

January 17, 2013

## Texas Exes tap Isabel Fears for outstanding teaching

A veteran educator is being recognized for her distinguished career and professional accomplishments.

Isabel Fears is among a dozen teachers to be honored on Feb. 22 by the University of Texas at Austin's Texas Exes alumni association, the President's Office and UT's College of Education.



In honor of her selection as a Texas Exes outstanding teacher, Isabel Fears poses under the UT-Austin banner at her school.

She and nine other high school and two elementary-level teachers statewide will be presented a custom sculpture and \$2,250 as Texas Exes for Outstanding Teachers Awards recipients during a dinner hosted by UT President Bill Powers.

The Jefferson HS math teacher was nominated by her principal, Joanne Cockrell.

"Ms. Fears continuously demonstrates a genuine passion for the teaching profession in all that she does for our school, but more importantly, our students. Isabel goes above and beyond the call of duty each and every day," Cockrell stated in her nomination letter.

"My passion for teaching is beyond imagination," Fears wrote in describing her teaching philosophy for the nomination, adding:

"There are times when I step back and look at my students working their mathematical equations. I admire their tenacity, their desire to learn, their sense of pride and accomplishment and I am thankful for

the opportunity to teach and learn from them."

When not in the classroom, Fears is active in a variety of campus and District organizations and community involvement. She also teaches GED adult education classes three evenings a week.

Prior to returning to the Jefferson family four years ago (where her teaching career began in 1973), Fears taught at Navarro Academy, now designated as a high school, and in the Northside ISD.

Honorees need not be UT-Austin graduates. Fears' bachelor's and master's degrees were earned at Our Lady of the Lake University and UTSA, respectively.

Award winners are selected based upon their ability to inspire and support their students, bringing credit to the teaching profession, and being held in the highest regard by their students, fellow teachers, administrators, parents and community.

Since 1987, more than 3,000 educators have been nominated and only 287 chosen as recipients.

## Schonberg selected for New Science Teacher Academy

Science lessons are especially engaging and exciting for some M.L. King Academy students this year. As one of 244 educators nationwide and among only 26 in Texas selected a New Science Teacher Academy fellow, their teacher, Brandi Schonberg, is sharing with them the lessons she is learning which are specially designed to pique their interest in this core subject.

"I applied to the NSTA fellowship program because I wanted to learn new ways to inspire my students the way my parents and my own middle and high school teachers inspired me," Schonberg, now in her third year of teaching and her first in SAISD, said.

"I remember the name of almost every science teacher I had because they told science stories instead of simply teaching the subject. I want my students to want to learn."

Schonberg was selected from hundreds of applicants nationwide.

Through NSTA, she and the others are participating in a yearlong professional development program designed to promote quality science teaching, enhance teacher confidence and classroom excellence and improve content knowledge.

The fellows have a comprehensive NSTA membership package, online mentoring with trained professionals who teach in the same discipline and the opportunity to participate in Web-based PD activities and seminars.

Additionally, each fellow will receive financial support to attend the NSTA 2013 National Conference on Science Education to be held here in San Antonio.

Sponsors include the Dow Chemical Co.,



the Amgen Foundation, Astellas Pharma US Inc., the American Honda Foundation, the Bayer USA Foundation and Lockheed Martin.



Experiments such as extracting DNA from a banana make science class more fun for students of M.L. King Academy's Brandi Schonberg.

## District's Police Department addresses school safety

SAISD's ongoing efforts to help ensure a safe environment for students and staff were presented to Trustees and community members at the Jan. 14 School Board meeting.

District Police Chief Jeff Ward provided the briefing following nationwide heightened interest in school safety.

His presentation offered an overview of safety and security measures which include yearly mandatory Emergency Preparedness training for each campus, safety drills for students and a well-trained District Police Department that reviews emergency plans and provides campus support.

There is an assigned SAISD police officer at every middle and traditional high school, while the elementaries are supported by a patrol team. Also, most campus officers are bike certified, offering outside presence and visibility at schools.

Additionally, three patrol shifts provide police service 24 hours a day.

