

February 13, 2014

SAISD's spotlight on literacy yields honors and accolades

A winner in an area writing contest and statewide recognition for participation in a program that has improved reading levels are just the latest examples of success in the District's goal to increase rigor in these vital subjects.

Outstanding area essayist

Her story "30 Days a Butterfly" about two sisters, the younger one still living at home and the eldest back for a 30-day visit from New York, earned Jessica Redmon first place in her category in the inaugural San Antonio Book Festival Fiction Writing Contest.



The Sam Houston HS junior's essay expressing the realities of daily life and the younger sister's sadness and overcoming it was the winner among 11th- and 12th-graders.

"Jessica has been an outstanding writer since she came to Sam Houston as a 9th-grader," said her principal Darnell White.

"This contest confirms her talent for writing and reasserts her goal to write for a living."

This year's theme was "A River Runs Through It..."

The works of the first-place winners will be published on the San Antonio Book Festival's website. The authors also will be invited to

the April 5 festival where they will be part of the program to include more than 70 national and regional writers. The free, all-day public event will take place at the Central Library and Southwest School of Art.

Redmon learned of her win during a surprise visit to her school by San Antonio Public Library Foundation President Tracey Bennett and Texas Cavaliers Association Publicity Chairman Clint Hennessey, whose organization underwrote the contest.

The win included a \$150 prize for her and \$500 for her school.

For more information visit www.saplif.org.

Tops in Texas

Beacon Hill and Brewer elementaries were two of the five statewide winners in the "2013 Texas SUCCESS & Istation Reading Contest," scoring visits from program characters Amelia Chameleon and Justin Time, who presented congratulatory gifts.

Both schools were recognized for minutes logged into the computer-based Istation reading and intervention program that maximizes students' reading fluency, comprehension and retention and academic success. The contest ran Oct. 21 to Nov. 30.

Placing first in the state was Beacon Hill, where students in kinder through 5th-grade

spend 30 minutes daily working on the program.

"Istation is a wonderful reading resource that allows the student to receive reading instruction through individualized, instructional level activities," said that school's principal Trace Mahbubani.

"As a result, more of our students are reading on grade level than ever before. Our goal is that every student will read on or above grade level and Istation is a key intervention in helping us realize this goal."

Also enthusiastic about the program is Brewer principal Lisa Barrera.

"Istation has benefited the students at Brewer by providing computer-based targeted reading skills for students below, at, or above grade level," Barrera said, adding:

"As these reading skills are mastered the students increase their reading ability. In addition, the computer-based program provides vocabulary lessons that increase reading comprehension skills."

Nearly 5,000 schools and more than 885,000 students participated in the contest's first year.

For more information visit: www.istation.com.



Jessica Redmon shows off her mock check as a San Antonio Book Festival Fiction Writing Contest winner. With her (l to r) are principal Darnell White and library and Texas Cavaliers Association representatives (respectively) Tracey Bennett and Clint Hennessey.



Trace Mahbubani welcomes Istation characters Amelia Chameleon and Justin Time to Beacon Hill. Among those enjoying the celebration (seated left) is Derrick Thomas, SAISD's senior coordinator for English language arts and reading.



Lisa Barrera (far left) and Jose Moreno, assistant superintendent of school leadership, elementary team 1 (far right), join Amelia Chameleon, Justin Time and students at the banner recognizing Brewer as a contest winner.

District Trustees approve 2014-15 calendar

Forward-thinking SAISD employees and community members can start planning now for next school year.

SAISD Trustees at the Feb. 10 School Board meeting approved Draft Calendar A, which

also garnered the most votes of employees and community members who were invited to express their preference through an online ballot.

It also was the staff-recommended calendar and will provide teachers six days of professional learning

before the first day of school.

The complete calendar will be posted on: www.saisd.net.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Aug. 13** - Teacher start date
- **Aug. 25** - Students' first day of school
- **Sept. 1** - Labor Day
- **Oct. 24** - End of first nine weeks
- **Nov. 24-28** - Thanksgiving holiday
- **Dec. 22 - Jan. 2** - Winter break

- **Jan. 15** - End second nine weeks
- **Jan. 19** - Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday
- **Feb. 16** - Presidents Day holiday/bad weather makeup day
- **March 9-13** - spring break
- **March 27** - End third nine weeks

- **April 3** - Good Friday
- **April 24** - Battle of Flowers Day
- **May 25** - Memorial Day
- **June 4** - Last day of school
- **June 5** - Bad weather makeup day

Science students from three SAISD schools reign at regional



Nearly 40 talented young scientists representing Harris and Rhodes middle schools and the Young Women's Leadership Academy, both middle- and high-school level, were winners for their outstanding projects at the Feb. 8-9 Alamo Regional Junior Academy of Science competition.

Earning the most awards was YWLA with 16 for the middle school and 10 for the high school.

At the high school level these include: Highest in Category - behavior; second place honors for chemistry and environmental; third place awards for behavior and biochemistry and an honorable mention.

YWLA middle school highlights include: Highest in Category for chemistry, Earth and space, environmental and medicine and health; first grand prizes in the categories of math and computers and biochemistry; second grand prize for medicine and health; third grand prize for medicine and health and behavior and a fourth and fifth grand prize for behavior. Also, second place in botany and third place in environmental and microbiology.

Harris' highlights include: Highest in Category for botany; fifth grand prize for microbiology; first place in chemistry and medicine and health; second place in botany, chemistry, environmental and physics; third place in behavior and two fourth place awards and an honorable mention.

Rhodes students won third and fifth grand prizes in the respective categories of physics and engineering.

Next stop for most is the Alamo Regional Science and Engineering Fair in March.

For a listing of the complete results visit: www.arase.org/winners.html.



