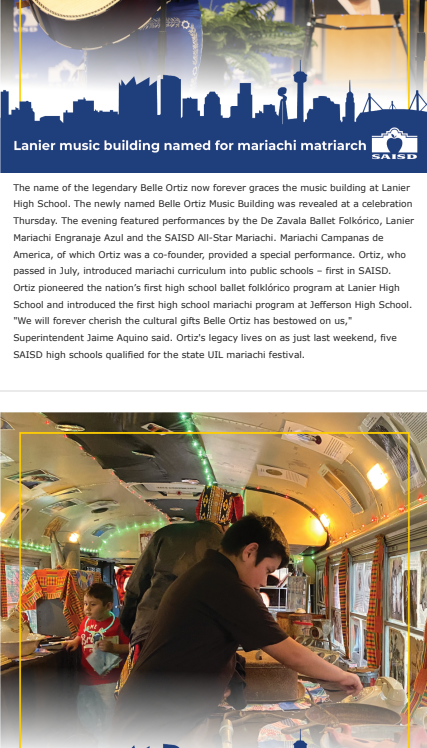
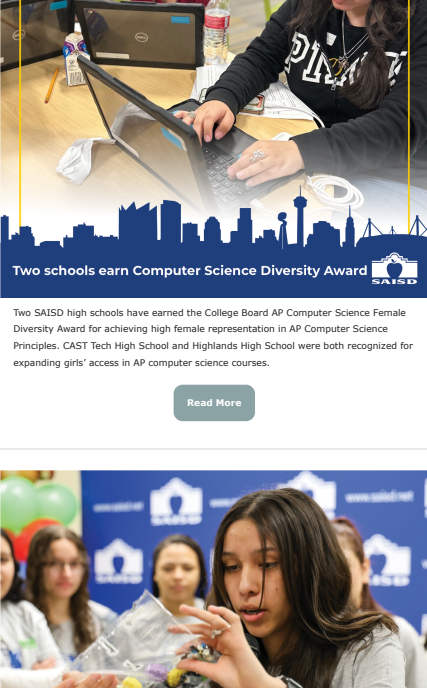


## NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



### Lanier music building named for mariachi matriarch

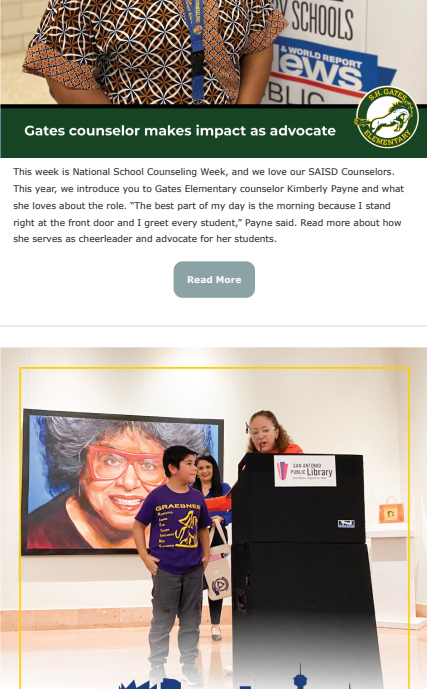
The name of the legendary Belle Ortiz now forever graces the music building at Lanier High School. The newly named Belle Ortiz Music Building was revealed at a celebration Thursday. The evening featured performances by the De Zavala Ballet Folklórico, Lanier Mariachi Engranaje Azul and the SAISD All-Star Mariachi. Mariachi Campanas de America, of which Ortiz was a co-founder, provided a special performance. Ortiz, who passed in July, introduced mariachi curriculum into public schools – first in SAISD. Ortiz pioneered the nation's first high school ballet folklórico program at Lanier High School and introduced the first high school mariachi program at Jefferson High School. "We will forever cherish the cultural gifts Belle Ortiz has bestowed on us," Superintendent Jaime Aquino said. Ortiz's legacy lives on as just last weekend, five SAISD high schools qualified for the state UIL mariachi festival.



### Black History Month bus brings local history to life

It's the third year for the transportation department's Black History Museum, and it's never been more of a museum. The bus — loaded with heirlooms from bus driver Robert Richardson's family — weaves together a narrative of tools used in the past with stories of influential Black San Antonians. Transportation has already booked 29 museum appearances at schools during Black History Month. When students board the bus, they are immediately drawn to the rotary phone, the typewriter, and the flat iron for straightening hair. They also pass by the old wood-burning stove Richardson's great-grandmother used, a lawn mower, an iron, a washtub, and an ice cream churn among the many relics, many of which sit atop quilted circles his mother made. "We're bringing it all to the children," Richardson said. "This year they are able to touch and see all the different artifacts."

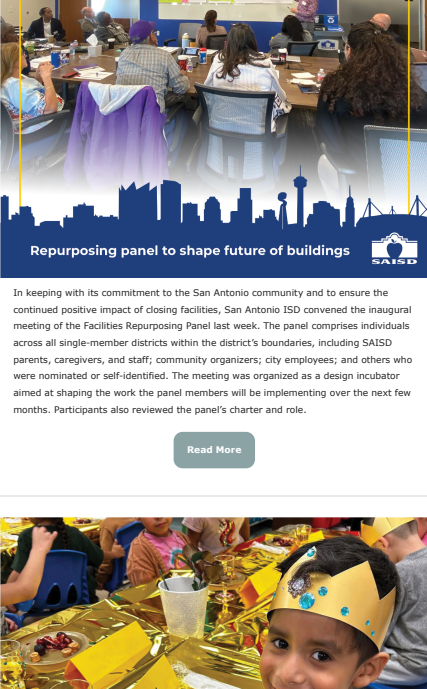
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### Two schools earn Computer Science Diversity Award

Two SAISD high schools have earned the College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles. CAST Tech High School and Highlands High School were both recognized for expanding girls' access in AP computer science courses.

