Superintendent’s Message

Dear NEISD Community Member,

The mission of North East ISD is to provide a top quality education to its students and successfully prepare them for college and the workforce.

We strongly feel that to do this, we must provide access to a 360-degree education. This means that in addition to the core curriculum of math, science, English and history, we must provide enrichment courses and activities in fine arts, athletics, JROTC, and career and technical education.

In an effort to provide these opportunities, the District has worked hard to form partnerships with businesses and area schools of higher learning to offer unique programs that our students can benefit from. Learn about some of these and other student achievements in this issue.

I am so proud of our young leaders and everyone who has contributed to their success.

Sincerely,

Brian G. Gottardy, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Current MacArthur student becomes Army Private

MacArthur High School senior, JROTC Cadet Captain Jessica Parra, sacrificed her entire summer break to accomplish a feat that most don't do in their lifetime. Cadet Parra successfully completed Army Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and earned the rank of Army Private – all before graduating high school.

Private Parra took advantage of the Army Split Option Program in which the Army allows high school juniors to attend basic training the summer before their senior year. After Jessica graduates in June 2017, instead of going to basic training, she will go straight to her Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to learn her Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) as a Unit Supply Specialist. Only 20 other split option soldiers out of 150 privates graduated alongside Jessica. She was the youngest trainee at 17 years old.

This spring, Parra will complete four years as an active member of MacArthur JROTC. She credits her JROTC experience as instrumental in preparing her for this program. “JROTC helped teach me personal responsibility, drill and ceremony and some basic knowledge about the Army that was useful going through training,” said Parra.

Parra said that her summer experience not only changed the way she looks at things but also helps her make more responsible decisions. As an active member of the Army Reserves, Jessica also plans to attend college after completing AIT.

Reagan volleyball earns state semifinalist title

Did you know?

For the past nine years, the Electrical Systems Technology (EST) Apprenticeship Program has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio to help install wiring in Habitat homes.

The Reagan volleyball team is recognized by the NEISD Board of Trustees and Executive Staff for an outstanding season and record of success.

The Reagan High School volleyball program is one of the best in the state with a rich tradition of excellence. In the 17 years since the school has been opened, the Reagan Rattlers have accumulated a record of 632 wins and 115 losses.

They have won 13 District Championships, advanced to Regional Finals seven times and advanced to State competition three times.

This year, under the direction of Coach Mike Carter, Reagan was District Champion, Regional Champion and State Semifinalist. Coach Carter earned his 800th career win this year as the Rattlers went 42-5 overall.

“It was a joy to watch them all year long,” said Karen Funk, Executive Director of NEISD Athletics. “To be one of four teams to make it that far in state competition is a feat unto itself.”
NESA senior Kaylee Holland was awarded a film screening at the South Texas Underground Film Festival in Corpus Christi. This is the first time a NESA student has successfully screened at this festival.

Reagan gets invited to perform at Tournament of Roses Parade

The Reagan High School Band performed at the Band of Americas (BOA) Grand National Championships in Indianapolis in November. After an outstanding performance, Reagan finished seventh out of 100 participants.

"It was an amazing experience just seeing all the other bands and how hard they worked," said Alicia Paulino, Reagan Senior Drum Major about the BOA competition.

Because of their standing in that competition, they can now look forward to their next achievement – the opportunity to perform at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California in 2018.

"I'm so glad to see their hard work paying off in such a big way," said Dan Morrison, Reagan Band Director.

A lot of practices are in store for Reagan students this year, and they can't wait to perform on the big day.

This is the second NEISD band program to receive this invitation. The Johnson High School band performed in the Tournament of Roses Parade in 2014.

Reagan runner's skill and heart are taking her places

Ali Hepp is a Reagan High School Varsity Track and Cross Country standout who posted National Elite times in Cross Country, 1600M and 3200M in her freshman year of school. As a sophomore, she began struggling in races despite her best effort and training.

That is when she was diagnosed with Auto Immune Dysfunction. This diagnosis was disappointing for Ali because it carried potentially long-term implications for her athletic career.

"I was discouraged and impatient with the process and time it took my body to heal," she said.

