

NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



Whittier opens new innovation laboratory

Whittier Middle School celebrated the grand opening of the Verizon Innovation Lab Thursday morning. Thanks to the generosity of Verizon, Heart of America and the J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship + Innovation Institute at Arizona State University, students and teachers using the lab have access to emerging technology such as augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), 3D printing and artificial intelligence (AI). "The Verizon Innovation Lab will change the way we learn and teach," said Mandie Hultford, principal at Whittier Middle School. "This is a futuristic type of learning that will elevate us to a higher level. Being exposed to virtual reality and artificial intelligence is a game changer. Our students are the real winners here. This will help students better prepare for the future."



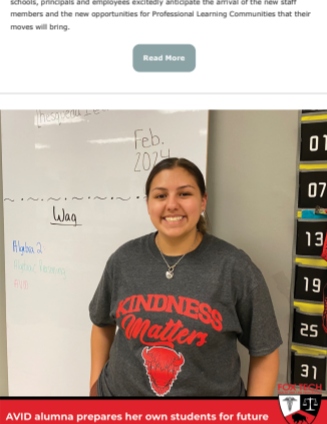
'Buenos Dias Aguilas' coffee cart develops job skills

Every Wednesday and Friday, the faculty and staff at Brackenridge High School can start their day with a special treat. The students from Carol Medina's special education class traverse the halls as Buenos Dias Aguilas, a rolling coffee cafe serving up Corralito Cafe from Mexico and other tasty treats. It's the Brackenridge version of a coffee cart program launched at all district high schools funded by an Innovative Services for Students with Autism Grant. Through the program, students gain communication skills, socialization, and job skills, plus a lot of hands-on learning in math.



Construction programs build 40 beds to donate

The day before Valentine's Day, sounds of drilling resonated as sawdust filled the air behind the CTE Building at Sam Houston High School. Construction students were sharing love with the community with bed frames they were building by hand. The Construction programs at Sam Houston and Lanier high schools are working with the nonprofit organization Sleep in Heavenly Peace this month to build 40 bedframes for children who do not currently have beds. You can help! Interested individuals may participate in the project by contributing a "Bed in a Bag" twin set, which includes a comforter and sheets, and/or a pillow. New bedding may be dropped off at the main offices of Lanier and Sam Houston High Schools and Quincy Central Office through March 1.



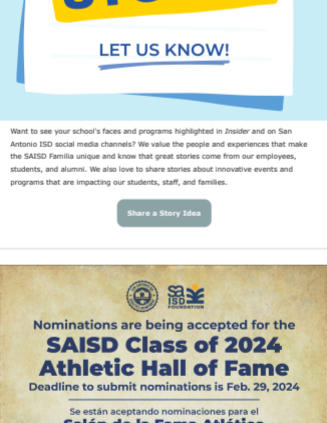
Cotton teacher earns district's Trinity Prize

Third grade teacher Sharon Martinez — the district's 2022-2023 Distinguished Teacher of the Year for the elementary level — was surprised earlier this month with the news that she was SAISD's 2023-2024 recipient of the Trinity Prize for Excellence. Martinez, who has taught at Cotton for nearly 30 years, is driven by the success of her students. "If I can instill in my children the passion for learning, the desire to never give up, the desire to work cooperatively with others, the determination to strive for more, the desire to meet and surpass their goals and the ability to be respectful and accepting of others, I am being successful," Martinez said. Typically honored at a reception at Trinity University in the spring, Trinity Prize winners receive a trophy, a \$500 cash prize from Whataburger, a \$250 Amazon gift card for a student organization or effort of their choice, and a Whataburger gift basket, including free Whataburger for a year.



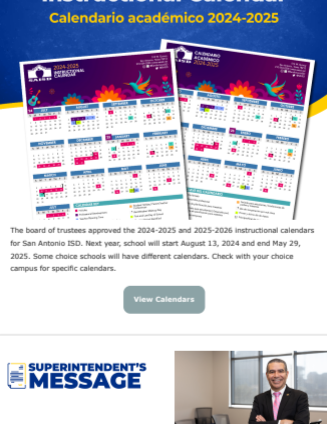
Officer Rosa shares joys of serving with 'Blue'

Officer Martin Rosa, a Burbank alumnus, is working with Blue, the newest member of the SAISD Police Department Care Team. Blue is especially good with kids, particularly when they need comfort or feel stressed. "Sometimes they just need somebody to talk to. Having a therapy dog there, you'd be surprised how much they open up," said Rosa. "He's calm. He's loving, and he's perfect. Blue is here to help anyone going through hard times."



