

# LAS ESCUELAS

October 2021



Featuring

## LISD BREAKS GROUND IN SOUTH LAREDO

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**Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early  
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## Laredo ISD Vision and Mission

### *Vision*

Diverse opportunities for student excellence make LISD schools the primary choice for families in the district. Our schools are safe and nurturing environments that motivate and prepare students to contribute and excel in life. They build on the strong and expanding foundation already established by families, local business leaders and community partners involved in student learning.

### *Mission*

LISD will prepare students to be highly successful, critical thinkers and effective problem solvers who are confident, self-motivated, and actively involved in our local and global community.



## Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza Tribute PG. 13

LISD paid its tribute to fallen Marine Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza Tribute killed in the Afganistan bombing on August 26, 2021.



## Back-to-School Donations PG. 18

Local organizations donated school supplies to LISD students.



## Drive Sames for Education PG. 7

For the eighth year in a row, the Sames Auto Group is sponsoring its annual Drive Sames for Education program to encourage perfect attendance among Laredo Independent School District's high school students.



## CHS students celebrate International Week of the Deaf PG. 8

Students at Daiches Elementary, Cigarroa Middle, and Cigarroa High School are celebrating International Week of the Deaf.



## Drivers education course picks up speed at Laredo ISD PG. 9

Laredo Independent School District introduced its new Drivers Education Course.



## STAY INFORMED!



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# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings LISD Family and Staff,

In just a few weeks we will be celebrating Thanksgiving Day with our loved ones. I have so much for which to be grateful this semester including the fact that we have more than 19,550 students enrolled in our schools and attending classes in person. We love having our children back in class, hearing their voices, answering their questions, and watching them grow up to become our community's future leaders. I am delighted to cheer and support our athletes, bands, dance teams, cheerleaders, and any youngsters participating in extracurricular activities. It's definitely one of the perks of serving as your Superintendent of Schools.

LISD has much to celebrate these days. It appears as if we are on the road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of cases keeps going down, and for that I am most thankful. So many LISD employees worked diligently to make sure that our schools were safe, sanitized several times a day, and that eligible students and staff were provided with a COVID vaccine.

Our Health Services Department continues scheduling COVID-19 and influenza vaccines. If you haven't already, I urge you to get your vaccine soon and help us keep our school community safe. While the number of cases keeps decreasing, we are not completely out of the woods yet. We strongly recommend all of our staff, students, and visitors to wear their face coverings. Meanwhile, we eagerly await the scheduling of the COVID-19 vaccine for little ones. As soon as we receive notification from the health authorities, we will share this information with all of our families. Booster shot clinics are also in the planning stages.

In the meantime, LISD students and staff are encouraged to get screened for COVID-19. LISD offers both PCR and Binax testing with results available in 15 minutes at most of our LISD campuses. More information on LISD's COVID-19 screening program with Community Labs is included on page 10.

Another group of individuals who have worked tirelessly to protect the health and safety of everyone in their learning communities are LISD's campus principals and directors. These leaders rolled up their sleeves with little or rapidly changing guidance. With every new challenge, they rose to the occasion and led their schools boldly through school closings, campus re-openings, virtual instruction, social distancing, and vaccine clinics for students and staff. Throughout the month of October, LISD celebrated National Principals Month and takes this opportunity to honor these amazing educators for their visionary leadership and tireless pursuit of academic excellence for every student.

As we near the end of the Fall Semester, LISD remains true to its mission in preparing "students to be highly successful, critical thinkers and effective problem solvers who are confident, self-motivated, and actively involved in our local and global community." Through our many comprehensive programs and extracurricular activities, our staff is dedicated to helping our students reach their full potential.

Our next challenge lies in the administration of the upcoming End-of-Course high school exams scheduled for early December. We encourage our students to attend afternoon and Saturday tutorials to prepare for these state graduation requirements. Please visit with school counselors for additional information regarding these opportunities.

Together we have achieved so much, and I am excited to see how much more we can accomplish for our children in the months to come.



Best always,

Respectfully,

*Dr. Sylvia G. Rios*

LISD Superintendent of Schools





# Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College H.S. Prepares Students for Healthcare Field

**W**ith the high demand of personalized and high-quality healthcare careers on the rise, students at the Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College High School are taking the appropriate steps to meet the demands of the ever-changing healthcare system.

Early on in the students' high school careers, the Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College High School prepares the students with a specifically designed curriculum and practicums uniquely designed to help students understand the concepts and skills associated with the health sciences and to increase their awareness of health-related courses.

Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Health Science Magnet School opened its doors to learning in August 1999. It was geared as a place where students interested in the health science field, could be provided an advanced specialized curriculum, with hands-on, real-life experiences to help them understand and embrace their chosen field.

With over 300 students currently enrolled, the Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College complies with the Early College High School blueprint that provides the foundational principles and standards for an Early College in Texas. The school targets students who are at risk of dropping out of school and who might not otherwise go to college, including students who are first generation college goers, students of low socioeconomic status, English Learners, and students with disabilities.

Cantu Early College is an open enrollment program that encourages and considers applicants from all students, regardless of background or academic performance and are offered the opportunity to earn 60 college hours from Laredo College. The goal of the program is to have all students graduate with an Associate of Science Degree while taking courses that prepare them for a career in the medical field. They also have the opportunity to graduate with one of the following state certifications: Certified Nursing Assistant, Emergency Medical Technician, Dental and Veterinarian Assistant.

The institute of higher education that partners to provide the students of the Cantu Early College is Laredo College. The school also works in collaboration with Laredo College's Health Science Department and the Workforce Department.

Students at Cantu Early College are far beyond the typical high school student because they are not only enrolled in their high school curriculum courses according to grade level, they are also expected to enroll in a given amount of college hours also per grade level.

The number of college courses a student takes depends on whether they have passed the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA2.) By taking and passing this exam students will be considered college ready and will be able to take the courses needed to graduate with their high school diploma and Associates Degree.

In addition to being enrolled as a student at the Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College Program, the students are encouraged and allowed to participate in extracurricular courses like band, sports and fine arts.

The Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College High School is under the direction of Geraldina Arredondo and has 20 teachers and one counselor. Most of the teachers at the



early college are also adjunct educators for Laredo College, which means they teach dual courses that serve to give students both high school and college credit.

