial and personnel decisions as the result of inadequate state funding and challenging economic conditions. In response, North East ISD cut costs and improved efficiency at every level of the district, including central office.

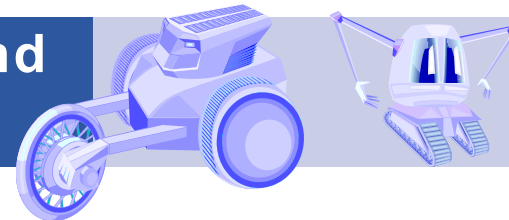
Before the start of the school year, the district's administration was reduced by 25 percent. Its four divisions (Operations, Instruction, Business Services and

Campus Support) were consolidated to three for a more efficient use of personnel and resources.

It is a common misconception that too much money is spent on maintaining a district's central office. However, the costs associated with NEISD's central office make up only three percent of its total budget. It is also considered efficient compared to other Texas school districts. Its administrative cost ratio, which is a state index for measuring efficiency, is 5.12 percent compared to the state standard of 11 percent for districts of similar size. Additionally, Education Resource Group ranks NEISD among the top districts in financial efficiency and student performance.

Every district must maintain a central office to coordinate efforts such as payroll, health services, communications, instructional technology and transportation. NEISD streamlines its administrative costs so it can put the majority of its funding where it counts -- in the classroom.

Elementary school engages students and nurtures future college graduates



Dellview, first built in 1957, is one of North East ISD's oldest elementary schools. It is located on the far south west corner of the district and serves approximately 530 students, 88 percent of which qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

Despite these characteristics, which to some may seem like challenges, the school embraces the goal of academic excellence for every child. Staff members provide a nurturing and supportive environment for its students and families from the moment they walk in the door. They focus on inspiring academic achievement, creating college awareness and teaching 21st century skills.

Rated a Recognized school by the Texas Education Agency in 2009-2010, Dellview's college awareness program is one of the strongest in the district for an elementary school.

"College readiness has been a long standing priority at Dellview," said Beth Vacek, Dellview counselor. "We understand the necessity to inform, motivate and inspire students and their families to pursue their dreams and achieve academic excellence in all realms of life."

Regular exposure to higher education and extracurricular activities help engage students and expose them to possible college and career choices. Look no further than fifth grader Brandon Garza to see this is true.

"I love math, science and technology," said Garza, 10. "Those are my favorite things in the world. That's why I want to go to Harvard when I grow up."



Dellview STEM Scholars Chelsea Schwartz and Brandon Garza use math and science in activities like robotics and gardening.



Teacher Rose Stevens teaches students how to prepare a healthy chicken dinner in her Cooking Club, while teacher Jennifer Santellan assists students in the Technology Club as Superintendent of Schools Richard A. Middleton drops by for a visit.



Garza is an outgoing young man and member of the Dellview STEM Scholars. The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Scholars program is based on innovative science, math and technology instruction. Once a week, students are immersed in hands-on learning while they create, invent and solve challenging real-world problems in science and math. From working on a school garden to building robots, the children are regularly using their critical thinking skills.

Fifth grader Chelsea Schwartz, 10, is a little more soft spoken than Garza, but is just as involved in the program and quick to point out one of the keys to success as a STEM Scholar.

"You have to have a lot of patience with your team," said Schwartz. "You have to have good teamwork."

In its fourth year, the program only accepts 24 students each year. Almost double that number apply. In addition to this program, 10 student clubs on the campus help engage students and extend instruction in creative ways. Once a month, students can participate in clubs that focus on activities like gardening, cooking, dancing, technology, running and cheering.

"Our test scores are comparable to any other school in the district," said Rose Stevens, fifth-grade teacher and advisor to the STEM Scholar program. "Our students may have very different situations than others, but we set the expectations high and they rise to it -- almost without fail. The teachers here give 120 percent every day because we believe in our kids."

The result of these efforts, is that the students are believing in themselves.

North East Recognitions



Harris artists Chalk It Up

Harris Middle School student artists won the Most Outstanding Middle School division award at the Chalk It Up 2010 event held on Oct. 9, 2010.

Chalk It Up is a free, family-friendly event where San Antonio's premier artists transformed city sidewalks into colorful works of art. This year's theme was "Made in San Antonio."