Despite this, Ali resolved to come back to running stronger than before. It took two years, but Ali earned a Runner Up individual finish at the 2016 District Cross Country Championship. Her journey of trial and perseverance has impacted every aspect of her life—from academic success to living a life of service.

Ali began volunteering with the Animal Defense League at the age of ten. Ali and her family foster animals that have been abused and neglected.

"I like seeing the animals develop a personality through healing," said Ali, drawing from the experience of her own life.

During her senior year, Ali took a missionary trip to care for children in the Little Flock Orphanage in India. Ali taught English to the young people in the school, hoping to afford them the opportunity to go to college in the future.

"It was eye-opening. There were so many families that were working hard and struggling to get out of poverty. It was difficult to see their struggle."

This experience solidified her passion to make the most of her second chance at running.

She has earned a position on the University of Oklahoma's Track and Cross Country team when she graduates. Her journey has inspired her future career as a pediatrician, with the hopes of donating time to the disadvantaged.

"I understand what it's like to feel like you've lost a chance and to have people around you who won't give up on you. My team and my family helped me to pull through, and I want to do that for others."

Lee offers new apartment maintenance program

A new apartment maintenance program, offered at Lee High School, is a two-hour practicum class for seniors interested in an entry-level position in apartment maintenance upon graduation from high school. Once complete, students are eligible to work for an apartment complex or hotel making basic repairs in electrical wiring and carpentry. After a year of work experience in this field, the students are also eligible to test for a certification in Apartment Maintenance, which will open doors for a bright future for these students.

Johnson orchestra performs at international conference

The Johnson High School orchestra was invited to perform at the prestigious Midwest Conference in Chicago in December 2016. The students performed beautifully and represented North East ISD with great professionalism.

The Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference is the world's largest instrumental music education conference, annually drawing approximately 17,000 attendees to Chicago from all 50 states and as many as 40 countries.
Churchill cadets prepare for college and military service

Cadets at the General George C. Marshall Leadership Center of Excellence at Churchill High School measure their academic success, in part, through the amount of scholarship dollars awarded to seniors each year. For each of the last four years, Churchill cadets have earned between $1.8 and $2.1 million in ROTC and Academic scholarships.

Last year's graduating class of 27 cadets earned $2.1 million in scholarships, including full academic scholarships to Yale University and ROTC scholarships to Saint Mary's University, Norwich University, University of Texas in San Antonio, University of Texas, and several other prestigious institutions. Many of these cadets will eventually commission to serve as officers in the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Army.

This year’s graduating class of 32 seniors is on track to surpass last year's scholarship benchmark. Although still very early in the scholarship season, the cadets have already received nearly $1,000,000 in academic and ROTC scholarships.

The Battalion Commander Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Widman achievements are among some of the most impressive. A four-year member of the corps of cadets and member of the National Honor Society, Widman has already received an ROTC scholarship offer from the United States Air Force to the University of Texas and a nomination from Senator John Cornyn to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point.

The first Cadet to earn an academic scholarship this year was Cadet Command Sergeant Major Natale Heilmann, a varsity orchestra violinist, and all around outstanding student athlete. In addition to the cadet’s remarkable achievement in scholarships, several seniors have decided to serve by enlisting in to the military. Among them is Cadet Sergeant Albert Valero who has enlisted to serve in the Marine Corps. All of these cadets are bound by a commitment to academic and leadership excellence and the desire to serve others.

NEISD art students compete at Chalk It Up

Bradley Middle School's depiction of a koi pond won them first place at the 13th annual Chalk it Up Festival.

Historic Houston Street was alive on Saturday, Oct. 8, 2016 as ArtPace San Antonio presented its street-level gallery of chalk masterpieces at its 13th annual Chalk It Up Festival.

North East ISD art programs were well represented as teams from Reagan, North East School of the Arts (NESA) and Churchill high schools; and Garner, Harris, STEM Academy, Nimitz, Bradley and Tejeda middle schools tested their chalk skills against other area teams.

They created original murals with the goal to create a vibrant representation of their schools and unique art vision. More than 20,000 members of the community attended and were encouraged to contribute to a Freestyle area – completing a city block-sized mural. This annual event was an opportunity for student and community artists, along with tourists, to appreciate and participate in San Antonio's creative heritage.