Students at Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College High School are held to high standards due to the significance of the career pathway they have selected and their desire to make a difference in the healthcare community. The school takes pride in producing not only skilled and educated students, but passionate, caring and selfless leaders of tomorrow who will benefit the future of our healthcare system.

Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College High School under the direction of Geraldina Arredondo prepares the students with a specifically designed curriculum and practicums uniquely designed to help students understand the concepts and skills associated with the health sciences and to increase their awareness of health-related courses.





**GETTING YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE IS A GREAT WAY TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM THE CORONAVIRUS.**

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED YOUR VACCINE, JUST SHOW PROOF TO YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A SCHOOL SPIRITED HOODIE JUST IN TIME FOR THE COOL WEATHER.



REMEMBER, STUDENTS 12 YEARS OLD AND OLDER ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE. SO GET YOUR VACCINE AND GET A FREE HOODIE FROM LISD.

CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION.

# GET YOUR FREE HOODIE!

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CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION.





Representatives from Sames Ford, Laredo ISD and Martin, Nixon, Cigarroa, and Garcia Early College High Schools kick off the eighth annual Drive Sames for Education Perfect Attendance Incentive Program.

# Laredo ISD kicks off Drive Sames for Education program for perfect attendance

For the eighth year in a row, the Sames Auto Group is sponsoring its annual Drive Sames for Education program to encourage perfect attendance among Laredo Independent School District's high school students. The kick off event was held at the Sames Ford Auto Showroom on San Dario Avenue on Thursday morning.

Through the Drive Sames for Education program, eligible students from Cigarroa, Garcia Early College, Martin and Nixon High Schools have the opportunity to win a new 2022 Ford EcoSport at the end of the school year. The Ford EcoSport will come at no expense to the student or their family and will also include the tax, title and the license sponsored by the Laredo Federal Credit Union.

"Attendance at all ages and grade levels is critical and is directly correlated to student success and graduation rates. Regardless of gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, students who are chronically absent perform lower academically," Executive Director of Communications for Laredo ISD Veronica Castillon said. "Therefore, we want our students to be in class every day."

Students in the program must have perfect attendance for nine weeks straight. When the nine weeks period is over, high school students with perfect attendance must get a voucher signed by their registrar. The student must hand deliver the signed voucher to the Sames Motor Com-



pany.

The deadline to turn in vouchers for the first two nine-week periods is January 20, 2022, while the deadline at the end of the year is May 13, 2022.

Participating in the press conference were Martin High School's Mariachi Los Tigres del Sur under the direction of Ruben Guadan, Sames' General Manager Thomas Piña, LISD Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Gerardo Cruz, and Laredo Federal Credit Union President Rafael Martinez.

"These last two years have been particularly tough on schools nationwide, but LISD is back in class and we are expecting everyone to be there as well. That includes all students and teachers," Castillon said.

Toward the end of the year, Sames will randomly select finalists from all the entries. Finalists will join the district on stage at Graduation Day, May 26, 2022 at the Sames Auto Arena. One very hard working student who has not missed a day of school will be driving home in a brand new 2022 Ford EcoSport.





# Laredo ISD students celebrate International Week of the Deaf

Cigarroa High School students and Assistant Principal Ms. Elizabeth Salazar sign “I Love You.”



**S**tudents at Daiches Elementary, Cigarroa Middle, and Cigarroa High School are celebrating International Week of the Deaf starting September 20, 2021. American Sign Language, or ASL, students will draw their attention to learning about the accomplishments of people who are deaf by recognizing achievements of deaf people and those who were instrumental in their advancement during their daily class announcements.

Students will read the fantastic history of deafness in society and how it's been overcome. Some of the books featured will be “Freddy and the Fairy” by Julia Donaldson, “The Deaf Musicians” by Pete Seeger and Paul Dubois Jacobs, among others. Additionally, students are encouraged to learn how to fingerspell their name by watching informational videos during the first ten minutes of class.

Cigarroa High School offers ASL I and ASL II as a foreign language for all students. ASL is used as a main source of communication by approximately one million people across the United States and Canada, according to the Communication Service for the Deaf. However, the language isn't exclusive to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

LISD is home to the Regional Day School Program of the Deaf. The district is responsible for providing service to students from United ISD, Webb Consolidated ISD, Jim Hogg County ISD, and Zapata County ISD. As a whole, the district serves approximately 105 students in several different settings running from general education to a self-contained classroom.

The program has been providing ASL classes since the 2019-2020 school year, in the hopes that students will eventually venture into college and become certified interpreters,

LISD Special Education Supervisor Rebecca Morales explains. The ASL I and II classes offered at Cigarroa High School focus on fingerspelling, vocabulary, nouns, verbs and forming complete thoughts.

“As a department, we've had the vision since 2009. The vision was to begin developing our own sign language interpreters by exposing students at Cigarroa High School (home of the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf) to ASL as a second language,” Morales added.

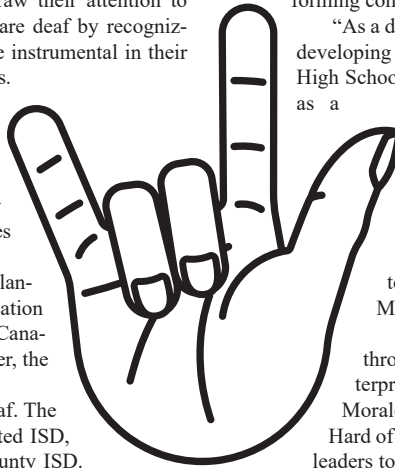
Learning ASL can bridge the gap between hearing and deaf people. A total of 54 deaf, hard of hearing, and regular students looking to learn a new language are enrolled this semester at Cigarroa High School.

“I hope that [our] students develop a passion for learning ASL and would want to pursue a career in the field, as a certified interpreter or in education as a Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher,” Morales said.

LISD employs six deaf and hard-of-hearing teachers across PK through 12th grade with support staff such as teacher assistants and interpreters to meet the needs of the students.

Morales hopes the class will educate and create awareness of our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program. She hopes the awareness raised will inform future leaders to continue to make Laredo a more inclusive setting for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community.

It is the policy of LISD not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, or handicapping.



Interpreter Monica Hamilton works with two Cigarroa High School 10th grade students, Mía Gamboa and Viviana Gonzalez.