Harris students drew a picture influenced by artist Grant Wood's, "The American Gothic." The students put a sombrero and mariachi coat on the man. The wife in the scene is wearing a brightly colored dress and large flower as if she were a Mexican dancer. The students also drew the Alamo and Tower of Americas in the background to match the theme.

Other North East schools participating in the event were Nimitz, Bradley, NESA and Tejada.



Lopez orchestra earns mark of excellence

The Lopez Middle School Symphony Orchestra was selected by the National Orchestral Honors Project as a Commended Winner.

The Mark of Excellence consists of the National Wind Band Honors, the National Orchestra Honors, National Choral Honors, and National Jazz Honors. It is a competition, entered by recordings, in which the top quarter are selected as National Winners and the second quarter receive Commended Honors. This year, 138 of the finest musical ensembles in the nation entered the competition representing 32 states.

Churchill wins national video contest

The Churchill High School video department won a national competition from Ford Motor company's "Drive One 4UR School" contest. The challenge was to create a video during the "Drive One 4UR School" campus event that raised \$3,300 for the Charger Sports Association. The Ford Motor company doubled that amount since the school's video won.

The winning video, selected from more than 1,700 entries, was shot by Zachary Villafana, Victor Reyes and Rey Ruiz. It was produced and directed by Reyes and Villafana.

Hardy Oak makes TBEC Honor Roll

Hardy Oak Elementary School has made the Texas Business and Education Coalition's (TBEC) Honor Roll for 2010. Hardy Oak is among more than 8,000 Texas public schools, with only 4 percent of these being selected for the honor.

According to TBEC, the Honor Roll is the most prestigious award for sustained, academic excellence in Texas. It recognizes schools that have demonstrated three years of consistent, high performance in all subjects compared to other schools serving similar student populations.

NEISD students named ambassadors for mayor

El Dorado Elementary School student Robert Nicholas Bernal and Oak Meadow Elementary School students Kelly and Tessa Herrmann were presented certificates as Student Ambassadors for the Mayor's Fitness Council on Saturday, Oct. 16 at Woodlawn Lake Park.

Students were elected as ambassadors to assist Mayor Julián Castro in an initiative to improve the health of San Antonio. The program gives students the opportunity to represent their schools by promoting and encouraging healthy living on their respective campuses.

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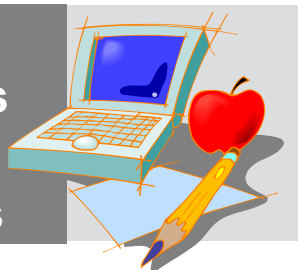
North East Connections is a community newsletter mailed to all residents of the district. Content is edited and prepared by the North East ISD Community Relations Office. E-mail submissions to news@neisd.net or mail to 8961 Tesoro Drive, San Antonio, Texas, 78217. For more information, visit www.neisd.net or call (210) 407-0040.

Senior citizens back in school: *Jim Boyle*



East Terrell Hills Principal Tina Reck truly appreciates the contributions of volunteers like Jim Boyle.

For Parents: New Web features from School Nutrition Services



North East ISD School Nutrition Services (SNS) has added new features to its Web site at

www.neisd.net/foodserv/HTML/NutritionandHealth.html

A new “Ask a Dietitian” application allows students, parents, employees and community members to ask questions about the district’s breakfast and lunch programs, the meals served and any other related nutrition topic. NEISD has four registered dietitians on staff who can answer your questions and address your concerns.

With the increased national and local interest in school meals and NEISD’s ongoing commitment to student and employee wellness, this feature strives to improve communication between the district and its customers.

In addition to the “Ask a Dietitian” application, SNS added a body mass index (BMI) calculator link to the Web site. Once the calculator has given your BMI, you can use the links below it to learn how to use it as an indicator of your health.

As always, you can still find information about menus, meal prices, wellness policy, classroom party regulations, food allergens, and on-line free and reduced meal applications on the site. More information about nutrition and health will be added as the year progresses, so be sure to check back periodically for updates.

Retired from the Air Force after serving for 20 years, Jim Boyle knew he wanted to give back to his community. He has always had a great passion for education and helping children, and living in the East Terrell Hills neighborhood it turns out he’s a perfect fit at East Terrell Hills Elementary.

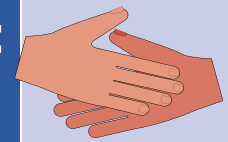
Each school day for about four years, Jim arrives at the campus ready for a full day of volunteering. He has a routine that starts around 6 a.m. and ends after dismissal at 2:45 p.m., where he takes on the role of the school’s “traffic cop.”

