

# Your Link To The News Within SAISD

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# New graduation program begins with the class of 2018

Starting this fall, all District freshmen will be enrolled in the Distinguished Level of Achievement Plan with an Endorsement, putting them on a faster track for college readiness, admission and scholarships.

Trustees approved the more rigorous plan, which includes making algebra II mandatory, as the recommended option for the class of 2018.

Their action follows that of the State Board of Education, which approved final graduation requirements in January as part of the new Foundation High School Program passed under House Bill 5.

In addition to serving as a strong collegereadiness indicator and providing students an advantage for college admission and scholarships, this plan is designed to personalize learning and gives them added flexibility to follow their



Whittier MS counselor Hilda Villagomez provides information on the new graduation requirements at a community meeting, one of many held this month for parents of all SAISD 8th-graders.

academic interests in preparing for career fields.

Students also will have the opportunity to be eligible to graduate under the state's top 10 percent rule, granted they meet other requirements. Under this provision, Texas students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class are eligible for automatic admission to a state-funded university.

Community meetings are being held at all academies and middle and high schools to explain the new graduation plan to parents of 8thgraders. Counselors also will meet with incoming freshmen and their parents in August to discuss the new requirements and map out a personal graduation plan.

### halls of fame accolades District dominates 2014

March 22 was a particularly special day for nine SAISD family members, all of whom were recognized for their contributions to education.

### 2014 San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame

Young Women's Leadership Academy principal Delia McLerran was among a dozen inductees honored for excellence in their individual fields.

"My induction is quite an honor," she said.

"As the principal of YWLA I have had the distinct pleasure and challenge of establishing a college preparatory academy that provides a very rigorous and life-changing educational experience



Presenting Delia McLerran (center) her award is Dr. Adela Gonzalez, induction ceremony committee chair, while SAWHOF President Chris Alderete offers her congratulations to the inductee.

for the young ladies who enter our doors."

YWLA's academic successes include being named Texas' best middle school for 2013 by the advocacy group Children at Risk, rising from second place the previous year. Since opening in 2008, YWLA was rated exemplary, the Texas Education Agency's highest ranking for student performance under the previous system.

This past year, YWLA received academic distinctions in math, reading and top 25 percent student progress from TEA.

The grade 6-12 school will graduate its first class of seniors this spring, all of whom already have been accepted into universities with a total of \$1.7 million in scholarships thus far.

Immediately prior to her four-year tenure with SAISD, all of which at YWLA, McLerran was principal of her alma mater, Miller HS in Corpus Christi, where she had been valedictorian and president of her senior class in 1984.

She joins 2012 inductee Dr. Vangie Aguilera, the District's senior executive director of special education, as the most recent SAISD employee to be inducted.

McLerran was nominated by 1989 inductee and YWLA Advisory Chair Jimmie Ruth Evans.

### 2014 Educators' Hall of Fame

School Board Assistant Secretary James Howard was among eight persons with ties to the District selected for induction by Gamma Tau, the local chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa Inc.

"It truly was an honor and humbling experience for me to be considered with this cadre of outstanding individuals," he said.

"This encourages me to continue being an advocate for kids, especially ours in SAISD." Howard has served as District 2 Trustee since

being elected in 1998. Between 2008-13, he was SAISD's first African-American School Board president.

The Wheatley HS graduate is an employee relations specialist for the Texas American Federation of Teachers and a member of the Board of Directors for the Texas Association of School Boards.

His fellow inductees are:

- Alfred Alderson IV, Bowden ES kinder teacher.
- Lt. Col. Jerry Cheatom, Sam Houston HS ROTC instructor.
- Wayne Dickey, retired Sam Houston HS basketball coach, teacher and Highlands HS
- Clarence Hill, retired Jefferson HS teacher.
- Freddie Ray Patterson, retired Davis MS
- Dr. Burnie L. Roper, former Davis MS 6th-grade math teacher, Sam Houston HS alum and current Lackland ISD superintendent.
- Dr. Lawrence Scott II, Sam Houston HS counselor.

Inductees are chosen through recommendations from their peers.

Ceremony emcee was Dr. Mateen Diop, SAISD's special projects and partnerships executive director.



