

August 11, 2011

TAKS era ends with increases in math, science and completion rate

With confirmation that academic progress is being made, the new school year will get off to an optimistic start for SAISD overall, while staff and students at 29 District campuses can enjoy reaching the state's top rankings.

Although work remains to attain the level of achievement to which SAISD aspires for all students, the District rose to the challenge of higher standards to return to an academically-acceptable rating.

This is due to a significant increase in the percentage of students graduating or continuing their education for a fifth year in high school and improved performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

Other SAISD accountability highlights include passing rates of 73 percent in math and 72 percent for science, the highest since TAKS began in 2003.

About a third of SAISD schools end this era rated among the state's top academic achievers, including repeat performers.

Among the District's trio of *exemplary* schools, Travis Early College HS and the Young Women's Leadership Academy consecutively have achieved the Texas Education Agency's highest ranking since they opened in the 2008-09 school year, while Arnold ES makes this list for the fourth straight time.

The majority of the 26 *recognized* campuses

2011 Exemplary Schools
Travis Early College HS • Young Women's Leadership Academy • Arnold ES

2011 Recognized Schools
Austin Academy • Hawthorne Academy • M.L. King Academy • Mission Academy
• Baskin ES • J.T. Brackenridge ES • Briscoe ES • Cameron ES • Cotton ES
• Douglass ES • Forbes ES • Green ES • Highland Hills ES • Huppertz ES • Kelly ES
• Lamar ES • Madison ES • Maverick ES • Nelson ES • Pershing ES • Rogers ES
• Schenck ES • Steele ES • Storm ES • Wilson ES • Woodlawn Hills ES

Congratulations to our exemplary and recognized schools

also are perennial high achievers, while M.L. King Academy and Pershing ES are noteworthy as the District's most-improved schools.

This was the last year for the state's public school students to take the TAKS, which was more rigorous than its predecessor, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills.

Ratings will be suspended until 2013 for this year's inauguration of the next generation of student assessments - the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness.

Significantly more challenging than TAKS, STAAR will measure performance as well as academic growth. The class of 2015 will be the

first that must meet the end-of-course testing requirements - as well as pass their classes - in order to earn a diploma.

2011 TAKS highlights

Districtwide, social studies remains *exemplary*, while reading and writing continue to be *recognized*. Other highlights are:

- 41 schools had gains in both math and science
- 34 schools had gains in writing
- 23 schools had gains in reading
- 12 schools had gains in social studies
- 9 schools had double-digit gains in science
- 8 schools had double-digit gains in writing
- 7 schools had double-digit gains in math

Patron input part of Alamo Stadium's blueprint for the 21st century



Trustees (l to r) Olga Hernandez, Patti Radle and Carlos Villarreal listen to a presentation by Citizens' Oversight Committee chair Mario Barrera.



Heath Wenrich of RVK, working in a charrette-type setting, is among architects jotting down patron input.

In the first of a series of community meetings, patrons on Aug. 4 met with - and offered feedback to - the architectural team selected to complete \$35 million in renovations to the Alamo Stadium and Convocation Center.

More than 100 participants, broken into three groups, provided input regarding external site elements such as parking, landscaping, traffic and drainage, as well as options for future use of the stadium.

Community members also were invited to tour the facilities, which will be renovated under SAISD Bond 2010, to see firsthand the areas in need of upgrades.

Bathrooms and locker rooms in both will be renovated, and new seating will be installed. Upgrades also slated for those facilities will include infrastructure involving electrical and plumbing, along with ADA access, parking, lighting and other improvements.

For the latest visit:
www.saisd.net/bondprojects



Athletic Department Executive Director Gil Garza leads community members on a tour of Alamo Stadium.



Alamo Stadium - affectionately known as the "Rock Pile" because of its limestone structure and location at the site of a former quarry - has been a San Antonio landmark since 1940.



