





Student Advisory Committee shares research results

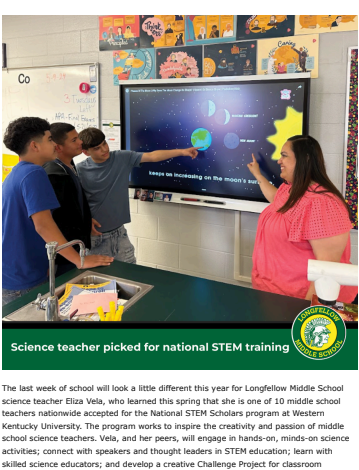
Members of the 41-member Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee presented their research and advocacy at an end-of-year banquet Monday. The group, which comprises both middle and high school students, met with the superintendent monthly throughout the year and set agendas about issues important to them and their peers. They also conducted focus groups at elementary schools and academies to learn about the needs of younger students. "They are truly our thought partners, and we deeply respect their input," Superintendent Aquino said. "I am immensely proud of their leadership, their contributions, and for being an integral part of the SAISD Familia."



Jefferson senior to receive national NORD award

Jefferson High School senior Abigail Villarreal has a busy couple of weeks coming up. On June 6, she crosses the stage with her classmates at Freeman Coliseum. Three days later, she turns 18. But in the middle, she and her mother are flying out to Los Angeles, where she will receive the first ever Youth Champion Award from the National Organization for Rare Diseases (NORD) in recognition of her efforts to increase awareness and education about rare diseases among her peers and the wider community. It's a whirlwind of activity that celebrates, and in some ways, culminates, her life's work the past 18 years.

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Phoenix student interns in aircraft mechanics

Phoenix Middle College senior Soly Gutierrez is putting his skills to work in a paid internship at Barrio Aviation, helping to inspect and maintain the flight school's fleet. It's an experience that Gutierrez sought out as he pursued the aircraft mechanics program at Phoenix, which provides both high school and college level courses through St. Philip's College. When Gutierrez crosses the stage for his SAISD diploma next week, he will also be ready to take his general certification exam for aircraft mechanics.

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Arnold community rallies to create new mural

A wall on the back side of Arnold Elementary is looking a lot brighter after the school's community came together with local artist Albert Gonzales to create a mural inspired by his **Wabi Sabi Project**. The project came to be after coach Alejandra Garza, who started the school's garden last year, suggested to art teacher Monique Valero that the wall in the background surrounding the boiler could be donated to amplify the garden's theme. Valero contacted Gonzales, a 2009 Lanier graduate, who donated his design to the campus. During the first weekend in May, the school had a painting day in the garden. Gonzales came out, primed the wall and placed the outlines of the floral design. Saturday morning, more than 100 students, plus families, teachers and staff came out to not only add the splashes of color, but enjoy fellowship with food, music and vendors.

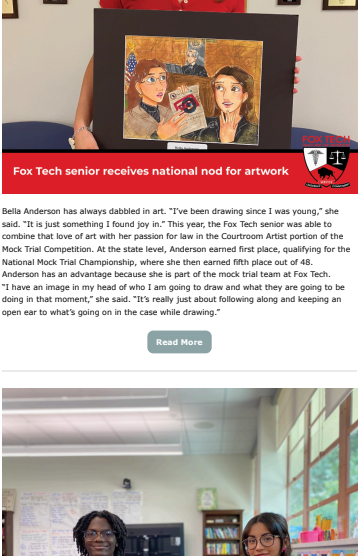
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Science teacher picked for national STEM training

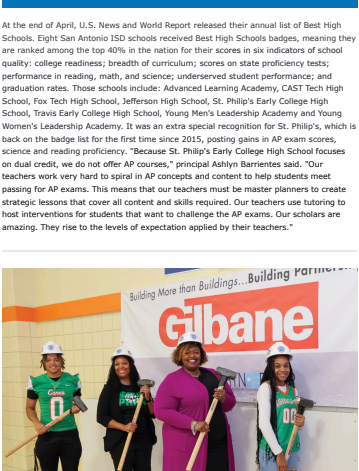
The last week of school will look a little different this year for Longfellow Middle School science teacher Eliza Vela, who learned this spring that she is one of 10 middle school teachers nationwide accepted for the National STEM Scholars program at Western Kentucky University. The program works to inspire the creativity and passion of middle school science teachers. Vela, and her peers, will engage in hands-on, minds-on science activities; connect with speakers and thought leaders in STEM education; learn with skilled science educators; and develop a creative Challenge Project for classroom implementation. For the veteran instructor, who has been at Longfellow all 17 years she has been teaching, the program will bring more opportunities to impact her students. "I live for the 'light bulb' moments when my students finally understand a concept that they have been struggling with," Vela said. "I try to instill in them that their education is the only thing they own, and no one can take it away from them."

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Students honored in 'Do the Write Thing' contest

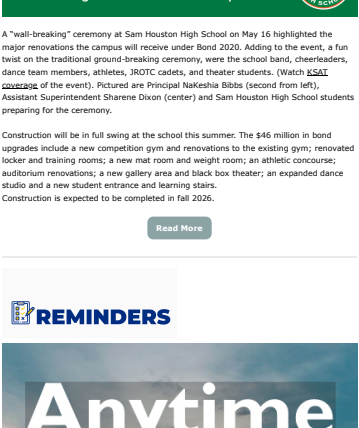
Rogers College Prep Middle School student Emily Resendiz-Ochoa was named the grand prize winner of the "Do the Write Thing" challenge. The contest, brought to Bear County by 57th District Judge Antonio Artega, gives middle school students across the county the chance to write about how violence has impacted them and what solutions they believe can better help their peers. "We've been able to give children a path, an avenue to express any violence that they want to talk about — anything that they feel like they have a solution for," Artega said. "Because kids come up with some of the best things." Emily will now serve as an ambassador for San Antonio when she, her parents and her teacher travel to Washington, D.C. this summer for a conference. Malcolm Martin and Risa Baumer from the Advanced Learning Academy were also named as finalists.