Educators' Hall of Fame inductees are (I to r) Dr. Lawrence Scott, Dr. Burnie L. Roper, Freddie Ray Patterson, James Howard, Clarence Hill, Lt. Col. Jerry Cheatom and Alfred Alderson IV. Not pictured is Wayne Dickey.

# Winning by doing the 'Write Thing'

Twain MS 8th-grader Kyllista Mykayla Mata's ideas on ending youth violence and her eloquence in expressing them may earn her a place in the annals of American history.

As a national finalist in the "Do the Write Thing" challenge program, her winning essay will compete against others across the country for publication in the Library of Congress.

This summer, she and her mom Margarita Mata will travel to Washington, D.C., for the national contest. There, 50 middle school-level winners will be selected. They also will have the opportunity to meet personally with their respective members of Congress on Capitol Hill prior to the publication of their essays.

She is one of two San Antonians whose selection was announced this weekend.

Local sponsor is the Bexar County District Attorney's Office in conjunction with the National Campaign to Stop Violence.



Standing proud with Kyllista are her principal Christopher Castro and teacher Natalie Leader.

### Cameron community celebrates exciting new era

Jubilation reigned as some 300 celebrants gathered for a sneak peek at the District's first campus completed under SAISD Bond 2010.

An open house showcased an all-new Cameron ES, significantly upgraded from its former 47-year-old self into a fab, colorfully modern 21st-century learning environment.

Inspired by Google's logo, Cameron's new open



Cameron fans pose for a keepsake to mark this auspicious occasion. Photo booth was among the evening's most popular open house events.

floor plan takes advantage of natural lighting and features a series of bright, airy spaces designed to stimulate creativity and learning.

Among the highlights of the \$12.3 million renovation are a refurbished library and cafeteria, science labs, additional classrooms, art and music labs, a courtyard conducive to outdoor learning and, as its crown jewel, a glass-enclosed front



Doggone proud of the new Cameron are school mascots the Scotties and (I to r) Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez, principal Pamela Walls-Tankerson and District 2 Trustee James Howard.

entry, which establishes its contemporary look.

Construction also has more than doubled the original school's existing space.

Cameron students now attend classes at the former Pfeiffer Academy and are scheduled to return home in August.

For the latest on SAISD Bond 2010 visit: **www.saisd.net/bondprojects**.



Open house attendees check out the school's vibrant colors, natural lighting and exposed infrastructure, including painted ducts.

### New early college high school welcomes prospective students

Hundreds of middle school-level students Districtwide and their families recently explored



Conducting a presentation at the open house is the school's principal Dr. Derrick Thomas.

their higher education options by attending an open house at St. Philip's College, planned future site of SAISD's newest early college high school.

This fall, it is slated to join the District's Travis ECHS - it has operated in partnership with San Antonio College since 2008 - in offering students a head start on higher education.

Like Travis, this school would provide teens the option of working on an associate degree or up to 60 hours of college credit toward a bachelor's while earning their high school diploma at the same time, and at no cost to them or their parents.

Students would attend school full time at the

St. Philip's campus, where they would be able to pursue degrees in associate of arts, associate of science or associate of applied science, as well as certifications in the high-demand career fields of information technology or automotive technology.

### Important upcoming dates

- April 7-12 student/parent interviews
- April 21-24 acceptance letters sent
- May 28 student meet and greet
  For more information call: 554-2584

# Girl power to rule through dynamic new partnership

San Antonio's first and only all-girls public school is marking yet another first.

The San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame selected the Young Women's Leadership Academy as the organization's first-ever partner.

"Having access to this esteemed network of women, who have established themselves in their respective fields, will prove to be a great asset for my students as they explore career options for themselves," YWLA principal Delia McLerran said.

"This partnership provides greater financial support to our students as they enter college, along with great hope for their dreams to become a reality,"

she said

The partnership will introduce the school's students and staff to the high-achieving SAWHOF

members, who also will mentor the young women. Scholarships also will be raised, all of which going to YWLA through the SAISD Foundation.

As part of the partnership, YWLA students created a video of interviews they conducted

of the 2014 Hall of Fame inductees, including their principal, Delia McLerran (see story, page 1), which was shown at the induction luncheon on March 22.