# Drivers education course picks up speed at Laredo ISD



Martin High School students Victor J. Carrillo and Sarah Abigail Ramos get behind the wheel for their Drivers Education course.

**L**aredo Independent School District introduced its new Drivers Education Course Friday morning at Martin High School. The course is offered tuition free as an elective to eligible students enrolled at Garcia Early College, Martin, Nixon, and Cigarroa High Schools.

The LISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved adding Drivers Education to the high school curriculum last May. Following the Board's approval, LISD provided professional development to certify staff to teach the course and purchased vehicles equipped for drivers education classes. Only a handful of Texas public school district are currently offering drivers education for its students.

According to Rogelio Garcia, LISD's Executive Director for College, Career, Military Readiness, Advanced Academics and Schools of Innovation, two white Honda Accords are already being used for behind-the-wheel instruction on the streets of Laredo. The vehicles are marked with a Student Driver decal on the rear window and LISD logo on the passenger and driver's side doors. The LISD Transportation Department added extra dual brakes for the instructors.

Sixty students are already taking advantage of the course this semester. Garcia said the district is expecting 88 students per campus in the 2022 Spring Semester.

"LISD continues being innovative in providing courses such as drivers education that benefit our students," said LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia G. Rios. "We strive to provide the very best opportunities such as specialty schools, dual enrollment courses for college credit and electives that will enrich our students' educational experience."

"By enrolling and completing this course, we are expecting our students to become safe, responsible defensive drivers," Dr. Rios added. "I am thankful for the joint effort of our LISD administration in ensuring that this initiative came to fruition successfully."

LISD identified teachers who expressed an interest in teaching the drivers education course. Along with their Texas driver's license, a bachelors degree, and a Texas teaching certificate, teachers must have completed required hours of drivers education classroom, in-car simulation, and traffic instruction. They must not have accumulated six or more penalty points on a driving record during the preceding 36-month period.

Course instructors include Romeo Macias, Martin High School; Juan Garcia, Valdez High School; Bertha Losoya and Gabriela Gaona, Garcia ECHS; John Roycroft and Angel E. Cruz, Nixon High School; Enrique Villarreal and Armando Garcia, Cigarroa High School, and Maria Idalia Mendiola and Maria Imelda Mendiola, who are faculty members at Memorial Middle School.

## Red Ribbon Week



Valdez High School held a Red Ribbon Week presentation featuring LISD Board of Trustee Guadalupe Gomez and Judge Oscar Liendo. They both encouraged students to make good choices and live a drug-free lifestyle.



Macdonell Elementary School hosted a Red Ribbon Balloon Release Ceremony.



Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts showed their good character by being Drug Free.



Hector J. Garcia Early College High School showed their good character by being Drug Free.





# Laredo ISD partners with Community Labs to provide COVID-19 testing to staff and students

**L**aredo Independent School District's top priority is the safety and well being of its students and staff. As part of LISD's School Safety Plan to protect its school community from the coronavirus (COVID-19), LISD has established a partnership with Community Labs to offer COVID-19 testing as an option to all staff and students, free of charge starting Thursday, September 30, 2021.

Community Labs, a San Antonio non-profit organization, works with schools and businesses to create COVID-19 Safety Zones by identifying asymptomatic "silent spreaders" in an effort to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Community Lab's goal is to provide a pathway for schools to reopen, people return to work and communities to recover.

"We are excited to partner with Community Labs with the full support of our LISD Board of Trustees for the opportunity to administer Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing to LISD students and employees as a preventive measure to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19," Executive Director for Health and Occupational Safety Support Services Oscar Perez said.

The Community Labs screening process uses a PCR test and is 95% effective in detecting asymptomatic, silent spreaders of the virus. Community Labs provides scale, accuracy, and a less invasive, self-administered test that swabs the front of the nostril. Results are given via email or text within 24 hours. Parental consent is required for all tests.

"Community Labs is happy to bring assurance testing to the students and staff of Laredo ISD, the first school district we're partnering with outside of Bexar County," said Sal Webber, president of Community Labs. "By providing monitored, self-administered PCR screenings – the FDA gold standard – and delivering results within 24 hours, we can quickly identify asymptomatic individuals, allow them to isolate, and thus suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus."

According to Community Labs, their system is provided to area schools, businesses and local groups or 'Micro-Populations' to conduct biweekly assurance testing of their entire communities according to this proven suppression system. By testing whole Micro-Populations the previously undetected 'silent spreaders' can be immediately identified and quarantined for the first time - burning out the virus and turning each school and business into a safety zone for normal operations.

"We've provided more than 1 million screenings since our inception in September 2020, and we currently test at more than 350 campuses on a weekly basis. During the



Lamar Middle School students take a PCR test provided by Community Labs.

2020-2021 school year, our data showed the positivity rate at schools was 0.5%, far below the general population positivity rate. This tells us the spread of COVID-19 is not happening in the classroom," said Webber.

LISD's goal is to provide a healthy, safe, learning environment, and to minimize the risk of exposure to communicable diseases. Community Labs will send an experienced testing team to facilitate the process. Testing is voluntary and only requires the completion of a consent form. This will be implemented at all LISD campus levels on a weekly basis.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Executive Director for Health and Occupational Safety Support Services, Oscar Perez at (956) 273-1010, [opez@laredoisd.org](mailto:opez@laredoisd.org).

## LISD Student Advisory Council meets with Superintendent

**T**he Laredo Independent School District Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) held their first meeting of the 2021-2022 school year with LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia G. Rios. The meeting was hosted by Martin High School in the school's library.

The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council is comprised of 96 student representatives from Martin, Nixon, Cigarroa, and Garcia Early College High Schools. School administrators from each campus select a diverse mix of 24 students that are involved in extracurricular activities.

The advisory council meets four times a year for about two hours. They eat lunch and discuss different issues ranging from academics to extracurricular activities. In addition, the advisory council gives the students an opportunity to be heard and express their concerns about their campus.

"The Council allows the students to have open dialogue where they can be honest and open about what is happening on their campus," said Dr. Sylvia G. Rios LISD Superintendent of Schools. "It's great that they are able to express their concerns and exchange ideas with their peers."

This was the first face to face meeting the advisory council has had since January 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the meeting students heard presentations regarding COVID-19 vaccines from LISD Health Services Director, Grace Lopez, R.N., and Safety Protocols from LISD Executive Director of Health and Occupational Safety Support Services, Oscar Perez.