The Bradley Middle School team, led by teachers Kim Villarreal and Taylor Galvan, won first place in their division. This is a great accomplishment and earned the Bradley art department a monetary award for art supplies.

Madison HOSA students participate in Area; move on to state competition

The Madison High School Health Occupations Student Association (HOSA) chapter participated in AREA competition on Jan. 13-14, 2017. The following students placed:

- Judith Murgia
- Lauren Newsom
- Krystin Fikes and Amantha Cochran-Howard
- Lauren Chontos and Priscilla Puentes
- Genavie Cabrera and Kylie Bendele
- Sakib Hoque, Selena Casanova, Evelyn Herrera and Leslie Velasquez
- Rwan Ibrahim
- Sami Wolff
- Dahee Lee
- Adrianna Vega-Donato
- Sakib Hoque, Rwan Ibrahim, and Elena Stampley - Silver
- Dahee Lee – Bronze
- Jaslyn Ramirez - Bronze

Six students from Madison's HOSA will also receive the Barbara James Service Award at the state competition later this year. The award is given to students based on service hours performed in the following categories: Bronze (100-174 hours) Silver (175-274 hours) and Gold (275 +).

These students are:
- Adrianna Vega-Donato – Gold
- Sakib Hoque, Rwan Ibrahim, and Elena Stampley - Silver
- Dahee Lee – Bronze
- Jaslyn Ramirez - Bronze

HOSA students (left to right) Sakib Hoque, Adrianna Vega-Donato, Dahee Lee and Rwan Ibrahim will receive the Barbara James Service Award at State for their many hours of volunteerism. Not pictured and also receiving the award are Elena Stampley and Jaslyn Ramirez.

JROTC programs in NEISD have nine integrated extracurricular teams. They are Armed Drill team, Unarmed Drill teams, Color Guards, Raider teams, Orienteering teams, Air Rifle teams, Academic teams, Leadership teams, and Cyber Patriot teams.

Did you know?
Amadeo Cantu-Trevino is an honor student at MacArthur High School. He is ranked in the top three percent of his class and is the Junior Class President. He is a Varsity basketball player, a member of the National Spanish Honor Society Mu Alpha Theta, Academic UIL in Math and Science, as well as a mentor, role model and PALS student to three elementary students in the District.

What truly separates Amadeo from the typical honor student is that in addition to his many extracurricular activities, he still manages time to help out in the community. Amadeo regularly works with Saint PJ’s Orphanage serving lunch to children, as well as playing basketball with the elementary and teenage residents. Another rewarding experience for Amadeo is visiting and playing games with the residents at The Waterford Nursing Home.

“I love hearing them tell me about their lives,” said Cantu-Trevino. “They have very interesting stories and they always enjoy talking to young people.”

He also spends time working during the annual San Antonio Buddy Walk, which raises money to support programs, services and research for Downs Syndrome.

“What I find to be most impressive about Amadeo, is his level of maturity and his overall integrity as a student-athlete,” said Mark Murphy, MacArthur Head Basketball Coach. “Whatever Amadeo chooses to pursue in life, he will always work hard and be successful because of the experiences he had while being a student athlete in North East ISD.”

MacArthur athlete and STEM Academy student Nate Love accepts a national ROTC scholarship at the High School All-American football game in January.

MacArthur athlete Amadeo Cantu-Trevino stays busy during basketball season, but is also an active volunteer in the community.

The annual variety show featuring North East ISD cheerleaders, dance and drill teams, and pep squads, “One Singular Sensation,” took place on Jan 28-29, 2017. Varsity, Junior Varsity and competition teams from all North East ISD high schools and North East School of the Arts perform to a packed audience in the Littleton Gymnasium at Blossom Athletic Center.

The show began with cheerleading squads featuring their best routines of the year. That was followed by jazz, kick, lyrical, novelty and pom routines performed by dance teams, drill teams and pep squads. In a dazzling finale, the show ended with the entire cast of 1,200 girls performing together. It is a spotlight on all their hard work throughout the year.

Lee track athlete and STEM Academy student Nate Love accepts a national ROTC scholarship at the High School All-American football game in January.

MacArthur High School tuba player Mark Flowers, Jr. was invited to perform with the Macy’s Great American Marching Band during the 90th Annual Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade this past November.