Posing with the students who created a video on the 2014 Hall of Fame inductees are (center, I to r), principal Delia McLerran, SAWHOF's Maria Elena Torralvo-Alonso and their teacher, Adrean Springer.

# Lamar ES offers tuition-based pre-kinder

Good news for parents whose children do not qualify for state-funded pre-kinder. Their child may be eligible for SAISD's acclaimed program on a tuition basis, offered for the second consecutive year at Lamar Elementary.

Applications now are being accepted for 2014-15. To qualify, the child must be 3- or 4-years-old by

Sept. 1 and meet other eligibility requirements. Tuition is \$500 a month, or may be paid by semester or annually.

For more information, interested parents, including SAISD employees, may call the District's Early Childhood Education Department, **554-2410**.

# Own a piece of history

Coming soon - your first-edition 2014 Alamo Stadium Fiesta medal commemorating the long-anticipated re-opening of a beloved San Antonio landmark. Supplies are limited so get yours before they're all gone. Proceeds go to the SAISD Foundation.

Medals are \$8 plus tax (cash and credit cards are acceptable) and go on sale to SAISD employees Monday, March 31, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Central Office Printing Services Department

For more information call **554-8350**.

# Get your parking pass

Central Office Fiesta parking passes for full-time employees will be available for purchase starting Monday, March 31.

Passes are for April 21-26 events and will be valid only on the specific day for which they were bought. Cost is \$5, cash only.

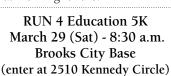
They may be purchased 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Jackie Landa, Human Resources Department executive secretary.

For more information call **554-8410**.

# Register March 29 for

Missed online registration for one of SAISD's seasonal favorite events?

Not to worry! Participants can register on-site that morning for the:



Race day prices are: \$25 for SAISD employees; \$35 for the community and \$5 for students.

Employees who already have registered may pick up their packets 4 to 6 p.m. today, March 27 and 1 to 7 p.m. tomorrow, March 28 in the Central Office Board Room, 141 Lavaca St.

For event information visit: **www.saisdfoundation.com**.









### Double the cheer factor

Having twice the cause for celebration are Edison HS spirit groups. Awards earned at the HTEDance National Competition include first in jazz, pom and military for the dance team and first in jazz and pom for the pep squad. Director (not shown) is Daniela M. Benavidez.

### Masterful music lessons

Totally jazzed by the opportunity to jam with renowned professionals is the Jefferson HS Jazz Band. The student musicians were among a select few nationwide chosen to learn from the masters, members of the ChiArts Jazz Quintet featuring Bobby Watson, who conducted a clinic at their school. This exclusive instruction was courtesy of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, whose mission includes offering promising young musicians college-level training by America's jazz masters. Jefferson also was chosen for this distinction in 2008.





# A multitude of 'Skills'

Nearly 60 Lanier students - the most from any Bexar County-area high school - are advancing this week to the state SkillsUSA competition following outstanding performance in a variety of categories at the regional contest. With them, back row, far left are principal Dr. Edward Garcia and cosmetology teacher Flor Molina. Far right is criminal justice teacher Tamara Ford. Teens representing Brackenridge and Burbank high schools also are among those advancing to state.

### Meeting adjourned!

Assembled for their final gathering of the school year are members of SAISD's Federal Reserve Bank Student Board of Directors. Membership in this six-month program has provided teens from nine District high schools hands-on lessons and an insider's view into the world of finance and the economy.

# Courtesy photo

### Sign up for SAISD invitationals!

Student game board enthusiasts are invited to participate in the:

Chess or Scrabble invitational tournaments April 12 (Sat) - 8:45 a.m. check in Mission Academy, 9210 S. Presa St.

The chess tournament is for grades kinder-12 while Scrabble is for grades 4-12. Both are for SAISD students only. Registration deadline is April 11.

For more information email: ecchase@chessforeducation.com.

# Friends in high places

Welcoming House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and District 20 U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro (center) to their school are Young Women's Leadership Academy students and staff. She was at YWLA as keynote speaker of a women's economic forum that was hosted by Castro.



### San Antonio Independent School District

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### **Board of Trustees**

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