Harris MS

Harris science teachers (far left, l to r) Deborah Tinsley Pledger and Susan Cullinan and (far right, l to r) Rosanne Volpert, Orlando Rummans and Staci Robertson Kelly with their school's award winners.



Rhodes MS

Rhodes principal Julio Garcia and science teachers (far left and right, respectively) Jennifer O'Grady and Kathryn Torralva-Villa with their school's award winners.



YWLA

YWLA science teachers Karen D. Harris (far left) and (far right, l to r) Regina Arzamendi and Michelle Menchaca with their school's award winners.

Schools rewarded for generosity as charitable contributions rise

Giving to the SAISD Foundation through the United Way has increased for the fifth consecutive year.

Nearly 1,350 District employees made pledges for 2014 through the Combined School United Way Campaign, compared to 1,264 last year.

The generosity of staff at Fenwick and Sarah King elementaries and Harris MS was

reciprocated in \$500 grants to those schools while Herff and Riverside Park elementaries, Rogers MS and Estrada AC received grants of \$1,000.

This was the second consecutive year that Herff and Riverside Park employees were recognized for their level of giving.

The grants represent an expression of

appreciation from the Foundation for the schools' outstanding efforts to encourage giving on their campuses.

Give a Little Love Employee Campaign

Although the United Way campaign period has ended, opportunities for giving have not. Staff still can make a gift to the SAISD Foundation through a payroll deduction this month via the Give a Little Love Employee Campaign, or later at anytime.

The Foundation also will be giving incentive grants and donor thank you gifts for this campaign.

Interested employees can download a payroll deduction form at:

www.saisd.net/admin/finance/index.shtm.



Courtesy photo

Javier C. Leal, SAISD Foundation board member and Foundation director Judy Geelhoed (far left and right, respectively) thank principals (l to r): Kristin Willmann, Rogers MS; Homer Rivera, Riverside Park ES; Dr. Traci Smith, Herff ES; Anna Garcia, Sarah King ES; Dr. Tambrey J. Ozuna, Fenwick ES; Dr. Carol Velazquez, Harris MS and vice principal Ruben Fernandez, Estrada AC.



Thinking about retirement?

Employees considering retiring during the 2013-14 school year are invited to learn about their options at:

Retirement information sessions

Feb. 13, Feb. 19, Feb. 26,
March 19 or March 20
5 to 7 p.m.

Burnet Center, 406 Barrera St.

Posters have been provided to all schools and departments by sponsor the SAISD Employee Benefits, Risk Management and Safety Department. To request a poster or more information call Natalie Martinez, 554-8664 or email nmartinez9@saisd.net.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Come join us in celebrating SAISD's inaugural Teachers of the Year at a recognition ceremony

Feb. 19 (Wed) - 5 to 7 p.m.

Convocation Center, 110 Tuleta Drive

In addition to honoring each school's Teacher of the Year, the three Distinguished Teachers of the Year will be announced.

These were selected for the levels of elementary, middle and high school from the 91 chosen Teachers of the Year to represent their campuses.

The School Board meeting originally set for Tuesday, Feb. 18 has been re-scheduled for Monday, Feb. 17. Classes also will be held that day to make up for schools being closed Friday, Jan. 24 due to icy weather conditions.



Leaders in the making

While taking a break from the YMCA's four-day statewide Youth and Government Conference, Jefferson HS student delegates pause for a photo in front of the state capital. While there, they participated in an education and leadership development program providing hands-on experience including authoring and presenting legislative bills designed to help their community and the state. Two of Jefferson's bills passed during committee and senior Alexander Rodriguez (bottom row, left) and junior Kelsy Olmos (top row, third from left) were named "Outstanding Delegates." Others shown, all left to right are: top row, David Garcia, Magnet coordinator; Lexi Heller, social studies teacher and students Olga Escalera and Jose Medrano. Bottom row are students Abel Hernandez, David Vela and Amber Cardenas and Posey Duncan, YMCA sponsor.



Courtesy photo

Model of excellence

Welcoming educational leaders nationwide to her school (left) is Whittier MS principal Janet Perez. Nearly 50 toured the school to learn more about Advancement Via Individual Determination. Whittier is one of three SAISD campuses named national models for the AVID college-prep system. Joining the tour (standing beside Perez) is Jeanne Mercer, an AVID Texas State Office program manager.

Help on wheels

This semester SAISD students are getting the medical assistance they need without having to leave their schools. Making a stop at Carroll ECEC (adjacent and middle photos) is the University Health System's mobile pediatric clinic, where tots receive mandatory physicals required for enrolling in Head Start. This was its first stop to SAISD early childhood education centers this month. Elsewhere, Crockett ES students recently were beneficiaries of a visit from Miles of Smiles,



a free school-based oral disease prevention program for grades kinder, 2nd and 3rd. Miles of Smiles is offered in collaboration with the UT Health Science Center and

San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department. Assisting on this visit (foreground) is Cindy Champagne, the District's dental hygienist.

SAISD's National Signing Day sensations

Brackenridge HS



District athletes shared a major milestone moment in their lives as they joined thousands of other teens from across the country in signing letters of intent to play college football. At Brackenridge HS, head football coach Willie Hall (standing) beams

with pride as quarterback Ramon Richards dons an Oklahoma State University cap after signing to play for the Cowboys. Sharing in the joyous occasion are mom Ruth Murray and SAISD Athletic Director Gil Garza. Burbank's two-way starter at quarterback

Burbank HS



and defensive end Jeremy Sanchez (left) is bound for Tarleton State University while his Bulldogs offensive lineman teammate Juan Chavarria heads to Texas A&M University-Commerce. Wishing them well at the collegiate level is their coach Mark Perez.



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