

Las

ESCUELAS

LAREDO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Laredo ISD kicks off Drive Sames 4 Education program for perfect attendance *pg. 8*

LISD and TAMIU motivate students to pursue teaching career *pg. 14*



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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.



T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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LAREDO ISD HOSTS SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Laredo Independent School District Board of Trustees gathered for a special call meeting and swearing-in ceremony recently. Four newly elected board members were administered the oath of office before a crowd of nearly 200 well-wishers. The new Trustees include Juan Ramirez, Jr., Veronica Orduño, Goyo M. López, and Dr. Gil Martinez.

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COLLEGE BOARD NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The College Board's National Recognition Program has recognized 28 Hector J. Garcia Early College High School students. The students were given the prestigious honor as National Recognition Scholars for their college entrance exam scores.

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ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SHOWCASE SKILLS AT LEGO ROBOTICS COMPETITION

The Laredo Independent School District hosted the Star Wars LEGO Robotics Competition for elementary students recently at the LISD Performing Arts Complex. The students showcased their math and science skills and competed in the challenge where students were responsible for building and operating their robot system.

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LISD PRINCIPAL ATTENDS HARVARD INSTITUTE

Sanchez-Ochoa Elementary School Principal Rosalba Martinez was among the 85 school leaders from across Texas selected to attend the summer institute at the Principals' Center (PC) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education sponsored by the Charles Butt Foundation, a non-profit pursuing a more equitable and prosperous future for all Texans through education and community partnerships.

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LISD JROTC STUDENTS NAMED HONORABLE CADET

Laredo Independent School District recognized their top JROTC students during the inaugural Honorable Cadet Ceremony which was held at Nixon High School's Raymond Goodman Library.

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Superintendent's Message

Warm Christmas Greetings to all of our Readers:

As the lights twinkle on our Christmas tree at the LISD Performing Arts Complex, we are reminded of all the ways in which our students, staff and schools have shined throughout the school year. The return of our students to LISD marks not only the end to the isolation caused by the pandemic, but also a time to celebrate all that we accomplished together in 2022 while looking forward with great anticipation to the New Year!

It has been exciting to see our classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums and athletic fields once more, filled with eager students participating in a myriad of extra-curricular events. The newly remodeled facilities at the LISD Performing Arts Complex are booked on a daily basis with concerts, competitions, meetings, Food Expos, chess tournaments, professional development and numerous learning opportunities. Just last week, a large crowd of well-wishers ushered in the holidays with a tree lighting ceremony. The happy sounds of our three high school bands and choir from the Trevino Magnet School filled the foyer as children cheered the arrival of Santa Claus. This month has also been a celebration of our children, joining together to sing once more in their annual Christmas Honors Choir concerts hosted in our auditorium. The joy of their performance radiated throughout the audience with the magic and promise of Christmas!

This has clearly been a stellar year for Laredo ISD. We are the only school district in Webb County awarded two A's from the Texas Education Agency. We earned an A or Exemplary TEA rating in both Academics and in Financial Accountability. We are proud to claim that our LISD schools garnered 95 Distinctions for their academic excellence, and such accolades are the result of the hard work, commitment and perseverance of our students, their families and staff. The

pursuit of excellence continues as we strive to ensure that all of our students are well-prepared when they graduate from our high schools. The work that we do as a District is steadfastly supported by the vision of excellence inspired by our Board of Trustees. Their dedication to our educational mission is reflected in the projects and initiatives they have undertaken to provide our students and staff with state-of-the-art facilities as well as instructional resources designed to serve the needs of all whom we serve.

As the Fall Semester draws to an end and we prepare to embrace the new year, there is no better time to express our most heartfelt appreciation to our Board of Trustees, to the more than 4,000 LISD employees, parents, guardians, and community partners who work tirelessly, day after day, to support our students. With this being said, I commend our 21,000 students for inspiring us every day with their curiosity, intelligence, and *animo!* Their dreams shape the futures that we envision for our LISD family and community.

Therefore, it is my sincere hope that you and your family are blessed with an abundance of peace, joy and love this holiday season. May you enjoy the company of your loved ones and take good care of yourselves. We will see you again when LISD classes resume on Monday, January 9, 2023.

Until then, from my family to yours, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

LISD Superintendent of Schools



O' Christmas Tree O' Christmas Tree How beautiful is thee!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at Laredo ISD! This year's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony kicked-off the holiday season just after dusk. The ceremony included live music by the Martin, Nixon, and Ciarroga High Schools bands, Christmas Carols performed by the Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts Choir, dance performances by MHS Tigerettes, NHS Golden Spurs, and CHS Silver Roses, including cheer teams. The 41-foot-tall tree is decorated with 29 personally hand-crafted elementary and secondary school ornaments, hundreds of yule lights, and a bright star lighting the way to the North Pole. The evening's festivities enhanced the Christmas spirit with a special visit from Santa Claus.



Welcome

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Juan J. Ramirez, Jr., District 1



Veronica V. Orduño, District 3



Goyo Lopez, District 5



Dr. Gilberto "Gil" Martinez, Jr., District 6

The Laredo Independent School District Board of Trustees gathered for a special call meeting and swearing-in ceremony recently. Four newly elected board members were administered the oath of office before a crowd of nearly 200 well-wishers. The new Trustees include Juan Ramirez, Jr., Veronica Orduño, Goyo M. López, and Dr. Gil Martínez.

As the school board representative for District 1, Ramirez represents Farias, Santa Maria, and Leyendecker Elemen-

tary Schools, Christen Middle School, and Martin High School. County Court at Law 1 Judge Hugo Martinez delivered Ramirez' oath.

Orduño is the Trustee for District 3, which includes Bruni, J.C. Martin, and Sanchez/Ochoa Elementary Schools. Webb County Judge Tano administered Orduño's oath of office.

As the school board representative for District 5, Lopez represents Gallego Elementary and Heights Elementary Schools and Memorial Middle School. United States District Judge Diana Saldana ad-

ministered his oath.

District 6 Trustee Martinez represents D.D. Hachar Elementary, Milton Elementary, Ryan Elementary Schools, and Lamar Middle School. Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina administered his oath.

Trustees also elected new officers and selected Monica Garcia as President of the Board. First elected by the voters of District 7 in 2018, Garcia represents Cigarroa High School, Cigarroa Middle School, Santo Nino Elementary, Ligarde Elementary, Kawas Elementary, and Zachry Elementary Schools.

Ricardo "Rick" Garza was voted Vice President of the Board. Garza, who has served as Trustee since 2012, represents campuses in District 4, which include Alma Pierce Elementary, K. Tarver Elementary, and Nixon High Schools.