Summer in SAISD

In the last issue of insider we highlighted some of the ways District staff and students are taking advantage of fun learning opportunities. From sharing their knowledge with others and getting a jump start on the new school year to incorporating education with taking time to commune with nature, here are some more examples of how SAISD spends summer.



Courtesy photo

Two Promise Neighborhood schools were must-see sites for lawmakers in town this week for the National Conference of State Legislators Summit. Shown greeting them at Wheatley MS (left photo) is Dr. Robert J. Durón, while Board President James Howard and Promise Neighborhood representative and SAISD parent Alberta Harris (near trophy case) are among those enjoying a tour of the historic school. Welcoming guests to the Tynan ECEC (right photo) is principal Judy Ratlief. A half dozen East Side SAISD campuses are part beneficiaries of the \$312,000 Promise Neighborhood Project federal education grant focusing on the connection between school and neighborhood revitalization.



Overseen by a statue John Harvard, the Ivy League university's first benefactor, more than a dozen SAISD educators converged in Cambridge, Mass., to learn how their school's assessment data can be a catalyst for improving the quality of education. Data Wise program participants shown back row (l to r) are Jason Cottrell, TECHS teacher; Liz Noriega, Longfellow MS teacher; Michael Jordan, Irving MS principal; and Carolina Elizondo, Tafolla MS principal. Middle row (l to r) are Stacy Hodges, TECHS teacher; Dawn Parker, Fox Tech HS principal; Dr. Carol Saxenian, high schools leadership executive director; Liz Solis, Longfellow MS principal; Alexis Haase, Irving MS teacher; Miriam Aguilar, Lanier HS vice principal; Annette Soto, Irving MS academic dean; Eva Beniflah, Rogers MS assistant principal; Stephane Savell, Rogers MS teacher; and Dr. Priscilla Canales, leadership executive director. Front row (l to r) are Allen Wilson, Lanier HS teacher; Miguel Elizondo, Lanier HS principal; and Kristin Willmann, Rogers MS principal.

Preparing for their "One Transformation Will Better Your Destination" campaign are members of the Lanier HS Police Explorers command staff. The drive encouraging SAISD students, parents and educators to join forces for academic success was implemented during Extreme Youth Leadership training at Schreiner University the teens attended on scholarship.



Courtesy photo



Rodriguez ES teacher Joseph Aguaristi proudly displays his certificate of completion for the Summer Writing Institute where he and 40 other District educators learned how to help students improve their own writing, reading and literacy skills. Offering congratulations at a graduation ceremony were Deputy Superintendent Betty Burks (center) and trainers (l to r) Karen Guajardo, Jo Rose and Sheryl Lew of SAISD, and independent consultant Diana Olague. Curriculum used for the institute was the Abydos Learning International program, formerly the New Jersey Writing Project.

At Botanical Gardens Camp, incoming YWLA 7th-graders learn basic biological processes through hands-on activities including making seed balls such as these being stored in plastic bags. Rolled in clay and other materials, the balls can be thrown for sowing with the seeds protected from hungry animals and insects. This camp at the San Antonio Botanical Center is among several the city's only all-girls public school is holding in August.



Taking the spotlight at the International Baccalaureate Conference of the Americas were Burbank HS staff and students including presenters (far right, l to r) IB coordinator Candace Michael, principal Mona Lopez and teacher Victor Martinez. Shown adjacent photo is class of 2011 valedictorian Mayra Almeida-Trejo with IB Americas Director Drew Deutsch prior to her addressing attendees at the July 22 luncheon. The Burbank contingent was among approximately 1,400 IB representatives from throughout the Americas at this four-day conference hosted by the Alamo City. Burbank is the only San Antonio high school to offer the world-renowned, rigorous IB honors program.



What we knew...

- The IB Diploma is the best preparation for academic success at the post secondary level
- It requires students to face weaknesses as well as strengths
- It was/is unknown in the San Antonio area
- The students enrolled in the IB program at Burbank HS are in the majority (class of 2011)
 - Hispanic - 97%, African American 3%
 - Economically disadvantaged - 86%



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insider is produced by the **Communications Department**.

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