As an active member of the advisory council the students take part in the Superintendent's Literacy Project. Prior to each meeting, the members visit an el-

ementary school and read a book to a class. This month the advisory council virtually read *Dragons Love Tacos* to second grade students from Ligarde, Tarver, Alma Pierce, and Macdonell Elementary Schools.

Also graduating seniors, who are members of the Student Advisory Council, receive a Black Cord to wear at graduation.

The next Superintendent's Student Advisory Council Meetings are scheduled for Thursday, November 18, at Nixon High School, Thursday, January 27, at Garcia Early College High School and Thursday, March 31, at Cigarroa High School.



Martin High School Student Advisory Council members meet with LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia Rios to exchange ideas that will impact their campus. MHS hosted the years first meeting.



# ATTENTION LISD PARENTS

If any of the following apply, please DO NOT send your child to school and call campus nurse.

- Student or someone they have been in contact with in the past 14 days is pending COVID-19 test results.

- If student has any the following symptoms may include but are not limited to:

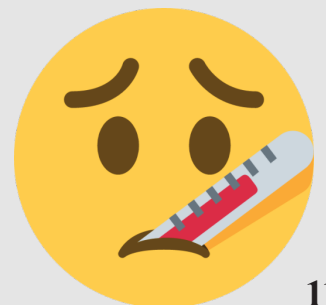
- |                                 |               |                              |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| · Vomiting                      | · Chills      | · Shortness of breath        |
| · Nausea                        | · Fatigue     | · Difficulty breathing       |
| · Temperature is $>100^{\circ}$ | · Muscle Ache | · New loss of taste or smell |
| · Sore throat                   | · Cough       | · Headache                   |
|                                 |               | · Congestion/runny nose      |

Si se aplica alguna de las siguientes situaciones, NO envíe a su hijo a la escuela y llámé a la enfermera de la escuela.

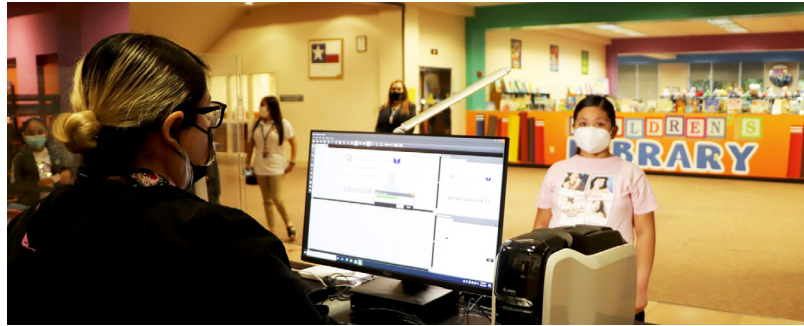
- El estudiante o alguien con quien haya estado en contacto en los últimos 14 días está pendiente de los resultados de la prueba COVID-19.

- Si el estudiante tiene los siguientes síntomas:

- |                                    |                                    |                   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| · Temperatura más de $100^{\circ}$ | · Dolor muscular                   | · Escalofríos     |
| · Tos                              | · Congestión/ secreción nasal      | · Dolor de cabeza |
| · Dificultad para respirar         | · Dolor de garganta                | · Náuseas         |
| · Respiración dificultosa          | · Vómito                           | · Fatiga          |
|                                    | · Nueva pérdida del gusto u olfato |                   |



# National Library Card Sign-up Month



Sanchez Ochoa Elementary School 4th grade trail-blazing students visited the Laredo Public Library and signed up for their new Library Card. The students also toured the library and participated in various activities.



## LISD to host Specialty School Recruitment Day

**L**aredo Independent School District will be hosting Specialty Schools Open House for eighth grade students and their parents on Saturday, November 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The event is aimed at recruiting students who may be interested in attending any of LISD's early college academies/high schools, magnet campus, and specialty schools for the 2022-2023 school year.

The five early college high schools and magnet school include the Business, Industry, and Public Services Early College Academy at Nixon High School, Sabas Perez STEM Early College Academy at Cigarroa High School, Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Health Science Early College High School at Martin High School, Hector J. Garcia Early College High School located at Texas A&M International University, Pathways to Technology Early College High School at Dr. Leo G. Cigarroa High School, and the Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts Magnet School.

Parent and students will have a chance to visit the six specialty schools. Students, counselors, and administrators from the specialty schools will be on hand to share their experiences and to answer any questions concerning the admissions and application process with prospective incoming freshman.

Also, all LISD eighth grade students participated in Google Class Virtual Presentations from October 18, to October 27, in their homeroom and CTE classes. The five specialty schools will showcase their pathways and programs. The virtual presentations consist of a 10-minute video and a 30-minute virtual booth where the students can log on and ask questions to the specialty school representatives.

"LISD wants to provide students every opportunity to gain the skills needed for today's workforce and to pursue a higher education in the field of their choice," said Cindy Dominguez, LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Coordinator. "The recruitment event will give our middle school students and their parents the opportunity to consider their academic futures."

The Business, Industry, and Public Services Early College Academy located at Nixon High School offers students the opportunity to earn up to 60 college hours and/or an associates degree with a concentration in Law Enforcement, Education, Cosmetology, Welding, Accounting, Distribution and Logistics, and Auto Collision Repair from Laredo College.

Students looking for a career in Science and Math field can attend the Sabas Perez STEM Early College Academy at Dr. Leo G. Cigarroa High School. The STEM Academy allows students to prepare for careers in the field of engineering design, robotics, mobile application design, animation, game design, and cybersecurity and computer science. Students gain practical experience in engineering practices and

design using 3-D printers to create working models of their designs. Students will earn their high school diplomas while earning up to 60 college hours and/or an associates degree from Laredo College.

For those students wanting a career in the medical field, the Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Health Science Early College High School at Martin High School provides an opportunity to explore careers and gain hands-on experience in nursing, emergency medical technician, and nursing assistance. Students graduate with up to 60 hours of college credit and an associates degree from Laredo College and certification programs allowing them to work either full-time or part-time while they are pursuing advanced degrees and certifications in the medical field.