Did you know?

Madison cadets volunteer at Pumpkin Patch

Cadets from the Madison High School JROTC devoted their time to a great cause this past fall. On Saturday, Oct. 8, 2016, they gathered at St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church and Day School to help set up its annual Pumpkin Patch. When the trucks arrived, cadets went straight to work unloading pumpkins and placing them on pallets for the church to sell.

This is an annual event for the Madison JROTC. Reverend John S. Hill, pastor at St. Margaret’s, was very grateful for the help. The project is important because all of the proceeds go to the community.

“Each year we give between two and three thousand dollars in scholarships,” said Hill. “We also do some outreach with Stahl Elementary School, providing school supplies and various items. None of it goes to the church.”

The Pumpkin Patch is also a social event that brings together members of the community along with cadets to get to know one another, reach a mutual goal and have fun in the process.

One Singular Sensation wows audiences

The annual variety show featuring North East ISD cheerleaders, dance and drill teams, and pep squads, “One Singular Sensation,” took place on Jan 28-29, 2017. Varsity, Junior Varsity and competition teams from all North East ISD high schools and North East School of the Arts perform to a packed audience in the Littleton Gymnasium at Blossom Athletic Center.

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MacArthur athlete Amadeo Cantu-Trevino stays busy during basketball season, but is also an active volunteer in the community.
Cadets brave the weather at Open Raider Challenge

In what turned out to be a Mud Bowl due to adverse weather, cadets from across North ISD and Texas competed in the NEISD Open Raider Challenge at Camp Bullis on Dec. 2-4, 2016.

The U.S. Army JROTC Raider Challenge is among the most physically demanding and mentally challenging competitions high school students can experience. Modeled after this, the NEISD Raider Challenge is intended to inspire and test physical fitness, teamwork, and leadership. It consists of a series of team-oriented events, including a 5K run, rope bridge construction and crossing, obstacle course, one-mile ruck run and navigation course, and crucible that included a vehicle pull and other team challenge and leadership events.

The cadets selected to participate in the Challenge are physically fit and mentally tough. Churchill High School cadets were among those there, and first had to pass a qualification phase, followed by months of training and preliminary competitions. Among the stand out athletes was Cadet Major Miranda Leija, a fourth year JROTC Cadet. Despite being legally blind, Miranda has competed at the varsity level each of the last four years at Churchill and served as the Raider Commander for the 2016-2017 school year.

NEISD joins initiative to bring Computer Science to middle school students

On Dec. 14, 2016, North East ISD was part of an announcement by U.S. Congressman Will Hurd to increase computer science opportunities for middle school students. The Computer Science initiative was organized by Hurd to bring together private and public partners that will provide training, curriculum and teachers to incorporate Computer Science in existing middle school courses for the 2017-2018 school year.

NEISD’s Loper Middle School will pilot the new Computer Science course for eighth-grade students using curriculum from Bootstrap, a nonprofit organization.

“North East ISD recognizes the need for a skilled technology workforce and understands our role in preparing students for jobs that don’t even exist yet,” said Dr. Brian G. Gottardy, Superintendent of Schools. “Expanding Computer Science opportunities down to middle school will help us build engaging and relevant technology experiences to prepare students for high school, college and career.”

Across the 23rd Congressional District of Texas, close to 40 teachers will be trained by Bootstrap and the University of Texas’ Center for STEM Education. Sponsorships provided by Intel, Dell, Facebook, Brocade and Toyota will help reduce the cost of training and curriculum for schools and districts.

“In Texas, over 40,000 computing jobs are waiting to be filled, but we only graduate 2,000 computer scientists each year,” said Hurd, who studied Computer Science at Texas A&M University. “Right now the pipeline that produces Computer Science professionals starts at the high school level. We’ve got to do a better job preparing our students for the jobs that don’t exist yet—and we’ve got to start at an earlier age.”

Hill athletics donates blankets to military members

For the third consecutive year, the Hill Middle School girls athletics program is committed to giving back to the community through both fundraising and service projects. One of their service projects this year benefits The Center for the Intrepid at Fort Sam Houston and SAMMC, San Antonio Military Medical Center.