The new Board Secretary is Guadalupe Gomez, who is the Trustee for District 2. Elected in 2020, Gomez represents Daiches, Dovalina, and Macdonell Elementary Schools.

Board meetings are conducted in the Amber Yearly Board Room located at the LISD Performing Arts Complex.



LISD Board of Trustees elect Officers

The Laredo Independent School District Board of Trustees recently elected officers for President, Vice-President, and Secretary during a Special Call Board Meeting. Monica Garcia was elected President, while Ricardo “Rick” Garza was elected Vice-President, and Guadalupe Gomez will serve as Board Secretary. All three board members were elected unanimously.

Monica Garcia was elected to the LISD Board of Trustees on November 5, 2018. During her tenure as a trustee, she was named Board Secretary on November 12, 2019, and was recently elected as Board President by her colleagues on November 18, 2022.

Mrs. Garcia is a proud product of LISD schools, graduating from Cigarroa High School. Mrs. Garcia earned an Associate of Arts degree and is continuing her education at Laredo College to finalize her bachelor’s in organizational leadership with a concentration in management.

“It is my honor to be able to be part of a remarkable team, that together makes decisions that impact not only our students but also the employees of this organization,” said Garcia. “I wholeheartedly believe LISD has enhanced the possibilities for our students to be able to receive a great education without limitations.”

Mrs. Garcia further reiterated her pride in our schools. “Over the last several years LISD has continued its journey of excellence, earning countless accolades by setting high expectations for all who work and learn in our district,” said Garcia. “Working with our community and entities throughout the state, we hope to support the growth of our young minds to aspire to reach beyond their potential. As a district, we continue to support the growth of every individual within our learning community.”

Mrs. Garcia is currently employed as an Assistant General Manager of Administration for Hendrickson Transportation Group and

oversees all administration for El Metro Transit where she has worked for more than eight years.

As a trustee, Mrs. Garcia represents Cigarroa High School, Cigarroa Middle School, Santo Nino Elementary, Ligarde Elementary, Kawas Elementary, and Zachry Elementary Schools. Her support of District 7 schools underlines her unwavering commitment to the students of Laredo ISD.

Ricardo “Rick” Garza, who is serving his third term on the board was

elected to his first term as Vice-President on November 18, 2022. Mr. Garza also served as Board Secretary from November 2014 through November 2019.

A product of LISD and a 1981 graduate of Nixon High School, Mr. Garza received a bachelor’s degree in Science from Southwest Texas State University in 1986. Mr. Garza is currently the owner of Triumph Mechanical Inc.

Mr. Garza represents District 4 which includes Alma Pierce and K. Tarver Elementary Schools, and Nixon High School.

Guadalupe Gomez, who is in his third year as a board member, was elected as Board Secretary on November 18, 2022.

A product of LISD and a graduate of Martin High School Class of 2013, Gomez received an associate’s degree in Criminal Justice from Laredo College in May of 2016. He also attended the Laredo Regional Police Academy in December 2016, where he earned a Peace Officers license.

Mr. Gomez was elected Webb County Constable for Precinct 1 in November 2022, and has been an active member in the community as he has volunteered his time with various organizations.

As Board Member for District 2, Mr. Gomez represents Daiches, Dovalina, and Macdonell Elementary Schools.

Also serving on the LISD Board of Trustees are four newcomers. Mr. Juan Ramirez was elected to serve District 1. He will represent Farias, Santa Maria, and Leyendecker Elementary Schools, Christen Middle School, and Martin High School.

Mrs. Veronica V. Orduno was elected to be the representative for District 3, which includes Bruni, J.C. Martin, and Sanchez/Ochoa Elementary Schools.

Goyo Lopez will be the Trustee for District 5. He will represent Gallego and Heights Elementary Schools, and Memorial Middle School.

As the trustee for District 6, Dr. Gilberto Martinez will represent District D.D. Hachar, Milton, and Ryan Elementary Schools and Lamar Middle School.



4 DRIVE SAMES EDUCATION



For the 10th year in a row, Sames Auto Group is sponsoring their Drive Sames 4 Education Perfect Attendance Incentive Program. The kick off for this year's program was held at the Sames Ford Auto Showroom on San Dario Avenue.

Through the Drive Sames 4 Education program, eligible students from Cigarroa, Garcia Early College, Martin, and Nixon High Schools have the opportunity to win a brand new 2022 Ford Escape. The Ford Escape will come at no charge to the student or their family and will include the tax, title, and license sponsored by the Laredo Federal Credit Union. The purpose of the program is to motivate, monitor and promote attendance at each high school.

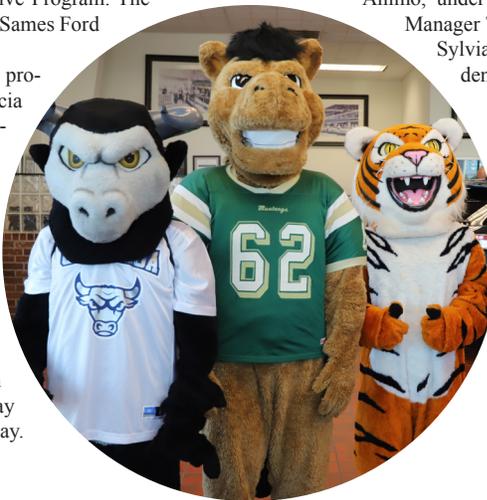
LISD distributed color coded vouchers to all four high schools. When the nine week periods are over, high school students with perfect attendance will hand deliver the signed vouchers to Sames Motor Company. Cigarroa High School and Garcia Early College High School students may also turn them in at the Sames location on the Zapata Highway.

Participating in the press conference were Martin High School's Banda del Animo, under the direction of Bobby Castro, Sames' General Manager Thomas Piña, LISD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sylvia G. Rios, and Laredo Federal Credit Union President Rafael Martinez.

The deadline to turn in vouchers for the second nine weeks period is January 21, 2023.

The deadline for the third nine weeks period is April 8, and the final deadline is May 13.

Towards the end of the year, Sames will randomly select 16 finalists from all the entries. The finalists will join the district on stage at Graduation Day on May 26, 2023, at the Sames Auto Arena. One very hard working student will be driving home a brand new 2022 Ford Escape, thanks to the Sames Auto Group.



LISD BUDDING SCIENTISTS SHINE AT ELEMENTARY SCIENCE FAIR



Over 150 of LISD's youngest science enthusiasts and their families filled the LISD Performing Arts Complex (PAC) Conference Center for the district's annual Elementary Science Fair Awards Ceremony where the top winners were announced.