The Hector J. Garcia Early College High School allows students to finish high school and their first two years of college simultaneously while accumulating college hours at Texas A & M International University. Many GECHS graduates finish high school with more than 60 hours of university credit. Students choose a college major and begin taking required coursework towards completing their degree while fulfilling high school graduation requirements with tuition and books provided by LISD. The GECHS was named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2017. U.S. News and World Report also rank it among the nation's top high schools.

The Dr. Leo G. Cigarroa Pathway-to-Technology Early College High School prepares students for the workforce with a hands-on approach in Heating/Ventilation/Air-Conditioning (HVAC), Plumbing, Welding, Electrical, and Architecture with an emphasis on Auto Cad. Students have an opportunity to acquire an associate degree with up to 60 college hours or technical industry certificate from Laredo College, which will prepare them for the construction industry of the 21st century.

Students interested in the Arts can apply to the Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts. VMT provides students an opportunity for comprehensive course study in communications and fine arts with an emphasis on creative development and artistic performance in communications, dance, music, theater arts, and visual arts. The school also provides a rigorous academic instructional program that complements and supports all visual and performing arts. Students can earn up to 21 college hours from Laredo College. The Texas Cultural Trust named the Trevino Magnet School as the recipient of the Texas Medal of Arts in 2018.

LISD provides transportation for students to all Specialty Schools. Applications open on October 18, and must be completed online and returned before Wednesday, December 1, 2021.

For more information, please contact Cindy Dominguez, LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Coordinator at 956-273-1864 or the respective specialty school



# LISD will never forget...



**“Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it. It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it.” –Unknown**



LISD JROTC cadets participated in tributes held to remember Laredoan Lancee Corporal David Lee Espinoza, one of the 13 United States service members killed outside the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.



**Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza**

*July 10, 2001 – August 26, 2021*



*LISD Police Chief sworn in*

# DOREEN HALE



**T**he Laredo Independent School District Police Chief, Doreen Hale, who is the first woman appointed to lead the LISD Police Department, took the oath of office during a swearing in ceremony in the Amber Yeary Board Room.

Hale's brother, 406th District Court Judge, the Honorable Oscar Hale administered the oath. Hale's badge was pinned by her father, O.J. Hale.

Hale was appointed to serve as the district's new Chief of Police by the LISD Board of Trustees during a special called meeting on Thursday, September 30.

"Mrs. Hale possesses the leadership skills necessary to serve our LISD community and provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff," said Dr. Sylvia G. Rios LISD Superintendent. "Chief Hale is one of our own. I am confident she will continue the tradition of excellence we have established with the Police Department."

The LISD Police Department currently has 41 licensed police officers, 74 security guards, and two investigators. The department also includes a canine unit, bike patrol, telecommunications officers, and hostage negotiators.

Hale brings more than 12 years of law enforcement experience to the district. Prior to becoming Police Chief, she served as the Investigator for Laredo ISD where she supervised investigative allegations made by district employees and students.

Hale has served as a Bailiff for the 341st District Court, Cyber Crimes Investigator for the Webb County Sheriff's Office, and as a Deputy Sheriff for Webb County.

Hale is a product of LISD schools having attended Tarver Elementary School, Lamar Middle School, and graduated from J.W. Nixon High School. She graduated from Laredo College South Texas Regional Police Academy. Hale earned a Bachelor of Criminal Justice from Texas A&M International University. She is currently pursuing a master's in criminal justice from Texas A&M International University.

Hale also has certifications from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement as a Master Peace Officer, Basic Instructor Proficiency, and a School Based Law Enforcement Officer.



# NHS Breast Cancer Awareness Walkathon



## Students participate in Washington Youth Leadership Seminar

**T**wo LISD students were selected for the LULAC National Educational Service Centers (LNEC) 2021 Washington Youth Leadership Seminar. Salma Medina Pow, a junior at the Hector Garcia Early College High School (GECHS), and Amanda Arreola, a senior at Cigarroa High School and the Sabas Perez Early College Academy, participated in the virtual seminar recently.

Medina Pow and Arreola joined future rising Latino students from around the nation where they discussed and debated this year's public policy topic on college finance and affordability. They along with the other students were selected for their exceptional academic achievements and impressive essays.

Medina Pow and Arreola expressed their enthusiasm about the seminar and acknowledged their nominating sponsors and family for their unwavering support.

"My experience in the virtual seminar was very exciting and it played a big part in heightening my self-confidence and self-esteem," Medina Pow said. "The seminar was also very informative. I got to learn about the different opportunities available for scholarships and college affordability. I have always worried about the cost of college and the seminar allowed me to learn about different opportunities to subsidize my worries."

"My experience in the virtual seminar was very exciting. I was able to meet so many intellectuals my age and older," said Arreola. "I was even able to talk to a Software Engineer and ask questions about his occupation, which convinced me even more to follow my dream job of becoming a software engineer."

"I want to thank my sister, Samantha, who participated in the WYLS in 2020. She has always been my inspiration and idol. She has always guided me in everything I do and my Communities in School (CIS) sponsor at GECHS Ms. Maria Larumbe, who has been a kind and reliable woman," said Medina Pow.

"I would like to thank my CIS sponsor at Cigarroa High School Ms. Diana Parra for giving me the opportunity to even apply and for being such an inspiring woman who has provided many opportunities for me and my mom and dad for supporting me and pushing me to be the best that I could be," added Arreola.

As part of the application process students had to submit their transcripts and write



Salma Medina Pow, a junior at the Hector Garcia Early College High School (GECHS), and Amanda Arreola, a senior at Cigarroa High School and the Sabas Perez Early College Academy, participated in the 2021 Washington Youth Leadership virtual seminar from, September 22, to September 25.



two essays about government forgiving student loans and affordability.

"I decided to write about how the government should create a program that provides forgiveness of loans in specific situations," said Medina Pow. "It should be more accessible to those in need, since many individuals in my community choose not to attend college due to insufficient funds."

During the seminar student advocates met our nation's most influential decision makers and members of Congress to discuss the changes they want to make for their communities. They also discussed issues important to the Latino community.

"It was really an honor to get to speak to leaders in Washington who have a say in these laws and loans," said Medina Pow. "Not only was I a given access to so many new resources, but I got to meet people all around the country."

"I ended up getting helpful resources on resume tips and different views on certain debate topics, like immigration, that I would not have thought of before," said Arreola. "I even got to be in the same call as Senator Elizabeth Warren."

