

May 10, 2012

SAISD schools named nationwide AVID models

Their successful use of a college-readiness system preparing students for higher education have earned Jefferson HS and Longfellow MS a place among America's elite schools.

Both have been named national demonstration sites for AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination.

"This is an honor for SAISD because as designated national demonstration sites, Jefferson and Longfellow will serve as models for schools across the nation as they prepare their students for college readiness using AVID as the foundation," said Carol Frausto, the District's director of advanced academics.

This prestigious status was bestowed following a rigorous validation process conducted by the college-readiness organization.

Only 124 of the nation's 4,500 AVID schools have earned this designation, which is granted to campuses regarded highly successful in the program's implementation. The schools also are among just 21 in the state and the only in Region 20, which represents South Texas.

"It's validation of what teamwork between

administration, teachers and students can accomplish," said Jefferson HS principal Joanne Cockrell.

"Entire faculty, staff and student body celebrated because this honor is a result of campuswide effort."

Jefferson is Cockrell's second school to serve as a national demonstration site. She was principal at Fox Tech in 2001 when that high school - along with SAISD's Edison - first received the designation which continued at both through 2010.

Longfellow is the District's first middle school to garner this distinction.

"To be designated as an AVID national demonstration site is a milestone in the history of Longfellow," said principal Liz Solis.

"It is a testament to our mission of promoting college readiness and excellence in academic achievement for all students."

Each school has an AVID site team composed of teachers, counselors and academic administrators, who receive intensive training in implementing the college-readiness system.

Now in its 16th year, SAISD was the first Texas school district to offer AVID when it was established

as an elective at eight high schools.

Campuses selected as national demonstration sites implement AVID beyond an elective and incorporate the college readiness system schoolwide.

Common characteristics - according to the program's website - include strong and committed leadership, evidence of outstanding student achievement, a campuswide college-going culture as a basic expectation and models for excellent inquiry-based AVID tutorials.

Through AVID, students are prepared for higher education by learning organizational skills, strategies and methodologies focusing on reading, writing, inquiry and collaboration.

AVID students are required to take either a pre-Advanced Placement, AP, or Dual Credit class that will challenge them through a rigorous course of study.

AVID also is offered at 24 other District campuses including all middle and high schools, plus Bonham and Mission academies.

Next school year Edison and Whittier plan to apply as national demonstration sites, Frausto said, and will learn their status in May 2013.



Proudly displaying the Jefferson HS AVID banner are (l to r) Juli Gonzalez, counselor; Jennifer Gomez, AVID III teacher; Albert Escalante and Rey Luna, AVID I teachers; Joanne Cockrell, principal; Judy Torres, AVID coordinator; Tammy Beresford, AVID I teacher; and Cathy Bridge, AVID campus consultant.



Equally proud of their AVID banner are Longfellow MS faculty (l to r) Daniel Luna, administrative assistant; Lori Latiolais, AVID teacher; Monica Brooks, AVID site team; Roland Ruvalcaba, AVID coordinator; Eliza Vela, AVID teacher; Liz Solis, principal; Derrick Brown and Richard Lopez, assistant principals; and Cynthia Martinez, Jessica Cavazos and James Spencer, counselors.

Campuses recognized for performance and improvement

Two SAISD academies have the distinction of ranking among the Top Five Middle Schools in the Greater San Antonio area, comprising six counties.

Making this list for the first time is Young Women's Leadership at No. 2, while this is the third consecutive year that Austin - rated No. 3 - has been recognized by Children at Risk, a Houston-based advocacy group.

Austin also was the host site for the May 7 news conference where rankings in a variety of categories were announced.

Jefferson - rated the group's No. 1 most-improved high school - was the third SAISD campus recognized at this event.

The rankings also show Brackenridge as the No. 2 most-improved high school, while in the middle school category academies Bonham and Hawthorne placed No. 8 and No. 13, respectively.

Nearly 500 area schools were rated by the organization.

Campuses were evaluated on a variety of factors including student performance on standardized testing and numerous other measures such as college entrance exams, participation in advanced coursework, student retention and graduation rates.

To view all of the rankings visit:

www.childrenatrisk.org



Dr. Sylvester Perez congratulates principals (l to r) Maribel Rodriguez, Austin Academy; Joanne Cockrell, Jefferson HS; and Delia McLerran, YWLA whose schools were recognized at the news conference.

Upward Bound funding continues to assist college readiness

Resources provided by San Antonio College to help nearly 60 teens from Fox Tech and Lanier high schools prepare for higher education will continue.

SAC – which currently serves these schools through Upward Bound – has garnered a new five-year, \$1.25 million grant for the program from the Department of Education.

“We are looking forward to expanding college and career opportunities through a partnership with SAC Upward Bound,” said Roxanne Rosales, executive director of academic support.

SAISD students selected for participation receive tutoring, college-readiness instruction,

assistance in applying for college admissions and financial aid. They also can attend financial literacy workshops and a summer academic program to prepare them for the next year of high school or college.

Additionally, graduating seniors can take advantage of a free summer bridge program allowing them to earn up to seven hours of college credit through SAC.

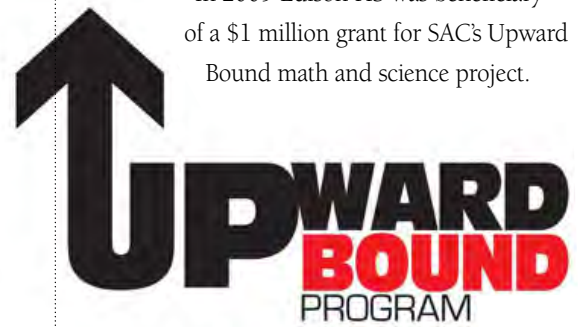
Upward Bound is designed to increase the rate at which participants complete their secondary education and succeed at the college or university level.