Annual contest brings out nearly 200 short films

Last week the Education Technology Department celebrated the winners of the 2024 SAISD Film Festival. This year, there were 173 submissions. All students that submitted a film received certificates and pins, category winners received a trophy at the event, and the grand prize winners each received a \$1,000 check from the SAISD Foundation for their campuses to use to continue their filmmaking efforts. At the culminating event at Sam Houston High School, the category winning films were shown in full in the auditorium. A screening room had four SMART boards showcasing all approved submissions, so students could showcase their work to family and friends on demand.

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Fox Tech senior receives national nod for artwork

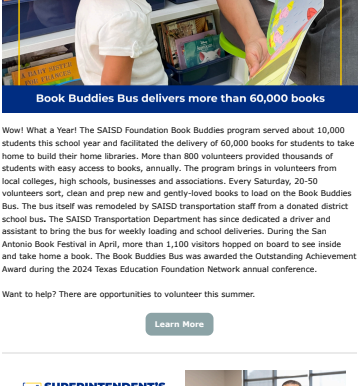
Bella Anderson has always dabbled in art. "I've been drawing since I was young," she said. "It is just something I found joy in." This year, the Fox Tech senior was able to combine that love of art with her passion for law in the Courtroom Artist portion of the Mock Trial Competition. At the state level, Anderson earned first place, qualifying for the National Mock Trial Championship, where she then earned fifth place out of 48. Anderson has an advantage because she is part of the mock trial team at Fox Tech. "I have an image in my head of who I am going to draw and what they are going to be doing in that moment," she said. "It's really just about following along and keeping an open ear to what's going on in the case while drawing."

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8 schools receive U.S. News Best High Schools badge

At the end of April, U.S. News and World Report released their annual list of Best High Schools. Eight San Antonio ISD schools received Best High Schools badges, meaning they are ranked among the top 40% in the nation for their scores in six indicators of school quality: college readiness; breadth of curriculum; scores on state proficiency tests; performance in reading, math, and science; underserved student performance; and graduation rates. Those schools include: Advanced Learning Academy, CAST Tech High School, Fox Tech High School, Jefferson High School, St. Philip's Early College High School, Travis Early College High School, Young Men's Leadership Academy and Young Women's Leadership Academy. It was an extra special recognition for St. Philip's, which is back on the badge list for the first time since 2015, posting gains in AP exam scores, science and reading proficiency. "Because St. Philip's Early College High School focuses on dual credit, we do not offer AP courses," principal Ashlyn Barrientes said. "Our teachers work very hard to spiral in our concepts and content to help students meet passing for AP exams. This means that our teachers must be master planners to create strategic lessons that cover all content and skills required. Our teachers use tutoring to host interventions for students that want to challenge the AP exams. Our scholars are amazing. They rise to the levels of expectation applied by their teachers."



'Wall-breaking' celebrates imminent improvements

A "wall-breaking" ceremony at Sam Houston High School on May 16 highlighted the major renovations the campus will receive under Bond 2020. Adding to the event, a fun twist on the traditional ground-breaking ceremony, were the school band, cheerleaders, dance team members, athletes, JROTC cadets, and theater students. (Watch [KSAT coverage](#) of the event). Pictured are Principal Nakeshia Bibbs (second from left), Assistant Superintendent Sharene Dixon (center) and Sam Houston High School students preparing for the ceremony.

Construction will be in full swing at the school this summer. The \$46 million in bond upgrades include a new competition gym and renovations to the existing gym; renovated locker and training rooms; a new mat room and weight room; an athletic concourse; auditorium renovations; a new gallery area and black box theater; an expanded dance studio and a new student entrance and learning stairs. Construction is expected to be completed in fall 2026.

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Anytime support

Aetna Resources For LivingSM

May is Mental Health Month, dedicated to prioritizing our well-being and promoting open conversations about mental health. At San Antonio ISD, we recognize the importance of mental health and its impact on our personal and professional lives. If you or a family member ever need help, Aetna's Employee Assistance Program, Resources for Living, is sponsored by SAISD and is available at no cost to you and all members of your household.

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Book Buddies Bus delivers more than 60,000 books

Wow! What a Year! The SAISD Foundation Book Buddies program served about 10,000 students this school year and facilitated the delivery of 60,000 books for students to take home to build their home libraries. More than 800 volunteers provided thousands of students with easy access to books, annually. The program brings in volunteers from local colleges, high schools, businesses and associations. Every Saturday, 20-50 volunteers sort, clean and prep new and gently-loved books to load on the Book Buddies Bus. The bus itself was remodeled by SAISD transportation staff from a donated district school bus. The SAISD Transportation Department has since dedicated a driver and assistant to bring the bus for weekly loading and school deliveries. During the San Antonio Book Festival in April, more than 1,100 visitors hopped on board to see inside and take home a book. The Book Buddies Bus was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award during the 2024 Texas Education Foundation Network annual conference.

Want to help? There are opportunities to volunteer this summer.

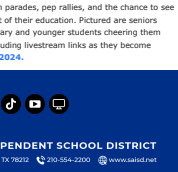
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Watch the superintendent's latest Quick Takes with Jaime video.





Trustee Leticia Ozuna shares highlights from the May 13, 2024 board meeting.



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