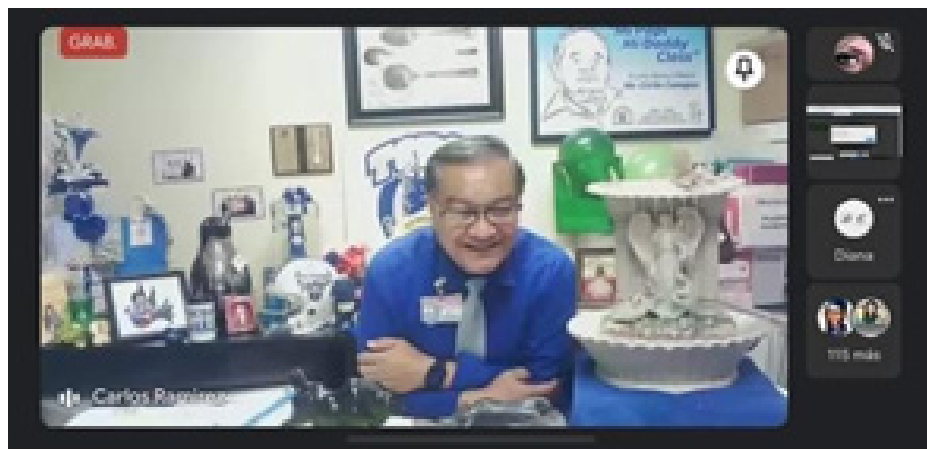
Medina Pow plans on attending the University of Texas, Texas A&M University, or Rice University to study social welfare programs and policies. She is in the top 10 percent of her class.

Medina Pow is a member of Student Council, Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, Vice President of National Honor Society, UIL Literary Criticism, and the Mentorship Program at her school. She also participates in other organizations such as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Youth Leadership Laredo. Salma was also awarded with the volunteer award by the Imaginarium of South Texas.

Arreola plans on attending TAMIU followed by the University of Texas at Austin. She plans on majoring in Computer Science so she can become a Software Engineer. Amanda is a member of varsity girls basketball team, Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, Principal's Advisory Council, National Honor Society, Communities in School and Church Youth Group.

Arreola has been on the A-honor roll, the Toro-Dusty Leadership, Young Women's Leadership Conference, Yale Book Award, and Never been Absent.





**“Y**es, Coach!” is one of the 14 new Parental Skills and Development courses offered by the Laredo Independent School District Parent and Family Engagement Department. This free all-Spanish course provides an opportunity for parents to discover the great support and training within the sports program for LISD athletes.

The Parent and Family Engagement Department started its partnership program with the Guidance and Counseling Department creating “La Cicatriz” parental classes in March of 2017. Its sole purpose was to unite its efforts in assisting parents and families. “The goal is to help with the understanding of the importance of developing leaders, as a team and as a person,” Lead Parent and Family Engagement Liaison Carlos René Ramirez said.

All LISD parents and families are invited to sign up for the course. The Parent and Family Engagement Department and each campus Parent Liaison promote all of its offered courses. Parents and family members are encouraged to reach out to their campus parent liaison to obtain a link to join the virtual Parent Classes. Once the parent/family members log in, they have an opportunity to register for the class and receive a Certificate of Participation. High school students signing up to volunteer will be compensated with Community Service hours.

“We have expanded our partnership to six school district departments. Four communities at large now have the opportunity to learn about this personalized insight for our parents and families,” Ramirez added. “We are proud to highlight this 2021-2022 school year with new partners in the Athletic Department and LISD’s Child Nutrition Program.”

The “YES, Coach!” Course is scheduled for a two-day training of 90 minute classes hosted by J.C. Martin Elementary School.

The first class is scheduled for Tuesday, October 5, 2021. In this class, parents and family members will have an opportunity to experience the “Learning & Developing” of an athlete. Coaches will present the “how” of the sport is being taught and the importance of ethical values of sportsmanship. The coach will help the applicants understand the development, or formation, of a team concept.

The second class is set for Wednesday, October 6, 2021. In this class, parents and family members will engage in their capacity to assist their son/daughter in the “Becoming an All Around Leader.” Coaches will offer skill development of best practices at home to support the attributes of a leader and as a leader on or off the court, track or field.

The areas of growth exposed as a School Link include Coaches Curriculum, Sportsmanship, Fair Play, Dedication & Commitment, and Teamwork.

Ramirez believes this partnership has become a powerful instrument for both departments and community entities at large. “It provides different mindsets for parents/families to receive information or training through the class approach. It is a simple win-win over all,” Ramirez added.

**“The training provides different mindsets for parents/families to receive information or training through the class approach. It is a simple win-win over all.”**

**- Carlos Rene Ramirez**



LISD parents invited to  
**Yes, Coach!**  
sessions



# VIVA



The Martin High School Spanish department celebrated 16 de Septiembre joined by Consul Juan Carlos Mendoza Sanchez from the Mexican Consulate who also presented students with brand new laptops.



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Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month with a 16 de Septiembre celebration. Students from Ms. Alicia McKinniss and Mr. Billy Thatcher's classes collaborated to bring our students a traditional Mexican celebration.



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Dovalina Elementary School celebrated Grandparents Day with a 16 de Septiembre themed Parade.



Students at J.C. Martin displayed their Heritage pride in Mexican attire in celebration of Mexico's Independence Day on September 16.



# Orangetheory and Lewis Energy donate school supplies to LISD kids

For parents and students, this back-to-school season presented unique challenges marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. To help ease the burden of an unprecedented school year, Laredo's Orangetheory Fitness and Lewis Energy Group graciously donated school supplies for Laredo ISD students.

Orangetheory's donation to Leyendecker and Farias Elementary School youngsters included a variety of markers, notebooks, crayons, pencils, pens, theme paper, glue sticks and backpacks to ensure that the students of these campuses have the basic tools they need to succeed in the classroom.

"We'd like to thank our members and community for contributing to this school supplies drive. Orangetheory is more than happy to additionally contribute to the school district to help support the children of Laredo in their education," Orangetheory South Texas General Manager Alfonso Illan Arguindegui said. "We wish the best of luck to the district's teachers, students, and staff this school year."

Orangetheory Fitness also donated \$1,000 for the schools to supply the resources teachers need to set their students up to achieve their educational goals.