The purpose of the fair is for students to learn about the scientific process and to prepare them for the upcoming STAAR exam.

Before the district fair, LISD elementary schools held campus science fairs to select the top experiments from each category to advance to the district fair.

During the weeklong district fair, the top students in first through fifth grade from LISD's 20 campuses put their science magic to the test as they displayed a variety of projects. Community members and district administrators served as judges. The students also had the opportunity to attend the student viewing and see the other qualifying projects.

The students competed and were judged in four categories: Physical Science 1-Matter and Energy, Physical Science 2-Force and Motion, Life Science, and Environmental Science.

All participants received a ribbon and a participation certificate. Trophies were awarded to students who were named first through third place winners.

The top first place winners selected are Primary Physical Science 1-Matter and Energy, Yamiet Gasca, Gallego Elementary School; Primary Physical Science 2-Force and Motion, Ramel Lopez, Ligarde Elementary School; Primary Life Science, Louis Reyes, Ryan Elementary School; Primary Environmental Science, Javier Arevalo and Abran Landeros, Kawas Elementary School; Intermediate Physical Science 1-Matter and Energy, Luis Delgadillo, Leyendecker Elementary School; Intermediate Physical Science 2-Force and Motion, Adam Gonzalez, Zachry Elementary School; and Intermediate Environmental Science, Junior Morales, Ryan Elementary School.

Also winning were Primary Physical Science 1-Matter and Energy, Emmanuel Cuevas, Alma Pierce Elementary School; Primary Physical Science 2-Force and Motion, Roel Rodriguez, Leyendecker Elementary School; Primary Life Science, Selene Hinojosa, Ryan Elementary School; Primary Environmental Science, Kaleb Bustamante, Macdonell Elementary School; Intermediate Physical Science 1-Matter and Energy, Mariano Nateras, Ryan Elementary School; Intermediate Physical Science 2-Force and Motion, Paulo Garcia and Dayanna Marquez, Macdonell Elementary School; Intermediate Life Science, Jezebel Hamlin, Milton Elementary School; and Intermediate Environmental Science Sophia Cuevas, Alma Pierce Elementary School.

SOCIAL . EMOTIONAL . LEARNING

The Laredo ISD Guidance and Counseling Department is helping district employees put mental health first by implementing a monthly Social Emotional Learning activity at the new LISD Administration Building.

On early mornings, employees are met with a festive table by the entrance of the building and with a Sharpie in hand are asked to answer the simplest of questions: what brings you joy, and what you are grateful for?

“The purpose of SEL is to build relationships in the classroom. LISD is taking it a step forward by initiating a monthly SEL activity with a Kindness Tree,” confirms the LISD Guidance and Counseling Department Director Rosina Silva. “In order to strengthen relationships in this building, it’s important to create communication between each department and maintain a positive work environment.”

Each month holds a theme with a decorative post that is respective to its holiday. Employees will be able to answer a monthly question and fill the artistic tree with positive notes and affirmations.

According to the Committee for Children website, Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success. The Committee for Children further explains that people with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically, professionally, and socially. From effective problem-solving to self-discipline, from impulse control to emotion management and more, SEL provides a foundation for positive, long-term effects on kids, adults, and communities.

LISD continues to lead the way by also offering a Youth Mental Health First Aid training for employees and community members. Youth MHFA is the initial help given to someone experiencing a mental health problem before appropriate treatment and support are obtained. The course serves to demystify the important topic of mental illness (i.e. to increase mental health literacy and to decrease the negative perceptions surrounding mental illnesses and addiction).

The participants in this course are taught how to recognize the symptoms of mental health problems; how to offer and provide initial help; and how to guide the individual to professional help, if appropriate, by trained LISD coordinators, administrators, counselors, and behavioral specialists.

“This training has really been inspirational, educational and informative because now more than ever our youth are going through mental health issues because of the pandemic. By taking this course it sheds some light on what the children are feeling and how we, as adults, can help them,” Silva said.

For more information, please contact the Guidance and Counseling Director Rosina Silva at (956) 273-1262.



“The purpose of SEL is to build relationships in the classroom. LISD is taking it a step forward by initiating a monthly SEL activity with a Kindness Tree. In order to strengthen relationships in this building, it’s important to create communication between each department and maintain a positive work environment.”

- Guidance and Counseling Department Director Rosina Silva



LEGO COMPETITION

Elementary school students showcase skills



LISD hosted the Star Wars LEGO Robotics Competition for elementary students at the LISD Performing Arts Complex. Team Bob from Gallego Elementary School was announced the Alliance Captain winner.

The Laredo Independent School District hosted the Star Wars LEGO Robotics Competition for elementary students recently at the LISD Performing Arts Complex. The students showcased their math and science skills and competed in the challenge where students were responsible for building and operating their robot system.

During the Robotic Competition, the students used LEGO EVO kits to create their Lego Mindstorm EV3 Core Robots. The Robots competed in the Autonomous Challenge where they had 10 seconds to knock over a 3D printed Star Wars toy. In preparation for the Autonomous Challenge, students had the opportunity to put the coding skills learned in the classroom into practice by programming the robot's microprocessor to perform a task initiated with the touch of a button.

Teams also competed in a manual challenge where the robot was driven around an obstacle course picking up objects (3D printed Storm Troopers) carrying and placing them in corresponding-colored bins. In the last 30 seconds of the challenge the robots had to release a trap door and park on a ramp for more points.

The schools had one month to build/create and practice with the robots prior to the competition. For many of the students, the robotics competition was their first experience competing against other schools.

A total of 20 teams competed from eight elementary schools. The schools included were Daiches, Gallego, D.D. Hachar, Heights, Kawas, Milton, Ryan, and Santa Maria Elementary Schools who had multiple teams participate in the challenge.

Team Bob from Gallego Elementary School was announced the Alliance Captain winner, while the Cougar Claw Team from D.D. Hachar Elementary School was declared the First Team Alliance winner.

The Roboforce Team from Kawas Elementary School was named the Finalist Alliance Captain, while the Quad Squad Team from Ryan Elementary School was named the Alliance Finalist.

The Storm Trooper winners were Matteo Hernandez of Gallego Elementary School, Gracie Calderon of Kawas Elementary School, Briceidee Lopez of Ryan Elementary School, and Matthew Arriaga of Santa Maria Elementary School.

Winning most spirited costumes award were the Minions from Gallego Elementary School, and the best overall costume was won by Daiches Elementary School with their Star Wars theme.

Students from the Sabas Perez Early College High School assisted throughout the competition.