The District's Police Department also works in close coordination with other local law enforcement



As part of a safety training session for the Superintendent's Cabinet, Police Chief Jeff Ward provides details on a FEMA management plan. The session preceded his Districtwide safety presentation at the Jan. 14 School Board meeting.

agencies to enhance safety and security.

The recent bond provides funding for additional safety and security upgrades, including:

- Keycard access control that requires all visitors to be buzzed into the building during the school day.
- Classroom door locks.
- Security fencing.
- Additional cameras.

In a recent letter to all employees, Interim Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez stated:

"I think the answer to creating the safest setting possible lies in a strong culture of awareness, with diligence on the part of school principals and their faculty and staff to follow security procedures that are in place and to foster a school environment where students feel they can openly report suspicious activity."

# Interviews under way for next SAISD superintendent

Trustees have taken an important step in the search for the District's next superintendent by interviewing seven candidates on Jan. 14-15.

The interviews followed an extensive process led by the PROACT Search firm that yielded 88

applicants for the superintendent position.

Applications were closely compared to the Superintendent Position Profile, which is based on information gathered from a number of stakeholder engagement forums.

The interviews were held in closed session, and following those interviews Trustees narrowed the list to three candidates, who will be in a second round of interviews this month.

## District sets legislative priorities for the 2013 session



As the Texas Legislature convenes for its 83rd session, SAISD leaders are urging lawmakers to place education on the top of their list of priorities.

"We in SAISD will be closely watching critical issues impacting the District, including changes to STAAR, graduation plans and school choice, namely vouchers and charters," Interim Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez wrote in a recent letter to employees.

"We also will continue to follow the school finance trial in Austin, which has the potential to have huge consequences for our District – and, ultimately, our state."

His statement follows School Board action advocating priorities that Trustees adopted at their Nov. 12 meeting. Below are highlights of legislation that SAISD endorses or supports.

- Improved state funding to: public education, including funds for enrollment growth; the Student Success Initiative to help students on End-of-Course Exams; and for the

Instructional Materials Allotment.

- Restored funding for districts that offer a Pre-K program.
- Streamlines state accountability requirements and provides flexibility or expansion in the ways students can satisfy graduation requirements.
- Allowing districts to receive credit in the state accountability system for students who demonstrate proficiency on alternate measures.
- Reducing the amount of testing days a district must administer to students.
- Amended law to allow students on the Minimum Graduation Plan to apply to a Texas public four-year university.
- Maintained or increased funding for dual credit courses.
- Allowing more Career and Technology Education courses to satisfy the 4x4 graduation requirements.
- Supporting state funding to reimburse districts that subsidize the industry credential certification exam fee for its students.
- Removing the disincentive in a tax

swap election.

- Amending the Texas Election Code to allow government entities to provide clarity on ballot propositions, including tax rate elections.
- Requiring charter schools to meet the same requirements as school districts.

Additionally, SAISD opposes legislation that would:

- Violate local control.
- Remove the statutory cap on the number of charter schools authorized.
- Fund private school vouchers, tuition tax credits and similar programs with public tax dollars.
- Lower federal Carl D. Perkins funds to school districts offering CTE courses.
- Provide for any further expansion by private schools to participate in UIL activities.
- Require districts to determine citizenship at the time of a student's enrollment.

Follow the session online at: [www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us).

## Thank you, Trustees!

SAISD's hard-working and dedicated elected officials were guests of honor at a Jan. 14 reception.

The occasion was for the annual Texas School Board Recognition Month, during which the District's seven Trustees received gifts from the family of high school feeder pattern campuses they represent, along with expressions of gratitude for their service from well-wishers gathered for the event held at the Fox Tech HS fine arts building.

Each year this observance provides the public an opportunity to thank Trustees for all they do on behalf of the school district and its community.

Refreshments for the reception were courtesy of the SAISD Foundation.



Jefferson HS principal Joanne Cockrell (left) is among those appreciative of Board President and District 7 Trustee Ed Garza.



Lorna Klockenga of Highlands HS (left) is one of the principals presenting Debra Guerrero with a quilt of the names of her District 3 schools.



Board Vice President Ruben Cuero (right) accepts thanks from Moises Ortiz, principal of his District 1 Brackenridge HS.



In addition to gifts, District 2 Trustee James Howard gets a hug from Wheatley MS principal Mary Olison.