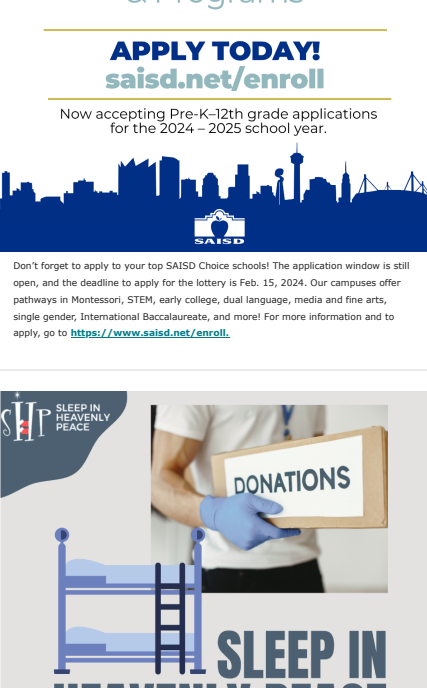
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### Student shares gift of Legos with Briscoe Elementary

For St. Philip's Early College High School student Leah Hernandez, everything happens for a reason. When the aspiring aerospace engineer had a birthday gift — a Lego kit — stolen off of her porch during the holidays, she turned the situation around, and received hundreds of Lego donations to share with elementary students. At an event at Briscoe Elementary Feb. 1, Hernandez and seven classmates from St. Philip's Early College High School distributed 71 kits to first grade students and helped the young engineers build them. It was a morning of joy as parents, staff, student volunteers and volunteers from both the San Antonio Police Department and SAISD Police Department helped the first graders build their Knockdown Stunt Challenge kits from the Lego Stuntz collection. "Maybe the Legos went to someone who really needed them or wanted them more, but so much good came out of the bad," she said.

[Read More](#)



### Gates counselor makes impact as advocate

This week is National School Counseling Week, and we love our SAISD Counselors. This year, we introduce you to Gates Elementary counselor Kimberly Payne and what she loves about the role. "The best part of my day is the morning because I stand right at the front door and I greet every student," Payne said. Read more about how she serves as cheerleader and advocate for her students.

[Read More](#)



### SAISD artwork displayed at Central Library exhibit

The creativity of 48 SAISD artists is on display at the Central Library. SAISD students produced nine of the top 10 award-winning pieces and 48 of the 60 total displayed pieces for the student portion of the Imagine exhibition honoring the inspiration of Dr. Ellen Riojas Clark. Student artists were recognized at a ceremony Saturday. Their work will be on display through Feb. 10.

[Read More](#)



### Repurposing panel to shape future of buildings

In keeping with its commitment to the San Antonio community and to ensure the continued positive impact of closing facilities, San Antonio ISD convened the inaugural meeting of the Facilities Repurposing Panel last week. The panel comprises individuals across all single-member districts within the district's boundaries, including SAISD parents, caregivers, and staff; community organizers; city employees; and others who were nominated or self-identified. The meeting was organized as a design incubator aimed at shaping the work the panel members will be implementing over the next few months. Participants also reviewed the panel's charter and role.

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### Kinder students experience life as royalty

Arnold kindergarten teachers Dr. Monica Ayala and Margaret Thompson planned a super fun and engaging conclusion to their Kings and Queens unit. Throughout the unit, they pulled together all the content areas, teaching vocabulary, literature, music, geography, and math. They learned about different royalty in literature and history, including King Midas and Princess Yennenga. "My favorite part was when my teacher read me the stories," Penelope, a kindergartener, said. Classes reenacted "The Princess and The Pea," placing a small rock under their reading mats. "We really wanted to make the stories come alive for our students," Ayala said. On the last day of the unit, they had a culminating activity in which they danced to medieval music, decorated crowns and cups and feasted like royalty — eating chocolate and grapes and drinking apple juice. "My favorite part was eating the food and drinking the juice out of my king cup," kindergartener Dovan said.

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## REMINDERS



**APPLY TODAY!**  
[saisd.net/enroll](https://www.saisd.net/enroll)

Now accepting Pre-K–12th grade applications for the 2024 – 2025 school year.

Don't forget to apply to your top SAISD Choice schools! The application window is still open, and the deadline to apply for the lottery is Feb. 15, 2024. Our campuses offer pathways in Montessori, STEM, early college, dual language, media and fine arts, single gender, International Baccalaureate, and more! For more information and to apply, go to <https://www.saisd.net/enroll>.

[Read More](#)

## SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

Your help means a lot to our students

**ITEMS NEEDED FROM:**  
Amazon/Walmart  
Bed in a bag twin size for boys or girls

**Drop off locations:**  
SAISD Central Office  
Sam Houston HS  
Lanier HS

Sleep in Heavenly Peace provides comfortable twin-size beds for students in need for our community!

[Read More](#)

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



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

## CLOSING SHOTS



We are 100 days smarter! Schools throughout the district have been holding celebrations to mark the milestone of the 100th day of school. They've held parades, dressed up as 100-year-olds, created posters and clothing containing 100 objects, and created classroom projects celebrating the number 100. We love seeing our students celebrating 100 days of wisdom, kindness and friendship. Let's finish the year strong! Pictured are: Hillcrest Elementary, Gonzales Early Childhood Education Center, Lamar Elementary, and Storm Elementary.



**SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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