The Center for the Intrepid’s mission is to provide rehabilitation for soldiers who have sustained amputation, burns or functional limb loss. They also provide education to soldiers and Veteran’s Affairs professionals on cutting-edge rehabilitation modalities, and promote research in the fields of orthopedics, prosthetics and physical/occupational rehabilitation. While soldiers are recovering for long periods of time, their families are often here as well trying to live as normal as possible away from their homes and extended families.

Each fall, Hill athletes collect and donate money to purchase fleece. On the last day before winter break, the athletic period is dedicated to making fleece blankets for recovering soldiers and their family members.

The Tex Hill girls athletics program hopes to assist in the recovery process of as many soldiers as possible. These blankets symbolize a small token of their immense appreciation for the sacrifice they and their families have made for all of us.

Eight deaf students are members of this year’s successful Churchill High School wrestling program. Six are athletes and two are team student assistants.
The Agriscience Magnet Program (AMP) at Madison High School has been very busy over the past few months preparing students for their potential in premiere leadership, personal growth and career success.

The new school year brought with it new members to the Guide Dogs for the Blind program. This brings the total of guide dogs trained by students on the Madison campus to 17. These students care for and train their dogs throughout the year. The dogs go with them to class, contests, stock shows, home and everywhere else they would go in a typical day.

The fall semester has been full of excitement. The National FFA Convention and Expo was held in Indianapolis, Indiana Oct. 17-21, 2016. Olivia Wise-Dent, Kamryn Nichols, Kaylee Graham and Sydney Martin were named National Champions in their respective Agriscience Fair divisions. Madison Crawford and Mikaela Sorrels were third overall in their division. The Agricultural Communications team of Madeline Wallace, Rebecca De La Pena and Haleigh Carlile came in at 18th place in the nation. James Madison FFA and the Texas FFA Association was very well represented at the national level by our students.

Once national competition was over, students began working on Leadership Development events, which help students develop their skills in public speaking. The Agricultural Issues Forum was named District and Area champion and finished sixth place in the state.

Did you know?
In November 2016, Johnson High School media students attended the National High School Journalism Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana and brought home a number of awards.

The school’s JAG TV, My JAG News and The Citadel (yearbook) were all honored as Best in Show recipients. Additionally, Johnson juniors Dominique Lavigne and Paulette Carreon received sixth place honors for Broadcast Sports Story of the Year.

In individual awards, the following Johnson students received recognition:
- Monika Stevens - Excellence in Sports Feature Photography
- Lillian Bautista - Excellence in Sports Action Photography
- Myralexis Tijerina - Honorable Mention in Portrait Photography
- Sam Kaman - Honorable Mention for Sports Broadcast Story

The National High School Journalism Convention is a semi-annual gathering of high school journalists and advisers co-sponsored by the Journalism Education Association and the National Scholastic Press Association. With typical attendance of more than 4,000 delegates, the JEA/NSPA convention is the largest gathering of student journalists in the country.

Roosevelt JROTC provides Service to Others

This past December, the Roosevelt High School JROTC Rough Rider Battalion teamed up with Roosevelt’s HOSA Club, Student Council, and PALS students to support North East ISD’s McKinney-Vento Homeless Project. The cadets and students collected boxed and canned food to help support those in need. Cadets prepared then sorted the items into family size boxes that were distributed to families just in time for the holiday break.

The McKinney-Vento Project is committed to ensuring that all NEISD children and youth in homeless situations have the opportunity to attend, enroll in and succeed in school.

“Although it may seem simple to just gather canned or boxed food items and stuff them into a box, it can have the biggest impact to whomever might receive it,” said Cadet Major Edgar Garcia. “These cadets felt the impact they were able to have on their community, through aiding those in need.”

Johnson brings home journalism awards

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Roosevelt cadets qualify for Army National Championship

After a successful season, the Roosevelt High School JROTC Sporter Rifle Team qualified for the Army JROTC Air Rifle National Championship in Anniston, Alabama. Team members include Cadet Captain Joshua Thompson (Team Captain), Cadet First Lieutenant Elmer Hose, Cadet First Lieutenant Monica Espinoza, Cadet Private Natalie Rodriguez, and Cadet Captain Jacob Rokey.