As part of the post-pandemic initiatives, LISD has re-started the elementary robotics competition. This is the fourth year that the district has hosted the robotics competition which began in the Spring of 2017. Since then, the district has added a fall and spring competition with students in grades second to fifth.

Returning teams from Gallego, D.D. Hachar, Kawas, and Milton Elementary Schools have competed since the original competition. Laredo Independent School District will host the next robotics competition in May of 2023.



The LISD Office of Communications staff and BOWL 4 KIDS sponsors distributed new jackets to 40 students at Ryan and Milton Elementary School. Through the department's 13th annual C... approximately 320 LISD elementary students received a new jacket for the holiday season. The jackets were purchased with proceeds from the district's annual BOWL 4 KIDS bowling tournam... ployees and community sponsors laced up their bowling shoes to raise funds for LISD students. This year's sponsors included Kazen, Meurer, and Perez, Falcon Bank, PNC Bank, Chick-Fil-A... Credit Union.



LISD is Walking in a Winter Toro Land! It's a very Merry Christmas for the Pride of South Laredo! The Toro Feeder Pattern Elem...



Grinchmas at Alma Pierce Elementary School!

The Top Accelerated Reader s... to watch 'Lyle, Lyle Crocodile... Christmas!



LISD Elementary Honors Choir Christmas Concert featuring students from the Mustang Team.



Laredo ISD stude... Vidal M. Trevino... Anthem and Chr... sented the flags. T... Daphne Arts Fou...



LISD Elementary Honors Christmas Concert.



Support Them With Love Campaign event where over 200 LISD employees gathered at the Laredo Marketplace, and Laredo Federal



11th District Court Judge Monica Notzon distributed "Be Grateful" Bags to students at J.C. Martin Elementary School as part of their Annual Give-Away Program. Students each received a bag filled with a Wal-Mart gift card, Gratitude Tree, gavel pencil, and goodies.



Elementary, Middle, and High Schools distribute over 1,000 toys to students donated by Laredo ISD Board President Monica Garcia!



Students from each elementary school were recognized for their dedication to reading. Students were treated to a special surprise. To their surprise, Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus were there to greet the kiddos and wish them a very Merry



Students participated in the Prairie Foundation's annual grants presentation awards luncheon at La Posada. The School of Communications and Fine Arts Chorale directed by Celia Hernandez provided the National Christmas Carols. The Cigarroa High School JROTC Color Guard, directed by Sgt. Gilberto Gonzalez, presented. The Prairie Foundation awarded grants to Mercy Ministries of Laredo, Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center, Laredo Foundation. Sacred Heart Children's Home, and Border Olympics.



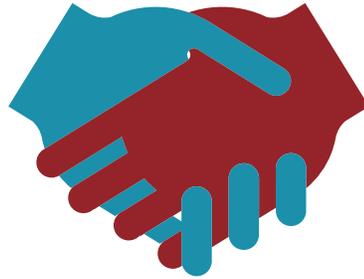
The LISD Bilingual/ESL Department recently celebrated LPAC Appreciation Week from November 28th to December 2nd, to honor the LPAC teams that assist us to service our Emergent Bilingual population district-wide. Campuses celebrated their LPAC teams during this week by providing genuine gestures of gratitude and appreciation. During an LPAC Team meeting on November 30th, the LPAC Administrators and the LPAC Clerks were provided with MOY updates for 2023, a light breakfast, and a well-deserving lunch.



The Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts dance department, directed by Ms. Mary Ellen Leyendecker, had a dance recital.



LISD



TAMIU

motivating students to pursue teaching career

The Laredo Independent School District and TAMIU have joined forces to address the current teacher shortage in the state by hosting the Future Teachers of LISD Seminar. The seminar was an innovative way to increase interest and awareness amongst LISD seventh and eighth grade students to pursue a Career, Technical, Education (CTE) future teacher pathway and to increase the number of teacher candidates prepared to enter the profession as early as possible.

Over 100 students from Lamar, Christen, Cigarroa, and Memorial Middle School visited the TAMIU campus where they were able to network with TAMIU College of Education faculty, TAMIU student representatives of the Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE), their peers, and student representatives in the pre-education program from Garcia Early College High School and Nixon High School. The future educators also participated in a panel discussion and a TAMIU TAFE Camp that provided them with hands-on learning activities focused on exposing them to the teaching field.

The students were welcomed by members of the TAMIU College of Education Faculty, and staff from LISD's College, Career, and Military Readiness Department.

"We want to establish a strong and diverse pipeline of teachers for LISD," said Cindy Dominguez LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Coordinator. "At LISD we believe in the "Grow Your Own" concept as it not only helps our students grow to become leading instructors in our district, but there is a genuine understanding of the needs of our students as they walk through our halls and sit in our classrooms. What better teachers than those who were once our students."

As part of the Seminar the middle school students joined in a panel discussion with their peers from the Garcia Early College High School Pre-Education Program, Nixon High School BIPS Program, and TAMIU Education TAFE student representatives.

Some of the questions asked by the middle school students were about salaries, how long does it take to get your teaching certificate, and why and when did you decide to become a teacher.

"I'm following the teaching pathway because I want to help out little kids,"

said Yajaira Molina, GECHS Pre-Education student. "If you know in your heart that you like to help people, becoming a teacher is a great idea. You get to interact with the kids and give them advise that you hope your teacher would give you. You can help them out in many different ways by giving them advise about education, life, or career choices."

The pre-education students talked about the experience they have gained while in the program. They spoke about their internships, working on bulletin boards, classroom observations, assisting teacher aides, and creating lesson plans.

“At LISD we believe in the "Grow Your Own" concept as it not only helps our students grow to become leading instructors in our district, but there is a genuine understanding of the needs of our students as they walk through our halls and sit in our classrooms. What better teachers than those who were once our students.”

**- Cindy Dominguez
LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Coordinator**

"Our goal here today was to introduce LISD seventh and eighth graders to education and a potential career in teaching," Dr. Christian Faltis, TAMIU Department Chair for Education at TAMIU. "We really want to make the students that came here today feel comfortable with the campus. We hope this increases their awareness about the opportunities available to them in the education field and that this might be a place they can come in hopes that they pursue an education degree and become a teacher."

The seminar also offered the students some hands-on activities that showed what TAMIU students in the teacher education program are learning about education as a career.

The Teaching and Training Program at Garcia Early College and Nixon High School BIPS Academy allows students in the pre-education field to get

up to 60 college hours from TAMIU or an Associate's degree from Laredo College.

