

September 26, 2013

Extreme Board Room makeover shows off District handiwork

When the new School Board Room made its Sept. 9 debut at the Burnet Center, visitors not only were treated to the sight of a facility as visually appealing as it is functional, they also saw a tangible example of the quality of work available through the District's Plant Services and Operations crew and others.

The mission, which began during the Fourth of July break, was to transform the 50-by-80 foot cafeteria of a building that began life in 1966 as Burnet Elementary into a modern venue for meetings.

The transformation included everything from top to bottom - new ceiling tile, monitors, covering windows with plasterboard and a staging area complete with a frosted glass wrap and floor tile carpet.

Mission accomplished admirably with an added touch! Renovation of the state-of-the-art facility, custom-built not only for School Board meetings but to serve as an all-purpose venue, was done so that the very elements making the site ideal for its intended purpose could be removed easily should the building ever again be used as a school.

Toward this goal, construction for the stage began

in the mill shop (instead of the Burnet Center) where double-sided plywood was cut into 4-foot sections and designed to interlock like pieces of a puzzle for later on-site assembly.

Prior to moving them to their ultimate destination, a dress rehearsal was held at the Department of Purchasing because of its proximity to Plant Services and Operations (cutting down on transportation time should alterations need to be made) and available space for the impromptu stage. Not to worry: the pieces proved to be a perfect fit.

Another feature designed for easy removal and quick cleaning is the plasterboard window covering.

Contributing to the original design prior to stage construction was the Department of Accountability, Technology & MIS, whose work included TV displays for the audience and providing feedback on network drops and screen display placement. Dago Garcia, Internet security and telecommunications manager, and Mark McRae, network technician, served in an advisory capacity.

The facility also boasts an energy-efficient air-conditioning system and a new, permanent, easy-to-use sound system installed by JPM

Communications.

The *pièce de résistance* is the colorful mural depicting a variety of student activities and city landmarks, all within SAISD. This includes the Tower of the Americas. Not only an obvious choice as an Alamo City icon, its inclusion also is a nod to the original Burnet Elementary, which was on the site that would become HemisFair Park.

The artwork is the result of many SAISD staff members who selected the scenes to be included and created the mock up. The finishing touches were provided by Duende Design Architects Inc.

All outside, contracted work was overseen by Plant Services administrators to ensure quality control.

This and other almost-exclusively SAISD products offer District personnel opportunities to shine.

"We have confidence in the team's work ability to deliver such a project," said Senior Executive Director II of Facilities Michael Sanchez.

"In light of the fact that every major work group at Plant Services and Operations contributed in the completion of this transformation, it stands as a landmark of our team work."



Making its premiere appearance at the Sept. 9 School Board meeting is the all-new Board Room, featuring a colorful mural of student activities and local landmarks.



Following the installation of monitors, workers put the finishing touches on ceiling tiles.



A contractor cuts the stage's rubber basing as part of the installation phase for its glass.

SAISD superintendent hosts ACA information meeting

At the invitation of Dr. Sylvester Perez, area school district officials and community partners gathered Sept. 23 for a round table discussion on ways to let parents know more about the federal Affordable Care Act and its marketplace enrollment, which begins Oct. 1 and will run through March 31.

"While many of our students may be insured through Medicaid or CHIP (the Children's Health Insurance Program) they are still affected by their parents' lack of medical coverage," he wrote in a letter inviting participation.

"I believe our schools are uniquely positioned to engage parents in a conversation around the insurance available to them."

While an estimated approximately 100,000 uninsured Bexar County residents would be eligible to obtain subsidized insurance through the marketplace, the letter states, polls show that

78 percent of them are either unaware of this opportunity or don't have enough information to enroll.

In addition to SAISD, other round table participants included representatives from the Alamo Heights, Harlandale, North East, South San Antonio and Southside school districts.

Others in attendance included Citizens Organized for Public Service/Metro Alliance, Eastside Promise Neighborhood and University Health System representatives.

SAISD was among several governmental agencies and other organizations holding meetings in anticipation of next week's launch date on how to help educate the public on the ACA, including its benefits and how they can sign up for the health care coverage.

The meeting facilitator was the District's Department of Human Resources.



Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez (left) introduces Jorge Montiel, COPS/Metro Alliance lead organizer, who spoke on the Affordable Care Act's requirements and enrollment period.

Owl freshmen obtain 'Code' for successful futures

Whether aspiring to become computer programmers, seeking ways to augment their high-tech skills for other professions or aiming to hone their critical thinking, all of Highlands HS's 400 9th-graders are getting a head start on college, careers and expanding their horizons.

