

# insider



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## Lamar ES educator a finalist for 2018 Texas Teacher of the Year

It's been a week of happy surprises for Andrea Lucas and her school.

Capping it off on Aug. 21 was learning she is one of only six finalists for the 2018 Texas Teacher of the Year, the state's highest honor for educators.

"This recognition for Ms. Lucas is an indication of her hard work, passion for students and indicative of the type of culture we are committed to fostering at Lamar," said Principal Brian Sparks.

"Ms. Lucas adds immeasurable value to everything she does in her class and in the Lamar community."

The 4th-grade teacher qualified as a finalist by first being selected Education Service Center, Region 20's Elementary Teacher of the Year, which was announced on Aug. 17.

Soon afterward, that field of 40 - one elementary and one secondary teacher - each representing the state's 20 Education Service Center regions, was whittled down to the top half dozen, including her.

They were selected by a panel of judges comprising Texas teacher associations representatives and the 2017 Texas Teacher of the Year finalists.



"I feel humbled and honored to represent the many inspiring educators in Region 20 and SAISD," Lucas said.

"Lamar is committed to building a learning community that is best for our students, and I am so thankful to be a part of such amazing work.

"Also, my students now think I'm going to be president, so that is pretty fun too!"

To celebrate her selection, the Aug. 21 surprise announcement also included a \$500 SAISD Foundation grant.

The Texas Teacher of the Year award is sponsored by the Texas Association of

School Administrators.

Next month, the finalists will be interviewed in Austin by a panel of judges representing educational leadership associations, community and business leaders, members of the State Board for Education Certification and the State Board of Education, and a former Texas Teacher of the Year.

Lucas is a 14-year veteran educator, four of which at Lamar. She holds a master's degree in education and bachelor's in economics, both from Trinity University.

Earlier this year, Lucas was one of three outstanding educators chosen as an SAISD Distinguished Teacher of the Year.

*Photo: Congratulating Lucas during the Aug. 17 surprise announcement (l to r) are Trustee Steve Lecholop, whose District 1 represents Lamar, Superintendent Pedro Martinez and Dr. Jeff Goldhorn, ECS-20 executive director.*

To view more photos [click here](#)

## District schools earn Distinction Designations

Nearly one-third of SAISD campuses started the school year with cause for celebration.

They were awarded one or more Distinction Designations from the Texas Education Agency, while Young Women's Leadership Academy again has earned every possible distinction.

The achievement was based upon student performance on the 2017 STAAR - State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness exam.

In all, the state awards seven distinctions, but the number of possible distinctions a school can earn depends upon the subjects tested at that campus.

They are academic achievement

in English language arts/reading, mathematics, science and social studies. Also, Top 25 Percent in student progress, closing performance gaps and postsecondary readiness.

### Marks of distinction

The full list of the 29 SAISD schools earning distinctions are:

- **Seven** - YWLA.
- **Six** - Twain MS.
- **Five** - Huppertz ES.
- **Four** - Fox Tech HS and Baskin and Gates elementaries.
- **Three** - Davis MS and Forbes, Lamar and Riverside Park elementaries.

- **Two** - Burbank, Sam Houston and Travis Early College high schools, the Advanced Learning Academy at Fox Tech and Mission and Young Men's Leadership academies and Arnold, Green and Highland Park elementaries.
- **One** - Edison HS, Lowell and Rhodes middle schools, M.L. King Academy and Ball, Crockett, Fenwick, Hirsch, Japhet and Woodlawn Hills elementaries.



## Time for the District's employee G.E.M.S. to shine bright

The outstanding efforts of two SAISD support staff members have earned them the title of G.E.M.S. Employees of the Year.

They are Linda Castillo, a department of transportation executive secretary, in the paraprofessional category, and Bea Guerrero, the department of athletics head custodian, in the classified personnel category.

The duo were chosen by a District selection committee for the Great Employees Modeling our Standards award from nearly 30 nominees.

To be considered, support employees should personify and uphold SAISD's core values and make significant improvements in job efficiency, quality of service, safety or conserving resources to achieve these standards.

### 2018 nomination process upcoming

Don't let the virtues of your full-time support staff members go unheralded! Starting in September, campus



principals and department heads may choose a genuine jewel of an employee for recognition each month, with one to be nominated at the end of 2017-18 for Districtwide recognition.

In May, principals and department heads can nominate a monthly honoree to the Department of Human Resources for G.E.M.S. Employee of the Year consideration.

Details will be included in the Aug. 28 memo pack, which can be found on the SAISD intranet.



For more information call **210-554-2253** or email [rlomas@saisd.net](mailto:rlomas@saisd.net).

To view the 2017 nominees [click here](#)

*Photos: G.E.M.S. recipients are shown holding their trophies. With Castillo (left photo) are Toni Thompson, associate superintendent of human resources, and Nathan Graf, senior executive director of transportation. With Guerrero (right photo, l to r) are Gerald Gonzalez, assistant athletics director and Todd Howey, athletics director.*



## Boarding now - SAISD's Rolling Readers buses with BiblioTech

The trip to and from school now includes a literary excursion as well for students on select school bus routes this year.