TAMIU will follow these students throughout high school to keep them interested and involved in the Education/Teaching career pathway. The student will likely be geared into the LISD Dual Enrollment Program.

For more information, please contact LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Coordinators, Cindy Dominguez at 956-273-1864 or Mayra Garcia at 956-273-1863.

JROTC

HONORABLE CADETS

Laredo Independent School District recognized their top JROTC students during the inaugural Honorable Cadet Ceremony which was held at Nixon High School's Raymond Goodman Library.

Nixon High School senior Cristina Ramirez, Cigarroa High School senior Lucien Lozano, and Martin High School junior Roberto Trevino were named LISD's Honorable Cadets for their qualities and leadership skills as cadets who demonstrate outstanding capabilities as active members of their community through service, self-discipline, responsibility, and respect. The recognition was conducted by LISD's ROTC Program and the LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Department.

LISD Board Member Guadalupe Gomez, LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia Rios, and Nixon High School Assistant Principal Ruben Garcia welcomed and addressed the cadets on the importance of leadership, citizenship, and teamwork.

Ramirez joined the JROTC because of the leadership-based structure. The organization taught her much about herself and helped develop her leadership skills. Aside from being appointed Cadet Major (S5), Cristina's most memorable experience within the JROTC program occurred when she was promoted to Master Sergeant during the JROTC Award Ceremony last spring. She intends to join ROTC in college, receive a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and pursue a master's or Ph.D. after graduation. Cristina's career goal is to become a psychologist.

"I'm extremely proud of Cristina," said Nixon High School JROTC Instructor, Lt. Col. Bennie Feagin. "She is involved in a little bit of everything on campus and in our community. So, she is very deserving of the award she is being given today."

Lozano joined JROTC to gain a deeper understanding of the military. He learned that the JROTC program differs in many ways from the military, but he learned the faces and commands needed to perform to the highest standards. The JROTC helped him develop interpersonal skills to become more social. He is now confident and in better physical shape. After graduation, Lucien plans to enlist in the US Army. He chose the Military Occupational Specialty of 35M, an Army Human Intelligence Collector. Lucien's goal is to begin basic training in June.

Trevino joined JROTC to become a well-rounded student. His experiences within the JROTC organization have impacted his life for the better. Roberto's goal after graduation is to enlist in one of the military branches. After his enlistment, he plans to earn a bachelor's degree and become a US Customs or Border Patrol Agent.

"I think the kids being recognized today feel very proud because they had to be vetted," said Feagin. "It wasn't just selecting someone, and they just show up. There was a process involved with them writing, teachers reading their essays, and then selecting the best of the best."

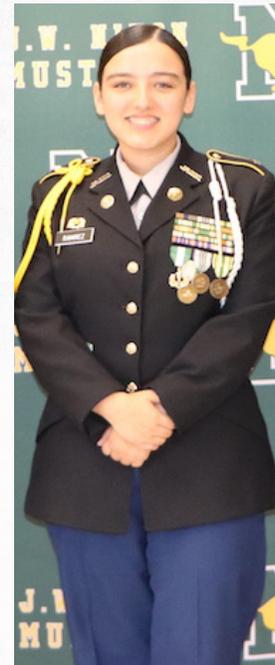
"LISD created this initiative to recognize JROTC Cadets who are leaders not only in their squad/campus, but in their community as well," said Rogelio Garcia, Executive Director of CCMR, Advanced Academics and Schools of Innovation. "They are an evident example of the JROTC mission, 'To Motivate Young People to be Better Citizens'."

The Nixon High School JROTC, under the direction of Lt. Col. Bennie Feagin, presented the colors, The Nixon High School Band performed the National Anthem directed by Juan Gerardo Sosa. Nixon High School JROTC student Andrea Gonzalez led the Pledge of Allegiance. Guests enjoyed lunch which was prepared by the Nixon High School Culinary Arts students.

The Nixon High School JROTC, which has 102 cadets, is under the direction of Lt. Col. Bennie Feagin. The Cigarroa High School JROTC, under the direction of St. Sgt. Gilbert Gonzalez and Stg. 1st Class. Conrado Martinez, has 104 cadets. Martin High School



Cigarroa High School senior Lucien Lozano, Nixon High School senior Cristina Ramirez, and Martin High School junior Roberto Trevino were named LISD's Honorable Cadets for their qualities and leadership skills as cadets who demonstrate outstanding capabilities as active members of their community through service, self-discipline, responsibility, and respect. The recognition was conducted by LISD's ROTC Program and the LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Department.



has 98 cadets and is under the direction of Sgt. Major Juan Hernandez.

Cadets from LISD's three JROTC Programs will be recognized every nine weeks. To be considered an Honorable Cadet, the student must submit a completed application with their information, resume, two letters of recommendation (non-JROTC Instructor) one recommendation letter from JROTC Instructor, essay, and cadet challenge score. The next Honorary Cadet Ceremonies are scheduled for January 13, 2023, and April 5, 2023. The Superior Cadet Ceremony will be held on May 17, 2023.

Cadets can get applications from the JROTC Instructors and counselors and must submit completed applications to their counselors.

For more information, please contact LISD College, Career and Military Readiness Coordinators, Cindy Dominquez at 956-273-1864 or Mayra Garcia at 956-273-1863.





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MR. *Dr. Lopez* MRS.

Laredo ISD works toward creating a culture of supporting growth for its students, staff, and community. This year two LISD administrators earned their Doctorate in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Liberty University in August. What makes this unique is that they are husband and wife, Lamar Middle School Principal, Dr. Eduardo E. Lopez, and Sabas Perez Early College High School Director Dr. Rocio Lopez.

The Lopez's are both products of Laredo ISD. She is a graduate of Raymond and Tirza Martin High School, and he is a J.W. Nixon High School graduate. They both continued their education at Texas A&M International University where they met in class, married a few years later, and have two daughters. In 2004, he graduated from TAMIU with his Bachelor of Science in Biology and was hired at J.W. Nixon High School. Shortly afterward, she graduated from TAMIU with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and was hired at L.J. Christen Middle School.

Together they completed a master's degree in Educational Administration, and both moved up within Laredo ISD to leadership roles. He moved from a teacher to assistant principal at Nixon H.S., and since 2018, he has been the principal at M.B. Lamar Middle School. She moved from teacher to Assistant Principal at F.S. Lara Academy, then Science Dean, and is now the Director of Sabas Perez Early College High School.

A few years ago, the Lopez's decided to take the next step in their educational journey by seeking a doctoral degree. They knew the journey of obtaining a master's degree while being teachers, but this time it would be different because both were working in leadership roles and raising one child and another one on the way.