This year they are among a select few students in the nation - and the first in Texas - learning how to code computer systems through the fun, interactive, Web-based platform CodeHS.

"This opportunity will give our students an edge in the workforce," said Chelsey Cook, Highlands Science, Engineering and Technology Magnet coordinator.

"CodeHS gives our students a basic understanding of computer programming. This type of technology is used in every industry."

While directly related to the SET Magnet as part

of an overall expansion to ensure that courses are up-to-date and relevant for today's workforce, the opportunity to participate in CodeHS was extended to all 9th-graders because the skills learned are beneficial, regardless of the career students pursue, Cook said.

"CodeHS is not simply teaching our students how to program computers. It teaches them how to solve problems," she explained.

"Highlands students will be better critical thinkers with the completion of this CodeHS program."

CodeHS is offered through the basic freshman prep course Dollars & Sense. At most other schools, the program is available only to a select few group of students.

Learning is made fun with users writing their own code in game form in which they direct Karel the dog through a maze. The first program is a simple

one that just requires Karel to move, with the level of difficulty progressing to more complex tasks.

Individual, personal feedback is offered to ensure active student engagement and deeper learning of the material. The program includes dozens of tutorial videos, allowing visual, hands-on training for students.

Funding for Highlands' participation in CodeHS was provided by Rackspace Hosting Co-Founder Graham Weston's 80/20 Foundation.

Training was conducted this summer for Highlands and SAISD educators by CodeHS Co-Founder Zach Galant.

CodeHS also is accessible to the public through a monthly subscription fee. For more information visit: www.codehs.com.



Highlands HS SET Magnet coordinator Chelsey Cook (first photo) and students Tyler Vega and Daimean Gonzales (l to r) discuss a computer programming function. Back at the keyboard, they practice coding, a computer's basic language. The Magnet students are among Highlands freshmen learning this skill through CodeHS.



The First Tee teaches far more than golf skills



Don't be surprised if tomorrow's top PGA and LPGA tournament players can be found right here and now, learning the game at an SAISD academy or elementary.

But even if a professional cup is not in their future, these amateurs will be champions in a far more important venue: winners in the game of life.

Through participation in The First Tee, elementary-age students from 58 District schools not only are honing their golf skills, but also preparing to become well-rounded individuals and upstanding citizens as well.

This year The First Tee was expanded to 18 additional SAISD campuses, offering even more students the opportunity to take advantage of the national program, which is delivered as part of their regular PE.

In addition to introducing and building golf skills, the program includes a seamless health and wellness component and an added bonus, Roger Rodriguez,

senior coordinator of health and PE, said he believes to be particularly valuable.

"The First Tee curriculum provides instruction in the nine core values to students such as: respect, courtesy, honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, responsibility, confidence, judgment and perseverance," he said.

This total-package approach also is popular with students, parents and educators alike at Mission Academy, one of the program's host sites, said PE teacher Susie Getz.

"Most of our students do not have the opportunity to learn the sport of golf. Through golf, these students learn skills, pride, patience and goal-setting that they can use socially, professionally and personally throughout their lives," she said.

Later this year students will have the opportunity to practice all the skills they have been learning in school at city golf courses, Rodriguez added.

SAISD's affiliation with this national program

is made possible through a collaboration with The First Tee of Greater San Antonio.



Mission Academy PE teacher Susie Getz (top photo) demonstrates basic putting skills. Shown adjacent photo (r to l) is good sport Joshua Cantu celebrating his classmate Antonio Guerra's successful shot.



Discover the possibilities

The public is invited to learn about the educational options available to students in 2014-15 by attending the:

SAISD Magnet & In-District Charter Fair
5 to 7:30 p.m. • Oct. 2 (Wed)
Brackenridge HS - 400 Eagleland Drive

Representatives will provide information on the programs, all designed to give students a strong scholastic foundation coupled with real-world experience to best suit their talents and interests.

Applications will be accepted for next year's kindergartners and 6th- and 9th-graders. Enrollment is open to Bexar County-area students, no matter which school they otherwise would attend.

Magnet deadline for SAISD students to turn in their application to their school counselor is Nov. 22. Applications from students outside the District are due to SAISD's Department of Charter, Magnet and Summer Schools on Dec. 13.

In-District charter deadline also is Dec. 13. These applications should be submitted directly to the individual charter campuses.

For more information call 554-2660 or visit www.saisd.net.