This marks the first time that North East ISD qualified a complete Sporter Rifle team to compete at the Army JROTC National Championship. Additionally, Cadet Captain Ta Un Windle qualified individually in the precision rifle category. She is the only NEISD cadet to qualify this year in the precision category, and this is her third year qualifying for the Army Nationals.

The Army’s JROTC top shooters will fire in the National Championship on the world class category, and this is her third year qualifying for the Army Nationals.

DATA student eyeing future as a filmmaker

Sergio Salazar Gonzales is a student at the Design and Technology Academy (DATA) at Roosevelt High School. He is also an accomplished award-winning filmmaker.

He has produced, shot and edited DATA’s STEAM Carnival video, DATA’s recruitment videos, along with many in-house production videos. A documentary he made was recently showcased at the Urban 15 Film Festival.

“Sergio has accomplished so much in the past year as a student and especially as a writer, camera operator and editor,” said Mario Falcon, Audio and Video Production teacher.

Sergio’s next venture is a partnership with KENS 5 CBS, where he will pitch his story idea, write and film a piece, then submit it to KENS 5 to showcase on social media.

“He can only go up from here,” said Falcon. “Just imagine. He is a 17-year-old kid interning with professionals at a major television station.”

Churchill season overcomes adversity

The Churchill football team overcomes a year of adversity to have a successful and inspiring season.

The Churchill High School football team started the 2016 season with a great loss. Teammate, friend and team leader Josh Pollard passed away less than a week before the start of practice. With the leadership of the entire senior class, the team banded together.

After working through adversity and relying on each other for support, the Chargers ended the season with an 11-3 record under the leadership of Head Coach Ron Harris. They also advanced to the state quarterfinals for the first time since 1996. This year’s team includes 34 seniors, 26 Academic All State Team members and 18 All District Team players.

On Jan. 9, 2017, the North East ISD Board of Trustees honored the team and coaching staff for their successful season, but most of all for their display of sportsmanship and teamwork.

“These life lessons are far more important than on-field success and are one of the many things that makes football a great sport and athletics an important piece of the educational process,” said First Assistant and Offensive Line Coach Jeff Peak.

2 NEISD a cappella groups receive invitations to perform

For the first time, two high schools from the same city have been invited to compete at the Education Association’s National a Cappella Convention Competition this April in Memphis, TN.

PFC, MacArthur High School’s Varsity a cappella group, and Madison Avenue, Madison High School’s a cappella group, are excited for this opportunity. The two schools were chosen as one of seven high school groups that will sing at the competition.

While in Memphis, the students will attend classes about a cappella music and be a part of a master class with professional musicians. Additionally, MacArthur Directors Matt Woodward and Caitlyn Gallegos will participate in a Directors Panel to discuss methods and teaching practices for groups of this style.

Reagan competes in speech and debate

In November 2016, the Reagan High School Oral Interpretation team competed at The Glenbrooks National Invitational Speech and Debate Tournament in Chicago, Illinois.

The Glenbrooks is the third largest invitational tournament in the country, hosting more than 260 schools and 2,000 students. Based on the performance of the entire team, the Reagan Oral Interpretation team earned the First Place Individual Events Sweepstakes Award, naming them Champions of the Glenbooks Invitational Tournament for the first time in Reagan’s history.

Reagan Champions include:

Arasha Lalani – 1st place in Original Oratory
Juan Nunez – 1st place in Program Oral Interpretation
Juan Nunez and Christina Gayton – 1st place in Duo Interpretation

Reagan Finalists (top 6) include:

Juan Nunez and Christina Gayton – 1st place in Duo Interpretation
Juan Nunez – 1st place in Program Oral Interpretation
Arasha Lalani – 1st place in Original Oratory
Diego Quesada – 4th place in Humorous Interpretation

Reagan Quarterfinalists (top 24) include:

Kaylyn Pederson – Program Oral Interpretation
Liat Rosenberg – Dramatic Interpretation

Did you know?

NEISD has developed a partnership with Hallmark University to offer a college-level program designed to prepare students for a career in aerospace manufacturing and maintenance.
The North East Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability.

El Distrito Escolar Independiente del Noreste no discrimina por raza, color, religión, género, origen nacional, edad, o incapacidad.