Their goal was to complete the doctorate in three years by following the university's recommended time frame but obtaining this goal would require three to four classes a semester. The goal became a plan of action as they wrote down the logistics of creating the time to do their doctoral work.

"The plan was created, requiring us to work a minimum of two hours every night after our little one went to sleep to do the needed work," said Rocio Lopez. "Saturday and Sunday would be one day for each of us. On Saturday, one of us would spend all day with our daughters feeding them, playing with them, and taking care of all their needs. At the same time, the other one worked on the coursework without interruption. On Sunday, the roles were reversed."

"Taking so many courses seemed nearly impossible, but we knew we could figure it out," Eduardo Lopez said. "We have a great relationship where we support each other and strengthen each other. We knew that together everything was possible."

The Lopez's were often asked if having children and a demanding career while taking doctorate coursework was tough.

"Anything worth doing is going to be a challenge. We believe that having children during this journey was a blessing and that having children and a career required us to be structured and not procrastinate on completing the coursework," said Eduardo Lopez. "Our strict schedule resulted in us sacrificing free time and recreational activities, but we knew this schedule wasn't forever. Having that structure and planning the pathway toward completion helped us greatly see the big picture."

After this long journey, they both looked back on the experience fondly.

"Finishing this seemingly impossible journey, showed us that having a plan with short and long-term goals made this impossible-looking task possible," Rocio Lopez added. "We know our acquired knowledge will help us better serve our children as they go through their educational experiences and the community we serve."

"Earning this degree represents my love for learning. I've always enjoyed learning that had a purpose. I was so happy after all that hard work to earn an Ed.D.," said Eduardo Lopez. "I got my Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction because my position within the educational field requires me to have deep knowledge in this area for us to be successful. The knowledge I acquired through my journey allows me to view curriculum and instruction in ways I may have never seen before. I grew as an individual, and I can bring my knowledge back to my campus and district. Getting this degree has helped me work towards making changes to help improve the education the students are receiving."

"Ever since I was a child, I would pretend to have a little schoolhouse in my backyard and teach my younger cousins. As I grew up, my passion for learning and teaching increased. I have always had a thirst for knowledge and improving my craft has always been a goal of mine," said Rocio Lopez. "My passion for learning has always been there and obtaining a doctoral degree has increased my love for learning. I am elated to be able to grow and develop as an individual so that I can assist my school community to be the best it can be."

The Lopez's journey to obtain a doctoral degree was challenging and they say the support that their family, friends, and coworkers gave them along the way was an integral part of them succeeding in reaching their goal.

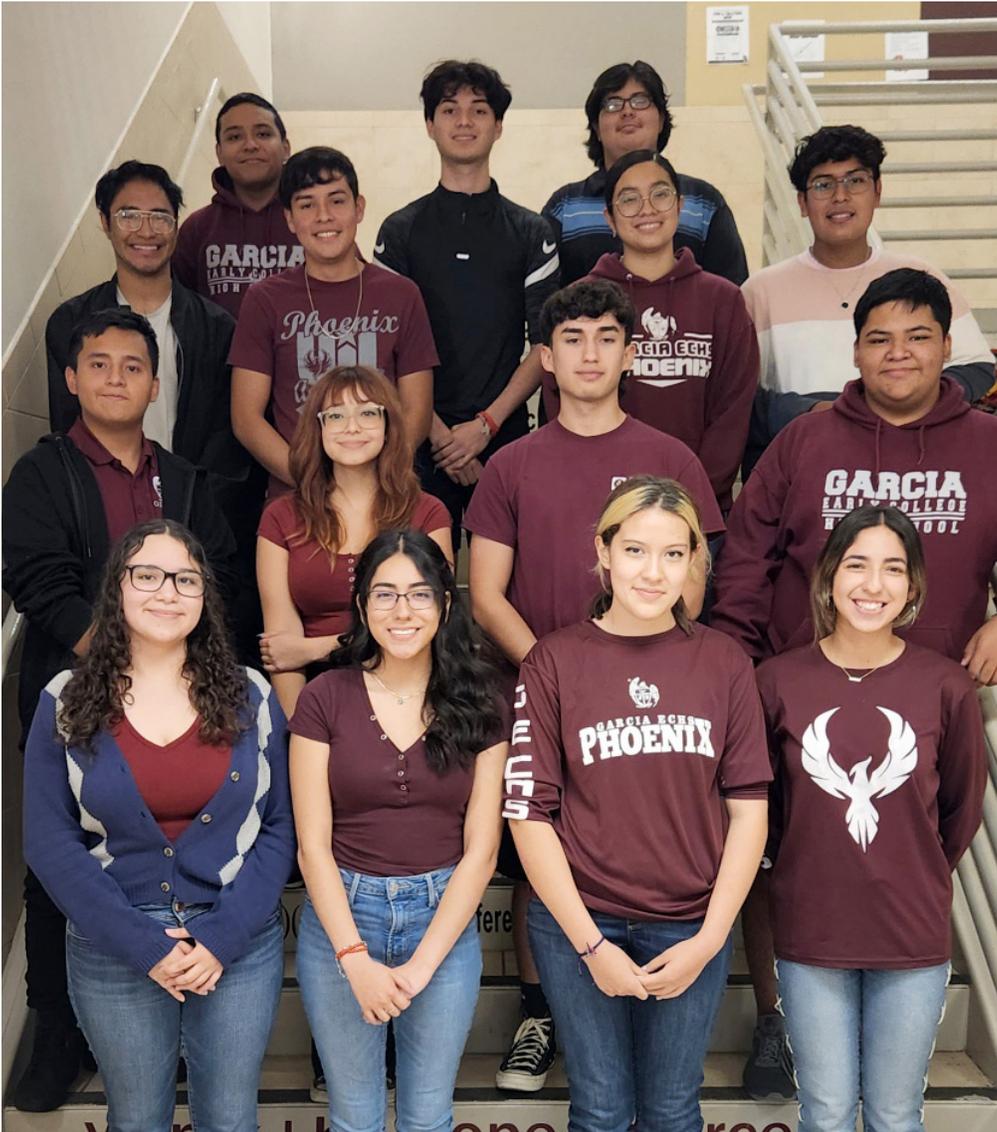
"I would like to thank my family and friends who provided encouragement throughout the process. My parents were also there for me to provide words of encouragement during those hectic times," said Eduardo Lopez. "I would also like to express my gratitude to Laredo ISD for creating a culture of supporting growth because that culture provided encouragement in many ways. LISD Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Gerardo Cruz also supported and encouraged my endeavors of furthering my education, and LISD Director of Secondary Education, Mr. Jose Cerda provided encouragement during the last two semesters of my doctoral work."