Thanks to a partnership with Bexar County's all-digital library, seven SAISD buses are fully equipped with Wi-Fi routers and other equipment for digital library access.

The pilot program with BiblioTech, designed to peak interest in reading, officially took off this week. Through its cloudLibrary app, students have access to more than 40,000 e-books and audio books.

Serving as reading captains are SAISD bus drivers, responsible for distributing



monthly reading prizes, motivating participation and more.

"Students and bus drivers love it," said Nathan Graf, the department of transportation senior executive director.

"The bus drivers are reporting that the

bus is quiet both in the morning and afternoon as the students are focused on listening to the book. The students know exactly where they left off from the audio book, and ask the driver to start at that point when they board."

Bus routes will rotate periodically so that every SAISD school has an opportunity for a route in 2017-18.

*Photo: Reading captains, joined by (back row, far left and right, respectively) Michael Daly, director of transportation and Graf, pose for a photo with the banner proclaiming the new Rolling Readers program.*

## Award-winning campus

Highlands HS, SAISD Bond 2010's largest project, has earned an Excellence in Construction Award from the Associated Builders and Contractors Inc. South Texas Chapter.

The honor was presented to Joeris General Contractors during an awards banquet held earlier this month.



Courtesy photo

The \$65 million project included new construction, renovations and preservation of ancient oak trees, as pictured in the adjacent photo.

## Great debate champions

Three SAISD high schools part of the National Hispanic Institute at San Antonio Ambassador Great Debate team were present at the Aug. 22

Commissioners Court meeting to be recognized for the group's first-place finish at this summer's National Hispanic Institute statewide debate.

Present were representatives from the Advanced Learning Academy at Fox Tech, Fox Tech and the Young Women's Leadership Academy. Students from Burbank and Travis Early College also were on the team.



Courtesy photo

## Foundation grants provide back-to-school welcome

The new school year is getting off to a prosperous start for District educators whose projects are being funded through SAISD Foundation grants.

Innovative Grants not awarded during the May grant deliveries are being presented this month to recipients at eight



campuses.

The 2017-18 school-year presentations began last week with Brackenridge HS magnet coordinator Cassandra Gonzales, who is project manager for “Capturing Realities.”

The funds will be used for 360-degree cameras and software to create virtual reality content for projects for all participating teachers.

The first of which will involve mixed reality - a combination of filming, animation

creation, production, direction, editing and other filming-related skills to produce a virtual reality tour of the campus and map.

Ultimately, students will create virtual reality content incorporating many of San Antonio’s historical locations.

The finished project will be unveiled during a viewing party at a principal’s coffee to community members and parents prior to being shown to the public.

For more information on these and other grants visit: [www.saisdfoundation.com](http://www.saisdfoundation.com).

*Photo: Displaying grant certificates (from left) are Gonzales, teacher Michael Ramirez, one of the project’s participants, and Principal Yesenia Cordova.*

## SAISD gets an early start on 2017-18

Two new first-day-of-classes start dates, new schools and new traditions marked the school year’s beginning.

Lamar ES was the first campus to usher in 2017-18. Classes there started Aug. 10 as part of a pilot program, which includes a longer school year.

Its longer school year and shorter summer will include breaks spread across 10 months to avoid summer-learning loss and ward against burnout.

The remainder of SAISD campuses started Aug. 14, earlier than the other area school districts. This change benefits students by enabling them to take end-of-semester tests prior to the winter break, so there is not the two-week delay before test-taking.

Five new and re-purposed schools welcomed students for the first time.

CAST Tech HS at Fox Tech made its

debut in downtown’s Tech District where an inaugural class of freshmen (growing to seniors by 2020-21) are getting a head start on careers in coding, cyber security, entrepreneurship and more.

It’s a new era at Twain, where the Dual Language Academy opened to pre-k to 2nd-



graders (expanding each year to 8th), who will have the opportunity to become fluent in English and Spanish.

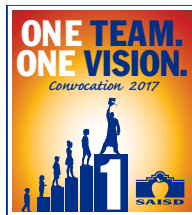
Twain’s middle school is being phased out, with the remaining 8th-graders to graduate in May.

On San Antonio’s Southeast Side, Steele Montessori Academy greeted pre-k to 1st-graders (growing to 6th), who are being taught by trained Montessori teachers with a focus on the whole child.

Serving SAISD’s youngest students are two new early childhood education centers, Gonzales in Midtown and Nelson in the Woodlawn Lake area.

*Photo: Dr. Olivia Hernández, assistant superintendent for the department of bilingual/ESL & migrant, welcomes Twain students. To view more photos [click here](#)*

## Convocation 2017 kicks off new school year



The home of the five-time NBA-champion San Antonio Spurs was the perfect venue when SAISD’s more than 7,400 employees assembled at the AT&T Center on

Aug. 9 supporting this year’s theme: “One Team. One Vision.”