THE MAGNETS

High Schools

- Architecture & Environmental Studies... Jefferson
- Burbank Agricultural Science (BAS)..... Burbank
- Business & Finance Lanier
- Health Professions Edison
- Health Professions Fox Tech
- International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB)..... Burbank
- Judge Andy Mireles Law Magnet Fox Tech
- Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology (MET) Sam Houston
- Media Productions..... Brackenridge
- Military Science and Public Service..... Jefferson
- Public Safety..... Edison
- Science, Engineering and Technology (SET)..... Highlands
- World Languages Brackenridge

Middle Schools

- American Heritage..... Poe
- Multilingual Tafolla
- Technology Rhodes

THE CHARTERS

Secondary Schools

- Early College High School..... Travis
- All-Girls Academy (6-12) YWLA

Middle Schools

- Music..... Irving
- Science and Health Whittier
- Scientific Inquiry Harris

K-8 Academies

- Core Knowledge and Visual Arts Hawthorne
- Dual Language, Fine Arts, and Environmental Sciences Bonham
- Integrated K-8 Instruction..... M.L. King
- Performing and Visual Arts Austin

Elementaries

- Accelerated Learning Briscoe
- Learning Styles Barkley-Ruiz
- Hands-on Thematic Units and Critical-Thinking Skills..... Highland Park



in the Spotlight



SAISD Foundation honors District's sources of inspiration



Past and present shining stars took the spotlight Sept. 25 for the INSPIRE Awards, where they were honored for making a significant difference.

This third-annual event was sponsored by the SAISD Foundation to recognize innovative educators, outstanding alumni and organizations.

Honorees are shown left to right. Award category, recipients and the schools they represent are: **1) Innovation Award** - Dr. Lawrence Scott, Burbank HS counselor; Blanca Gebhart, Bonham Academy

teacher; Paul Perea, Maverick ES music teacher; and Dr. Traci Smith, Herff ES principal. **2) Excellence Award** - Dr. Ricardo Romo, University of Texas at San Antonio president, author and noted photographer, Fox Tech HS. His presenter was John T. Montford, former SAISD Foundation board chairman. **3) Leadership Award** - Sonia M. Rodriguez, attorney, Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women chair, SA 2020 original tri-chair and current board member and YWLA board member, Burbank HS. Her presenter was Suzanne Wade, president of H-E-B San Antonio food/drug division.

4) Service Award - Dr. Joe Bernal, former educator, state representative, senator and Texas Board of Education member,

Lanier HS. His presenter was Dr. Maria "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, president and CEO of Intercultural Development Research Association and **5) The 80/20 Foundation**. Accepting on its behalf was Lorenzo Gomez, executive director. His presenter was Darryl Byrd, president and CEO of SA 20/20. The 80/20 Foundation supports giving San Antonio more urban options including education technology jobs, such as the group's partnership with the District and through the SAISD Foundation to fund Highlands HS's participation in CodeHS.

Nomination forms for next year's awards now are online at:

www.SAISDFoundation.com/events



SAISD says so long to beloved SADE

A valued District Police Department veteran officially is enjoying a dog's life. But before assuming retirement, SADE, a 10-year-old black Labrador retriever, received well-deserved recognition from Trustees at the Sept. 16 School Board meeting. After being acquired at age 2, SAISD's first-ever narcotics-sniffing canine inspired a name-the-dog contest in 2005. Winners were siblings Joshua and Travis Juarez of Graebner ES, who devised the acronym SADE for San Antonio Drug Enforcement. Joshua, who now attends Burbank HS and Travis, a Burbank grad and UTSA student, were among those bidding her a fond farewell. Others included (standing, l to r) Detective Raul Rodriguez, Officer Jaime Jalomo, Chief Jeff Ward, Lt. Sherry Palfrey and Officer Rebecca Alvarado. No goodbyes needed for Officer Charles Whitlock (kneeling), her longtime handler. She now is a member of the Whitlock family.



Eagles 'On Fast Track' to success

Brackenridge HS students pause for a photo during the Latinos on Fast Track student leadership symposium at the UTSA downtown campus where they heard from professionals on careers in the SET fields of science, engineering and technology. With them (far left and right, respectively) are Lynn Lynch, vice principal, and Juan Rocha, GEAR UP college readiness coach.



Strike up the bands!

If halftime entertainment is your favorite part of high school football, then we have an event just for you! Join us for the annual

Marching Band Showcase
6:30 p.m. • Oct. 8 (Tues)
SAISD Sports Complex

Come cheer for your favorite high school bands!



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