Additionally, representatives from Lewis Energy Group donated an assortment of



school supplies and backpacks to students at D. D. Hachar Elementary School.

Lewis Energy employees collected the supplies and the company matched the gift. The donations consisted of 70 backpacks loaded with boxes of crayons, pens, pencils, erasers, spiral notebooks and other supplies for distribution.

The Lewis Energy Group believes "investing in the community in which we operate and live in has and will continue to be one of Lewis Energy Group's core values. There is no better way of showing this than helping the youth of our community be prepared for school."

Lewis Energy staff members visiting D. D. Hachar Elementary included Veronica Soto, Human Resources Business Partner; Rafael Alvarez, Fueler; and Alberto Magnon, III Supervisor of Compliance.

"Right now, during a global pandemic, a lot of families are suffering through a lot of different things. Some have suffered loss of jobs, friends and family so now more than ever students really need the donations. They come in at a perfect time," D. D. Hachar Elementary School Principal Cynthia Villareal added. "Our kids are very humbled and appreciative and we are so grateful for what they have done for our kids."



Texas Exit Realty donates backpacks and school supplies to students at Daiches Elementary School.



The Laredo Rotary Club and Chick-fil-A presented the students of Daiches Elementary School with backpacks and school supplies.



Vera Bradley Outlet Store donates backpacks, school supplies, and face mask to students at D.D. Hachar Elementary School.



## BACK-TO-SCHOOL

# DONATIONS



Smiles illuminated the gloomy skies while love was spread with tokens of everlasting love such as teddy bears, cakes, monetary gift cards, and a plethora of symbols of warmth."

- ELSA MORALES  
MILTON ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL COUNSELOR

## Milton Elementary School Fights Childhood Cancer

In honor of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, C.L. Milton Elementary School went gold to celebrate the lives of two students, Desiree Muñiz and Christian Angel Ramos, who are fighting a battle with pediatric cancer.

The school entrance was decorated with inspirational posters of all different shapes and sizes, helium-filled yellow balloons and "Support Squad" shirts on youngsters in formation in support of their fellow classmates. Desiree and Christian were escorted by staff from the Webb County Precinct 1 Constable Office, following an entourage of friends, family, and local organizations: Golden Heart Project, Smiles From Heaven, Jeep Car Club, Twisted Toyz and Lazy Boy Tattoos Motorcycle Clubs.

Christian had been battling Stage 3 Neuroblastoma

since he was two years old, until December of 2019 when he ultimately won the battle. "It always makes me very happy and grateful to see the support my son has from his school and the local community. It makes him feel like he's not alone," Christian's mother, Debora Cipriano said.

As a survivor, Christian is back on track and the only battle he has to fight is which homework assignment to tackle first. "LISD has always shown their support to Christian during his battle. It really means a lot that the district recognizes its warriors and I thank them for taking the time to support them in every way possible," Cipriano said.

Desiree is currently fighting Osteosarcoma and LISD is rooting for her.





# LISD continues with construction and renovations

**L**ISD continues with the construction and renovations of several schools and support facilities including the former Civic Center, Dovalina Elementary School, Martin High School's Multi-Purpose Building, Heights Elementary School, and Nixon High School's Vocational/Agriculture and ROTC Buildings. The construction projects are funded by a \$150 million bond proposition approved by the voters of LISD in May of 2018.

The Civic Center complex is divided into three main building: Performing Arts Center, Administrative Building, and Conference Center. The buildings are set to open in the Winter, 2021. The total estimated amount for the Performing Arts Center renovations and the construction of the new LISD administration building is \$37,132,000.

The construction for Dovalina Elementary School's new campus located along the riverbanks of the Rio Grande River at 1700 W. Anna Ave, is underway. The new \$14.9 million facility will feature 21 instructional classrooms, two computer labs, a science lab, Library Media Center, a fine arts classroom, music classroom, and two self-contained classrooms. The new campus is expected to be fully complete for occupancy by Fall, 2022. For the 2021-2022 school year, students from Dovalina Elementary School are attending classes at Leyendecker and Farias Elementary Schools.

A new Multi-Purpose Building is under construction at Martin High School. The new two-story Science and Culinary Arts Building will have a multi-use student gathering atrium and a culinary arts lab with a full commercial kitchen and classrooms, spacious dance studio, science classrooms and a robotics and technology lab. The \$5.9M Multi-Purpose Building should be completed by Winter, 2021.

At Heights Elementary, the district will add four new classrooms, a new library, a new playground and will expand the teachers' parking lot.

Construction was recently completed for Nixon High School's new Vocational and Agricultural Building. The total cost of this project is \$8.2 million. The new Vocational and Agricultural Buildings will include a new Auto Technology Shop, Auto Collision Shop, Carpentry Shop, Cosmetology Lab, Meat Processing Lab, and Agriculture and Welding Shop. The \$10.8 million buildings will be completed by November, 2021. In addition, a new 2.5 million stand-alone JROTC Building and additional parking will also be constructed.

"What we promised to our taxpayers is what we are delivering," said LISD Board of Trustee President Hector "Tito" Garcia. "We are bringing the district's facilities to the 21st century by building these structures for our students. We are not taking any shortcuts as our children are the future of our community and we are preparing them to be tomorrow's leaders."

The Board of Trustees also approved the first of many renovations for South Laredo. The 2018 bond proposition will also pay for renovations to Kawas Elementary School and Cigarroa High School. The funds will also be used to construct a new Cigarroa Middle School.

Kawas Elementary Schools \$16.4 million campus is under construction. The new campus will feature 31 instructional classrooms from Pre-K - fifth grade, three computer labs, two science labs, a music room, cafeteria and full kitchen prep, administrative offices, library media center, gymnasium, nurses' station, drop off/pick up lanes for students, parking lot improvements, security fencing and facility access control, covered canopies, and playground. The campus will be completed by Summer, 2022.

The new Cigarroa Middle School will be located at 3618 Ejido Road, in Lomas Del Sur subdivision. The district recently held a groundbreaking ceremony. The new 250,000 square feet campus which sits on 23 acres of property will feature a three-story academic building with two wings each for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes. The campus will also have a boys and girls gymnasium with restrooms, lockers, weight rooms, and cheerleading and dance studio areas and its own cafeteria for 450 students with additional outdoor seating. The students will have access to a new band hall/fine arts area that will include orchestra ensemble, band hall rehearsal, choir area, storage and multiple sound-proof practice areas, a library with a lecture hall and computer lab, and a special education and life skills wing. The new school is designed by Sepulveda Associates and will be built by Leyendecker Construction.