Jim begins his day by unlocking the bike gate, turning on computers in the library and shelving books if necessary. Then he heads to the cafeteria to help students through the breakfast line. Throughout the day he helps staff in the main office, and returns to the cafeteria for lunch duty. The majority of his time is spent with his reading group, where he assists children with their reading skills and helps teachers track the students’ progress.

“I’ve worked with a group of students for the past three years and to see their progress during this time is really great,” said Jim. When asked why he volunteers, he simply stated “It’s the right thing to do.”

When he is not volunteering, Jim enjoys spending time with his dog Bucky and reading.

North East Partner Spotlight: Radio Disney



On Aug. 10, 2010, in conjunction with “Movies Under the Stars,” a weekly free event at the Village at Stone Oak, Radio Disney held a Stuff-A-Backpack Drive to benefit the students of North East ISD.

Radio Disney donated the backpacks, and the community provided the school supplies. The North East Council of PTAs showed up in full force to help stuff the backpacks. Children from the Stone Oak community also helped. Mickey Mouse dolls for the children volunteers and a night of games and performances were all provided courtesy of Radio Disney.

During the event, 100 backpacks were stuffed with school supplies and donated to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Project -- a program committed to ensuring that all NEISD students in homeless situations have the opportunity to succeed in school.

Part 1: Drop outs -- Prevention is key



Unable to complete their education, student drop outs face serious consequences including unemployment, poverty, reliance on public assistance and a higher likelihood of being incarcerated. North East ISD wants to ensure the success of all its students and keeping them in school is key.

A drop out is classified as any student in grades 7 through 12, who is not enrolled in school and who has not graduated. Every school district must monitor and track drop outs, and make every effort to help them complete their education.

“There is no typical reason for why a student leaves school,” said Tyler Shoemith, NEISD dropout leaver coordinator. “Life events, outside pressures, jobs, families...all those things come into play. What we’ve learned is that the sooner we can provide intervention, the better a student’s chances are for academic success.”

One of these interventions is Achieve. This new program identifies and supports at-risk students at every high school campus with individualized plans that address their academic and non-academic needs. “It is designed for students who don’t quite fit into a typical school environment and need a little extra coaching,” said Shoemith. The district also has a national, award-winning school, the Academy for Creative Education, that provides a non-traditional setting for at-risks youth to earn their high school diploma.

Going even further back into middle and elementary schools will be the next focus for NEISD. District officials will look for early identifiers that could signal a student is at risk and then target specific outreach efforts.

While NEISD remains focused on its students, many get caught up on the numbers. Drop out statistics are often difficult to understand and a quick review of how districts are measured will be shared in part two of this series on student drop outs.

Read in winter 2011 edition: Part 2: Drop outs -- Interpreting the numbers

Interesting Fact

NEISD administrators use a variety of tools to track down drop outs including home visits, state school databases and social networking sites.

District diversity and bilingual program grow



North East ISD currently serves nearly 66,000 students with an approximate growth of 1,200 students per year. With this growth in students, comes a growth in diversity. Today, minorities make up the majority of the district’s population. According to district’s 2009-2010 demographics, 49.3 percent of its students are Hispanic, 37 percent are White, 9.3 percent are African-American and 4.4 percent represent all other groups. To further illustrate its diversity, more than 50 different languages are spoken by NEISD students.

Interesting Fact

Of the total North East ISD English Language Learner population, 88.4 percent are of a Spanish-speaking background. The language spoken by the next largest group of students is Vietnamese.

The district’s bilingual program has grown tremendously over the past several years to meet the needs of its students. In 2009, the English Language Learner population reached 5,440 and comprised 8.3 percent of the total district population. Fifty percent of these students were served through one-way or two-way bilingual education.

“In our one-way bilingual model, all of the students are of Spanish-speaking decent,” said Marie Mendoza, director of the English Language Learners program. “The intent here is to build proficiency in English and Spanish. In the two-way bilingual model, commonly known as dual language, we still want to build proficiency in both languages, it’s just that half the class is made up of native English speakers whose parents want them to develop bilingual proficiency.”

Bilingual proficiency has been linked to improved academic performance and test scores. Currently, 12 campuses offer the two-way dual language program, as well as the one-way bilingual program.