Selected students are recommended by

their teachers and counselors. At least two-thirds must be low income and potential first-generation college students.

Funds from the grant will be allocated at \$250,000 annually.

In 2009 Edison HS was beneficiary of a \$1 million grant for SAC's Upward Bound math and science project.



Theatre director receives Lillian R. Moody Award



Joseph Brown poses with his latest award and some others won by the school's theatre department.

A veteran Jefferson HS educator has been honored for his outstanding support of San Antonio College's fine arts programs.

Joseph Brown - who is retiring after 27 years in teaching (seven of which at Jefferson) has received SAC's 2012 Lillian R. Moody Award.

“We are very proud to have Joseph Brown be our first educator from any high school as a recipient,” said the college's Fine Arts Chair Jeff Hunt.

Among the reasons Brown was selected include Jefferson student participation in the SAC Summer High School Theatre Camp, their attendance at

performances throughout the year and providing assistance to those who want to begin their college studies there.

“I have cherished my relationship with San Antonio College over the years, and I consider their theatre program to be one of the best in the state.” the Fine Arts Magnet Academy coordinator and theatre director said.

Brown also praised “the beautiful and historic campus at Jefferson, where I have been blessed with a magnificent facility, and many talented students.”

Literacy grant boosts book selection for young bibliophiles

Funding from the Association of Texas Professional Educators Foundation will help bring more Herff ES library reading materials into the 21st century.

Through a \$1,000 Beth Ann Rogers Literacy Initiative Grant, the school has been able to order a variety of popular books in both English and Spanish, as well as fill in some of the library's gaps.

“The age of our collection is over 20 years old. So, we are trying to upgrade our books and provide our students with current information along with some great recreational reading,” said librarian Alma Mendiola.

An equal amount - \$500 each - was used for those types of books and for literacy readers.

These will assist in the goal to help struggling students become fluent and successful readers, said 1st-grade teacher Erica Flores, who sought the funding on her school's behalf.

Named for a former teacher, the Beth Ann Rogers grant was created to fund Texas public school library literacy materials and to modernize resources.

Herff was among five grant recipients statewide this year.



Herff ES students soon will be enjoying books similar to these displayed by teacher Erica Flores (left) and librarian Alma Mendiola.

Tee time 'fore' education

Ready to hit the fairways for fun and a good cause at the annual Golf Fore Excellence tournament are (starting top row, l to r) Bob Raymond, Dr. Sylvester Perez, Joe Bernal and Dan Zeier. The golfers were among patrons and local business leaders participating in this SAISD Foundation fundraiser.

Proceeds support educational excellence and innovation in the District's schools. Donations to this year's event brought the total amount of funds raised by the foundation since its fruition to more than \$1.5 million.



A team effort

Thanks to the support of their staff, students, alumni and community, Bonham Academy has an extra \$1,000.

A check presented by the SAISD Foundation was given for the highest number of runners participating on the school's behalf at the 4E Run/Walk and Health Festival.

Check presentations for the other two recipients, Ball ES and Brackenridge HS, were held last month.

Three second place and three third place teams also were given \$500 and \$250, respectively.



Courtesy photo





in the Spotlight

Record-number of SAISD students earn major scholarships

As the school year comes to a close six members of the class of 2012 in particular have an added incentive to celebrate their accomplishments as they look forward to bright futures.

Four students from Burbank, Jefferson and Lanier high schools have earned full college

funding through the Ph.D. level as Gates Millennium Scholars.

They are among of 1,000 students nationwide to receive this funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In another scholarship highlight, two seniors from Edison HS will have \$20,000 each going

toward their college educations through Dell Foundation scholarships.

Funding for this program is provided by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation.

All also are first generation students of the college-prep GEAR UP, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness Programs.



Burbank HS Gates Scholar Steven Rivera is considering the universities of Columbia, Stanford or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lanier HS Gates Scholars and their chosen universities are Brandon Mojica, the UT-Austin McCombs School of Business; and Joyce Paez, Texas A&M - Corpus Christi.

Jefferson HS Gates Scholar Clarisa Medina is headed to St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind.

Edison HS Dell Scholars and their chosen colleges are (left) Darlene Ortiz, Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter, Minn., and Eliana Merla-Campillo, Charleston in South Carolina.

'A-Team' scholars

A trio of SAISD teens have been recognized by the San Antonio Express-News as among the area's best and brightest high school seniors.

They were among 50 area students who were presented plaques during a recent luncheon in their honor.

Recipients are nominated by their counselors and principals based on leadership, academics and community involvement.



Diana Luna, Brackenridge HS



Desirree San Martin, Jefferson HS



Mitzi Torres, Burbank HS

Courtesy photos

Hail to Harvard!

Jefferson HS junior Megan Kee accepts a 2012 Harvard Book Award from State District 125 Rep. Joaquin Castro, a fellow Mustang and an alum of the Ivy League school. Offering congratulations (l to r) are principal Joanne Cockrell, teacher Leslie Holland and counselor Juli Gonzalez. The award recruits the nation's brightest high school juniors and seniors to attend Harvard University.



Courtesy photo

Award-winning historians

Bound for next month's National History Day competition at the University of Maryland are YWLA 8th-graders (l to r) Nadia Balderas, Andrea Martinez and social studies teacher Adrean Scott. The students qualified by placing first at the recent Texas State History Fair for their documentary "Emma" about native San Antonian and labor rights activist Emma Tenayuca's role in the 1938 Southern Pecan Shelling Company strike.



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