Inside a pep rally-type atmosphere, Superintendent Pedro Martinez highlighted the previous school year’s successes, which will lay the foundation for the ones to follow.



Festivities also included representatives of schools and departments issuing declarations of commitment to their role

in student success and the presentation of the annual Spirit Stick, which recognizes the group exhibiting the most spirit at Convocation.

For the first-time ever, a department won the coveted prize.

Transportation took home the Spirit Stick, while Kelly ES, which has placed every year, was second. Earning third place was Cameron ES.

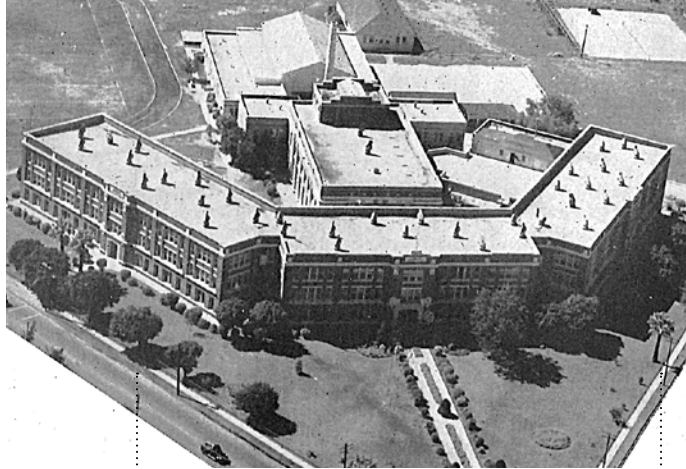
*Photo: The Jumbotron displays every employee’s purpose - student success. Spirit is on full display as represented by school colors worn. To view more photos [click here](#)*

# SAISD campuses to mark major milestones in 2017-18

According to our Communications Department history files, these schools are observing significant anniversaries this year.

The following reflect years spent at the school's current location, including those opened under different names and purposes.

- **110th – Hillcrest ES.** Originally the Beanville School in honor of Texas legend Judge Roy Bean, who had been an area resident.
- **110th – Riverside Park ES.** Originally the Missionfield School.
- **100th – Brackenridge HS.**
- **95th – Stewart ES.** Originally the Covington School.
- **90th – Wilson ES.**
- **90th – Woodlawn Hills ES.**
- **85th – Fenwick ES.**
- **85th – Graebner ES.**
- **85th – Knox ECEC.** The campus was an elementary until 2008.
- **85th – Rodriguez ES.** Originally Ivanhoe ES. Renamed in the 1970s to



honor former student Cleto Rodriguez, the first Hispanic Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.

- **85th – Tynan ECEC.** Until 2008 the campus was an elementary.
- **80th – Burbank HS.** Originally a junior-senior high school.
- **70th – Miller ES.**
- **65th – Highland Hills ES.**
- **60th – Forbes ES.**
- **60th – M.L. King Academy.** Opened as Riley ES-JHS in 1957. The campus served as a middle school through the mid-1970s until becoming a PK-8 academy in 2004. (See also third column.)

- **55th – Kelly ES.** Originally the Kelly Field School, exclusively serving Kelly Air Force Base students until becoming part of SAISD in 1962.
- **15th – Barkley-Ruiz ES.**

### What's in a name?

In addition to multiple locations, some SAISD schools have had many monikers. These anniversaries pertain to names only.

- **115th – Crockett ES.** Originally the Prospect Hill School.
- **115th – De Zavala ES.** Originally the Third Ward School.
- **115th – Douglass ES.** Originally the Riverside School. Douglass also previously served as a high school and junior high.
- **115th – Travis ECHS.** Originally School #13 and also called the Tobin Hill School. Travis served as an elementary until 2008.
- **110th – J.T. Brackenridge ES.** Originally the Kerr Hill School.
- **35th M.L. King Academy**

*Photo: Brackenridge HS opened in this building designed by famed architect Atlee B. Ayers in 1917. The school originally faced Roosevelt Avenue, now South St. Mary's Street.*

## Come cheer them on!

### Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2017

Aug. 26 - 4 to 6:30 p.m.  
Alamo Convocation Center  
110 Tuleta Drive  
Tickets are \$25 per person

Event hosts



For ticket information and to read the inductees' bios visit:  
[www.saisd.net/athletichalloffame2017](http://www.saisd.net/athletichalloffame2017)

## Employee campaign now underway

Your tax-deductible contribution, no matter how big or small, will help SAISD and the SAISD Foundation do BIG things this year!

All employees who make a monthly gift of \$5 or a one-time gift of \$50 or more by Aug. 31 through payroll deduction or online will receive our SAISD Texas T-shirt. Your one-time or recurring gift also can be made by texting the word EDUCATE to 91999.

Please note, the SAISD Foundation Employee Campaign is separate from the United Way Campaign, which begins in October.

For details, [click here](#)



San Antonio Independent School District  
141 Lavaca St.  
San Antonio, TX 78210  
phone: 554-2250

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