Cigarroa High School will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 will include a new two-story facility that will replace the existing academic wings, vocational classrooms, and administration offices. Phase 1 will be completed by Winter, 2023





# LISD holds groundbreaking ceremony for new Cigarroa Middle School

The Laredo Independent School District Board of Trustees held a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the construction of the new Dr. Joaquin Gonzalez Cigarroa Middle School. The future home of the new campus will be located at 3618 Ejido Rd. in the Lomas Del Sur neighborhood in South Laredo.

Cigarroa Middle School students, staff, and administrators along with LISD administration and community leaders gathered for the ceremony. LISD Board President Hector "Tito" Garcia, LISD Board Secretary Monica Garcia, and LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia G. Rios addressed the audience. The LISD Board of Trustees, LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia G. Rios, Cigarroa Middle School Principal Armando Molina and Cigarroa Middle School students shoveled the dirt during the groundbreaking.

The new 250,000 square foot campus which sits on 23 acres of property will feature a three-story academic building with two wings each for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes. The campus will also have a boys and girls gymnasium with restrooms, lockers, weight rooms, and cheerleading and dance studio areas and its own cafeteria for 450 students with additional outdoor seating. The students will have access to a new band hall/fine arts area that will include orchestra ensemble, band hall rehearsal, choir area, storage and multiple sound-proof practice areas, a library with a lecture hall and computer lab, and a special education and life skills wing. The new school is designed by Sepulveda Associates and will be built by Leyendecker Construction.

"This is a very important milestone for the children of South Laredo, their families and the future of our community," said LISD Board of Trustee Secretary, Monica Garcia. "My heart is overflowing with gratitude and joy because this day is finally here."



"Once the new campus is built, the students will have a space to call their own with facilities that are second to none. Facilities such as the one being built on this land are going to empower our youngsters to achieve their goals and realize their dreams, continued Garcia. "For out of these classrooms, library, and gyms, will come Laredo's future doctors, teachers, attorneys, engineers, law enforcement officials, entrepreneurs, and elected officials."

The combined Cigarroa Middle and Cigarroa



High School Bands under the direction of Fidel Borrego and Servando Serna provided the entertainment. The Cigarroa High School JROTC under the direction of Sgt. Conrado Martinez presented the colors. Cigarroa Middle School and Cigarroa High School Bands performed the National Anthem and Cigarroa Middle School students Robin Rangel, Armando Mata and Lorena Serna recited the pledge. Joey Ortiz Student Ministry Director, Grace Bible Church provided the invocation and Isabella Mendoza, Cigarroa Middle School student provided a message of gratitude.





# Laredo Independent School District Celebrates National School Lunch Week



To recognize the National School Lunch Program, serving 24,375 meals each day, Laredo Independent School District celebrated National School Lunch Week from October 11-15. The campaign theme, “Feed Your Creativity with a Healthy School Lunch” highlights the importance of a healthy school lunch to a student’s success both in and out of the classroom by expressing their creativity.

Recent research shows children are getting their healthiest meals at school. National School Lunch Week will highlight the nutritious foods available daily at LISD schools. The Child Nutrition program provides support to all schools in an integral way in helping educate kids about healthy choices and physical activity.

“School lunches offer students fruits and vegetables, whole grains and milk, and meet federal nutrition standards limiting fat, calories and sodium,” said Robert Cuellar Jr., Director. “Thanks to pandemic waivers, school meals are free for all students this school year, so it’s a great time to give school lunch a try. National School Lunch Week helps us educate parents and students about all the wonderful benefits of our lunch program.”

**“Thanks to pandemic waivers, school meals are free for all students this school year, so it’s a great time to give school lunch a try. National School Lunch Week helps us educate parents and students about all the wonderful benefits of our lunch program.”**

**- Robert Cuellar**  
LISD Director of Child Nutrition Program



Students at the elementary campuses will participate in lunch activities and be provided with fun coloring sheets and the opportunity to win prizes throughout the week. Leyendecker Elementary, Ligarde Elementary, Macdonell Elementary, and Jose Gallegos Elementary will take part in the celebration and will receive a visit from CNP’s Superhero, Health Charger or the CNP Foodie Fun Pal!

During NSLW, secondary students (6TH-12TH) have a chance to participate in our “You Art What You Eat” Student Art Contest to celebrate NSLW! Students are encouraged to use their imagination and illustrate healthy school meals while incorporating school lunch or breakfast items into their artwork. The winning entries inspire designs for cafeteria posters, flyers, and other resources that will be used throughout the school year. Students should submit their artwork via email at [liscnp@gmail.com](mailto:liscnp@gmail.com).

The federally-funded National School Lunch Program (NSLP) has been fueling students toward success for 75 years. Students can enjoy the convenience of a healthy school lunch at LISD absolutely free, under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP is a federal option that allows high poverty schools to provide free meals—both breakfast and lunch—to all students without having to collect school meal applications.

The “Feed Your Creativity with a Healthy School Lunch” campaign is made possible by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Parents and students can follow the fun using the hashtags #NSLW21 and #SchoolLunch. For more information on National School Lunch Week, visit <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram>.

and Others





# LISD SCHOOLS OBSERVE NATIONAL DYSPLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH



-Dyslexia is not a disease – but rather a learning disability  
-Dyslexia impacts males and females at the same rate  
-IQ does not impact Dyslexia, Albert Einstein had an estimated IQ of 160 and was diagnosed as Dyslexic





# 2022 LISD SCHOLARS

# GOLF TOURNAMENT



RESERVE YOUR SPOT AND MAKE A DONATION  
TO THE 2ND ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT.  
TO BENEFIT LISD SCHOLARS!

3-Man Scramble  
\$450 per Team  
or  
\$150 per Player

**SATURDAY | MARCH 26, 2022**

**MAX A. MANDEL MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE**

Registration and breakfast – 7:30 a.m. | Shotgun start – 9:00 a.m.

For more information, please contact: Tommy Ramirez, Asst. Director of Athletics

Ph: 956-273-1220 · E-mail: [tommyr@laredoisd.org](mailto:tommyr@laredoisd.org)