"I would like to thank my husband, two daughters, family, and friends for their continuous support throughout this incredible journey. My mom has always been a pillar of strength, and she has always provided me with the encouragement needed to go after all my goals. Unfortunately, my dad was not able to see me reach my goal, but I can imagine that he would have been proud," said Rocio Lopez. "LISD faculty and administration have always been supportive of my endeavors as a student, teacher, assistant principal, science dean, and now as Director of Sabas Perez Early College High School. Therefore, I would like to thank Dr. Cruz, Mr. Cerda, and all my former/current supervisors for instilling an amazing culture of professional growth."

During his career with Laredo ISD, Dr. Lopez received the following awards, 2022 H-E-B Excellence in Education Award (Principal Finalist), The EdTech Leadership Award School Leadership 2022 (Finalist), 2021 Tech Advocate Award: Best K-12 School Leader, District/Campus Administrator of the Year (TCEA 2021), LISD New Secondary Principal of the Year 2019, Digital Learning Administrator of the Year 2018-2019, and Laredo ISD Assistant Principal of the Year 2013. He has earned his certification in School Superintendent, Principal EC-12, Science 8-12, Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL), and Registered Texas School Business Administrator (RTSBA).

Dr. Rocio Lopez has received the Educator of the Year Award and Service Awards from educational organizations. She is certified in School Superintendent Certification, Principal EC-12, Science 4-8, Google Level 2 Certification, and Microsoft Innovative Educator.





NATIONAL RECOGNITION

College Board

The College Board's National Recognition Program has recognized 28 Hector J. Garcia Early College High School students. The students were given the prestigious honor as National Recognition Scholars for their college entrance exam scores.

To be eligible, the student must achieve a minimum PSAT/NMSQT score for their region, have a cumulative junior grade point average of 3.5 or higher, and meet their state's cutoff scores on their critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills on the PSAT to be designated as Scholars. The NHRP honors these outstanding students and makes their information available to subscribing college and universities.

GECHS students selected for the National Hispanic Recognition Award include Alejandro Ordóñez, Andrea Lopez, Andres Ambrosio Licona, Angel Godines, Ashley Gonzalez, Brandon Vasquez, Brayan Rodriguez, Cynthia Moreno, Eric Morales, Gerardo Martinez Guzman, Hermes Luna, Jocelyn Villarreal, Jorge Diaz, Juan Carreon, Karla Madrigal, Kate Delao, Kelsey Castro, Kyle Hamlin, Luis Arriaga, Mariann Cabrera, Mario Alvarado, Melissa Castanon, Raphael Navarro, Ricardo Valdez, Roy Ibarra, Salma Medina, and Victoria Garcia.

GECHS student Kwazar Coulibaly Akikuni was selected for the National African American Recog-

niton Award.

"We are thrilled that our students have earned this recognition. We are very proud of them for their achievements in their classroom and on the College Board assessments," said Margarita Taboada, Garcia Early College High School Principal. "These programs help students from underrepresented backgrounds stand out to colleges during admission."

Taking the PSAT/NMSQT Test as juniors allows students to see for themselves where they rate academically in comparison to other juniors all over this state and country. For some, who achieve national standing, it is the time to make final selections of colleges or universities as being a National Recognition Scholar opens the door to many opportunities. Taking a test such as the PSAT is the first important step in planning for the future.

"We want to honor the hard work of these students through the College Board National Recognition Program. This program creates a way for colleges and scholarship programs to connect directly with underrepresented students who they are hoping to reach," said Tarlin Ray, College Board Senior Vice President of BigFuture. "We hope the award winners and their families celebrate this prestigious honor and it helps them plan for their big future."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2023

January

6
LISD Employees Return
to Work
(Staff Development)

9
LISD Students
Return to School

24
LISD Spelling Bee
VMT Recital Hall
4:00 p.m.

February

16
IBC Youth Parade
San Bernardo Avenue
6:00 p.m.

17
Staff Development
(no classes for students)

18
WBCA Grand Parade
San Bernardo Avenue
9:00 a.m.

20
District Holiday

March

4
LISD Golf Tournament
Max Golf
8:00 a.m.

14-17
Spring Break

25
Scripps National
Spelling Bee

April

10
District Holiday

27
LISD Annual Banquet
6:00 p.m.

May

24
Last Day of School

25
CHS, MHS, NHS
Graduation
Sames Auto Arena

24
GECHS Graduation
PAC Auditorium

AMERICA'S SCHOOLS SAFE WEEK

The Laredo ISD Police Department and the LISD Health and Occupational Safety Support Services Department conducted a parade in celebration of America's Safe Schools Week which is observed October 16-22, 2022.

Police vehicles from the LISD Police Department, Webb County Constables Office, Webb County Sheriff's Office, and Laredo PD assembled at Garden and San Bernardo Avenue to start their red, white, and blue light and siren show which started at Martin High School. Law enforcement agencies were greeted with a wave of members from the MHS JROTC and the MHS Banda del Animo.

This annual observance brings awareness to school safety and security. "Having safe schools means having the protection of all students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying and harassment, the use of illegal drugs and all other emergencies. There is a direct link to improved students and outcomes with school safety," LISD PD Chief Doreen Hale said

The parade continued its way to L.J. Christen Middle School, Leyendecker Elementary School, Milton Elementary School, J.W. Nixon High School, Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts, Ryan Elementary School, and Lamar Middle School before heading south to Santo Niño Elementary School and Aranda Field at Cigarroa High School.

Chief Hale said the purpose of this activity was to recognize the importance of ensuring LISD schools are safe, secure, and productive by allowing the students to engage and have them observe how law enforcement agencies stand together to protect them. This security helps students stay focused on learning and pursue their potential.



America's Safe Schools Week activities remind students, their parents, employees, and the school community that law enforcement officers are here to protect them. The National School Safety Center established Safe School Week in 1984. School safety includes keeping campuses free of crime and violence, improving discipline, and increasing student attendance. Schools that are safe and free of violence, weapons and drugs are necessary to ensure the well-being of all children and the quality of their education.

LISD PD and the LISD Health and Occupational Safety Support Services Departments plan to continue this event and join forces with other law enforcement agencies next year.