Bilingual teachers must be certified and receive a variety of training and support services. This is important to help build teacher capacity as they serve students with a variety of cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. As the face of NEISD students change, language is no longer the barrier to education it used to be. It is becoming a benefit.



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Technology Corner: What it can do for us



Technology is changing the way students learn at home and in school. Today, instant news, video and digital images are what captivate their attention -- and it is how they've become accustomed to receive information.

NEISD attempts to not only keep up with technology, but to stay one step ahead. Currently, the district utilizes several high tech methods to teach in a way that better engages students and improves comprehension.

Students are using podcasts and video conferencing to extend learning beyond a classroom's walls. They develop smart phone applications in computer programming classes and build machines in robotics clubs. In addition to computers, flip cameras, interactive SMART boards, iPads, and iPods are popular instructional tools in core curriculum classes.

Teachers are taking advantage of technology as well. They benefit from online delivery of professional development and instructional resources. They can also review student

progress using a special district-designed software. By filtering and drilling down into a student's academic records, they can identify learning strengths and weaknesses and provide quick intervention when needed.

The district continually looks at new tools, methods and software on the horizon. What is clear, is that this technology and the opportunities it provides are well worth any investment the district must make. However, it still presents challenges.

While technology offers endless possibilities, it is constantly evolving. On average, the district's computers, hand held devices and cameras have a useful life span of five years. After this point, to maintain effectiveness, they must be upgraded or replaced.

Just think of your personal digital camera or smart phone. Soon after purchasing one for yourself, a newer, more efficient model comes out, or the software on your model must be upgraded to maintain functionality.

When these tools are being used to arm our students with the 21st century skills they'll need to succeed in the future, staying current has to be one of NEISD's top priorities.



Leadership North East welcomes third class



The district is currently implementing its third year of Leadership North East (LNE) classes. Leadership North East is an exciting dialogue between community leaders, community organizations, business partners and the district. During the nine-month program, participants go behind the scenes to learn about specific areas of district operations including curriculum, accountability, finance, facilities, health and wellness.

LNE Class of 2010-2011

Deana S. Abiassi
Parent Volunteer

Dean Alexander
Methodist Stone Oak
Hospital

Kathi Ashworth
Northeast Lakeview
College

Leslie Komet Ausburn
Komet Marketing
Communications

Jennifer Bailey
Texas Capital Bank

Evelyn Barnes
Security Service Federal
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Larry R. Baumgardner
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Company

Michael J. Bigley
Excel Benefits, Inc.

Sally M. Bolster
Retired

William P. Brendel
The Crockett Hotel

Susan Hope Campbell
Capital Group
Companies

Ron Campos
San Antonio Water
System

John Carlson
Sundt Construction, Inc

Judy Cooney
On The Wall Decorative
Painting

LaDorshe Damron
NE Methodist Hospital

Christine E. Dextraze
Dextraze Ins. & Risk
Mngmt. Services

Rolanda Flood-Lewis
Graduate Student

Walter Scott Gray
J.M. Waller Associates,
Inc.

Phil Grossmann
P16Plus Council of
Greater Bexar County

Kristin S. Held, M.D.
Stone Oak

Kathryn E. Herlich
Ophthalmology
Educator

Jodi Beth Phillips
Kirksey

**H-E-B Grocery
Company**

Clayton Kruse
CPS Energy

Pamela Leslie
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PVS

William Allen Martin
Retired

Karen Meade
Let's Get Organizing

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ITM

Sally Williams
Williams, Crow, Falls CPAs

Danielle Wyrick
Southwest Research
Institute

Volunteer Spotlight

Rhonda Banuelos



"I love my school and have been glad to be a part of their team for the last seven years. There was a time when I worked full time and could not volunteer as much as I wanted. I am grateful that I have time now to help for those parents who cannot be there for every event."

- ❖ Rhonda Banuelos is a volunteer at Harmony Hills Elementary and is serving in her third year as PTA president.
- ❖ She has held many positions with the Harmony Hills PTA including 1st vice president of fundraising, chairperson for Red Ribbon Week and room parent.
- ❖ In February, Rhonda earned a Texas Lifetime Membership for the PTA.
- ❖ She is married to Stephen Banuelos. They have two daughters. Hayley is a seventh grader at Eisenhower Middle School. Lauren is a first grader at Harmony Hills.

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