Adult learners earn state recognitions

Students from the Adult and Community Education program swept the adult learner awards from the Texas Association of Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE). The academic awards are granted to TALAE student members each year who have demonstrated exceptional determination through their effort, persistence, leadership, and community involvement. The following students were awarded: Lorena Sanchez Romo, High School Equivalency Adult Learner of the Year (pictured with Superintendent Aquino, Darlene Volz, Director of Adult and Community Education and Mark Sanchez, coordinator of the Adult Education Program); Julia Miranda, English Language Learner of the Year; and Mariana Rodriguez, Career Pathways Adult Learner of the Year. "This remarkable accomplishment is a testament to the hard work and dedication of both our students and educators," Sanchez said.



Blending Familia brings collaboration opportunity

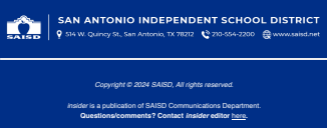
As school familias begin blending in the wake of the rightsizing decision, 253 teachers are planning their moves from closing campuses to receiving campuses. At receiving schools, principals and employees excitedly anticipate the arrival of the new staff members and the new opportunities for Professional Learning Communities that their moves will bring.



AVID alumna prepares her own students for future

Hannah Esqueda can't overstate the importance of AVID. The first-year teacher at Fox Tech High School is a product of the program, having taken courses in the Advancement Via Individual Determination curriculum both at Whittier Middle School and Edison High School. "Because I was in AVID, I was better prepared with time management as well as being organized," Esqueda said. Now she gets to teach those skills. The 2020 Edison alumna teaches AVID, Algebra II, and Algebraic Reasoning at Fox Tech.

NEWS FROM THE SAISD FOUNDATION



Scholarship Applications Now Open!

@SAISDFoundation.com

Do you know a deserving SAISD senior? The SAISD Foundation scholarship application is NOW OPEN! Thanks to the generosity of the SAISD Foundation and its donors, more than 100 scholarships are available to San Antonio ISD seniors. Deadline to apply is Monday, March 18.

[Apply for a Scholarship](#)

Innovative Grants Applications Open! Apply By: Feb. 23

There is still time!! If you have an idea for an innovative project, submit your short video application through Flip to have your project considered for a grant of up to \$5,000. Last year's grant winners included projects for book vending machines, virtual reality goggles and chicken coops. The deadline to apply is today.

[Learn More](#)

REMINDERS

Want to see your school's faces and programs highlighted in *Insider* and on San Antonio ISD social media channels? We value the people and experiences that make the SAISD Familia unique and know that great stories come from our employees, students, and alumni. We also love to share stories about innovative events and programs that are impacting our students, staff, and families.

[Share a Story Idea](#)

Se están aceptando nominaciones para el Salón de la Fama Atlético SAISD Clase de 2024. La fecha límite para presentar nominaciones es el 29 de febrero de 2024.

WWW.SAISD.NET/ATHLETICHALLOFFAME

Know an inspirational former athlete, administrator, or coach in SAISD? Nominations are now being accepted for the 2024 SAISD Athletic Hall of Fame. Each year, the Hall of Fame honors individuals who have made a positive impact in sports, either through excellent athletic achievements or excellent athletic program contributions. The deadline to submit a nomination is Feb. 29, 2024.

[Learn More](#)

The board of trustees approved the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 instructional calendars for San Antonio ISD. Next year, school will start August 13, 2024 and end May 29, 2025. Some choice schools will have different calendars. Check with your choice campus for specific calendars.

[View Calendars](#)

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

Trustee Stephanie Torres shares highlights from the Feb. 20, 2024 board meeting.

It's almost a wrap for this year's San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, and our students and schools have had such a fun and educational time engaging with the western and agricultural themes. Schools had dress-up days, took field trips to the rodeo grounds, had visits from trail drivers, and even competed in the stock show and rodeo events. Through all of these activities, they had a chance to learn more about animals and how our world is connected through agriculture.