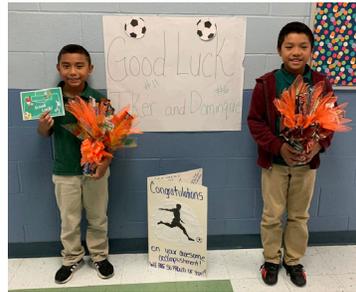
LISD SNAPSHOTS



The Fine Arts Department held its first LISD Chess Tournament invitational of the year. All elementary, middle, and high schools participated in four exciting rounds of chess in both the rated and non-rated divisions. Congratulations to the coaches and sponsors for a wonderful event!



The LISD Child Nutrition Department held the first Elementary Menu Advisory Committee (EMAC) Meeting of the year at the Sanchez/Ochoa Elementary School Cafeteria. LISD elementary students from all campuses who are members of the EMAC taste tested and rated several new menu items that will be considered for next year's school menu. Some of the menu items that 138 students sampled included ultra-bean and chorizo burrito, blueberry muffin, breakfast pizza, and much more. During the year the students will assist with evaluating food items, discuss cafeteria dining issues, advocate for their peers, and help plan menus.



Heights Elementary School students and brothers Iker, 2nd grade, and Dominique Gonzalez, 5th grade, have been selected to play soccer in Barcelona! They are part of the Laredo Heat and were chosen during a San Antonio tournament to have the honor of traveling to Spain.



Nixon High School students, in association with Junior Achievement of Laredo, volunteered to teach and mentor students at Milton Elementary School. The NHS students used the curriculum to teach the basics of economics, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship during their visit



Congratulations to Nixon's JROTC Raiders team for all their achievements at Saturday's competition at Martin High school. 1st place in the relay 1st place on ropes 2nd place on gauntlet 3rd place on deadlifting 1st place overall



Nixon High School students, in association with Junior Achievement of Laredo, volunteered to teach and mentor students at Milton Elementary School. The NHS students used the curriculum to teach the basics of economics, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship during their visit



Macdonell Elementary School thanks Martin High School's Superintendent Student Advisory Council for being advocates of literacy for 2nd and 3rd Graders! The students enjoyed listening to the books and engaging with these AMAZING role models from Martin High!



Nixon High Schools Welding Program received a check from the Laredo Area Community Foundation on behalf of the Sergio M. Garcia Endowment Fund. The funds will be used to purchase tools that require the students to practice daily to improve on their welding skills including metals, gases, and equipment. Martin High School was also present with a check from the LACE.



LISD Principal attends Harvard Institute

Sanchez-Ochoa Elementary School Principal Rosalba Martinez was among the 85 school leaders from across Texas selected to attend the summer institute at the Principals' Center (PC) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education sponsored by the Charles Butt Foundation, a non-profit pursuing a more equitable and prosperous future for all Texans through education and community partnerships.

The Harvard Institute course was conducted in Boston, Massachusetts at Harvard University. The PC provides professional education to leaders around the world. Through professional development programs and an extensive learning community, PC assists principals in leading change to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education.

The workshops focused on leadership development, coaching, or school turnaround led by Harvard faculty and other national and international experts. The trainings provided Martinez with additional tools to continue the work of a campus principal. Topics ranged from current educational trends such as building capacity for family engagements, being brave in a time of challenging work, designing powerful learning and cultural leadership for transforming schools.

Each program is designed to inspire, challenge, and empower school leaders to bring lasting impact to their campuses and communities, the entire state of Texas, and beyond. "The most rewarding was the end of the day group discussions. The same group of school leaders gathered at the end of the day and shared perspectives about the day's topics. We shared our successes and our struggles at our campuses too," Martinez said. "Each of the group members offered a unique and fresh perspective of hot topics in our campuses and across the world. We found that despite the geographic distances, schools struggle with equity, campus culture, academics and challenges in finding personnel for key areas."

The Charles Butt Foundation funds the training at Harvard through the Raising School Leaders program, an initiative designed to develop stronger school leaders who will enhance the quality of education across Texas. Since the program's inception, the Charles Butt Foundation covers all expenses for the attendees including tuition, travel, hotel, and other discretionary costs for a total investment of more than \$10 million.

"Great teachers, along with strong school and district leaders, represent the most significant influencers of academic achievement and supportive culture," said Tim Miller, Director of Leadership Development at the Charles Butt Foundation. "Our alumni often report that their Harvard experience is the best professional



development they have ever experienced and that they return to their campuses energized, inspired, and empowered to make meaningful change that benefits all students."

Following the Harvard Institutes, attendees remain a part of the program's statewide network of school leaders and are empowered to work together to create change at the campus and district levels. Alumni are sponsored to attend the organization's annual leadership symposium and receive continuous support and professional development.

"This has been a highlight of my educational journey. My colleagues, friends and family were excited for me too! I enjoyed the camaraderie of the 2020 and 2022 Raise Your Hand Cohorts," Martinez added. "The week in Boston was a unique experience. I basked in the learning, experiences, friendships and food! The best part of all was the learning! I have implemented ideas and frameworks for transforming schools. I look forward to this school year and all the amazing things to come. Attending Harvard was truly a blessing."





LISD LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE, APP

The Laredo Independent School District is thrilled to launch a new app for smartphones and a redesigned mobile-friendly website. The new app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, by searching for Laredo Independent School District. Along with the release of the new app, the district is also debuting its new and improved website.

LISD began working with Apptegy, an education technology company earlier this year to begin designing and building the school district's new website and mobile app. Apptegy focuses on improving the accessibility of school information on the quickly changing forms of technology.

While the school district has had a website for many years, it has never had a mobile app.

"We understand the importance of communication from the school district. The new app and redesigned mobile-friendly website will provide a better online experience for everyone," said Dr. Sylvia Rios, LISD Superintendent. "We're very excited about how the new app and website will improve the school district's ability to keep connected with students, families and the community, and provide them with the latest news and information about what's happening in our schools."

"Along with a new app and website, the school district is also receiving a new communication tool to help keep parents and the community informed," said Veronica Castillon, LISD Executive Director of Communications. "We're able to make one post and share it multiple ways, including on the district's social media, live feed page on the app and website, app push notification, text message and if needed, an automated phone call simultaneously."

The app isn't just limited to those with students in the district. Anyone in the community can download the app or visit the new website to get the latest news and information about the school district.

The new app and website will be used not just for announcements and important notifications, but also to showcase the hard work of our students and staff.

"The app allows users to choose from a list of settings, including the individual school or schools from which they want, and they can even receive push notifications from the district, any of the individual schools and even athletics," said Ambrose Gomez, LISD Executive Director of Technology. "Building administrators will be able to immediately share news, send out alerts and keep families informed through the new app and the redesigned website."

The new app can be downloaded through Android and Apple Play store by searching Laredo ISD.

Merry Christmas ✨