Receiving a bouquet from a student of her District 6 Edison HS is Board Secretary Olga Hernandez.



Paying tribute to District 5 Trustee Patti Radle is Lanier HS principal Miguel Elizondo.



Board Assistant Secretary and District 4 Trustee Adela Segovia is delighted by flowers from Burbank HS principal Yesenia Cordova.



Board of Trustees

## Registration ongoing for 4E Run/Walk and Health Festival

Seeking a fun, family-friendly activity while benefiting SAISD students at the same time?

Then make tracks to the annual 4E (Education, Exercise, Engagement, Empowerment) 5K and 10K Run/Walk set for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 23, along the Mission Reach portion of the San Antonio River, starting at Brackenridge HS. Cheering participants on will be the Spurs Coyote.

There also will be a Districtwide Health Festival on the track from 9 a.m. to noon featuring giveaways, free screenings, a pediatric mobile clinic, food sampling and a Kids Zone

with games, events and an obstacle course.

**Register early and save!**

Registration now is under way. Rates are:

\$15 for SAISD employees who sign up by March 2; \$25 thereafter; \$30 for families; and \$5 for students.

Community members can register at an early rate of \$25 and \$35 after March 2.

**Open to the public and business community**

Participants including community members and alumni can run or walk on a school's behalf by indicating their desire to do so upon registration. Businesses also can adopt a school for \$500. This price will pay for 10

registrations for their company and 10 for students at the designated campus.

Schools registering the most members for their 5K or 10K teams can earn \$250, \$500 or \$1,000 participation awards.

District employees also can earn points through Humana's Vitality Program for training and registering for the 5K or 10K.

SRG Athletics is the title sponsor for the event, and all proceeds benefit the SAISD Foundation.

For more information and to register online go to the event section at:

[www.saisdfoundation.com](http://www.saisdfoundation.com).



# in the Spotlight

## Pardon our dust!

Dirt flies at the Fenwick ES campus as workers use a backhoe to dig a hole for the school's two-story addition. When completed, the facility will house computer and science labs, as well as conventional classrooms. Ground recently broke on this phase of the \$11.9 million project under SAISD Bond 2010. Fenwick is one of 22 District campuses receiving bond-funded major renovation.



## Ready to serve

Coach Sheryl Campbell and members of the Rhodes MS tennis team are all smiles as they eagerly anticipate playing on the school's new resurfaced courts. Their school was selected as the host site for last month's announcement that sports courts there, along with at the Young Women's Leadership Academy and Lowell and Rogers middle schools, were rebuilt or resurfaced through \$111,000 from the city of San Antonio. The funding was courtesy of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work federal grant the city received to help fight obesity. The public also will be served by these outdoor sports facilities, which will be available to them after school hours and on weekends.



Courtesy photo

## Mindful parents

Graebner ES parents proudly display their certificates earned for successful completion of Precious Minds - New Connection. A commencement ceremony celebrated the end of this 13-week course during which they learned a variety of skills including how to manage stress, demonstrate respect, brain development and other strategies to help their children learn. Former SAISD principal David Espiritu Jr. led the sessions. He is seated front row center, with Graebner principal Noemi Saldivar at his left.

## 'On the Mark' educators

Gifts from FirstMark Credit Union are brightening the New Year for an SAISD counselor and a special education teacher. Bertha Castillo (shown bottom photo with her principal Derrick Brown) was honored for receiving a \$500 Educator Awards grant. The Douglass ES counselor is using the money to expand an attendance incentive program. The names of 21 (up from seven) students from all grade levels whose attendance is perfect each week are drawn for prizes and inclusion on the wall of Attendance Stars. Through the credit union's Less Stress for Teachers giveaway, Michael Salinas of Bowden ES (shown above with his prize) was presented an iPad. The giveaway celebrating FirstMark's 80th anniversary was held to provide gifts for educators to enjoy - or in Salinas' case - his 11-year-old daughter Myra, to whom he gave his prize.



Courtesy photo



## His dream lives on!

All SAISD schools and most offices will be closed Monday, Jan. 21, in observance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday honoring the civil rights leader's life.

*Have a safe and happy holiday!*

  
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