



Soaring to New Heights in Education:
Powerful Partnership Practices
Across Texas

Annual Collection
from Members of the
Texas Association of Partners in Education

2010





Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE) is proud to deliver the second edition of *Soaring to New Heights in Education: Powerful Partnership Practices Across Texas*. Each program profiled within these pages is an award-winning partnership in our state. These individuals, community groups, small businesses and corporations have created programs that are a testament to how innovative collaborations can benefit our classrooms and students.

The programs are proven examples of Powerful Partnership Practices at work. Whether it is the power of a mentor meeting one-on-one with a student; the dedication of a company to provide career experiences to high school students; the organization that provides basic needs so that each child reaches their full potential; or a collaboration between two non-profit organizations to provide internships for students — all of these programs have quantitative results. This publication supports the statement that *it takes a community to educate a child!*

On behalf of the TAPE Board of Directors, staff and recipients of *Powerful Partnership Practices Across Texas*, thank you to the people and programs profiled in this edition. You are an example to others.

Powerful Partnerships Practices Across Texas would not be possible without the exclusive sponsorship of Applied Materials. Its corporate citizenship is an example to every major employer in our state. Education and academic excellence is a team effort, and without this valuable business partnership, the collaborations described within these pages would not exist. TAPE is grateful for the partnership with Applied Materials.

Finally, this publication would not be possible without the dedication of our annual awards committee, award judges and the TAPE staff. Thank you all for giving your time to examine all the submissions to identify the outstanding partnerships included in this year's edition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Zenda Johnson".

Zenda T. Johnson
2010 TAPE President

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Introduction

Each year TAPE members share remarkable accomplishments achieved through collaborative efforts of districts, individual campuses and business/community partners. In 2009 the first edition of *Soaring to New Heights in Education: Powerful Partnership Practices Across Texas* was published, capturing 13 case studies of successful partnerships. For the 2010 edition, TAPE aligned our program efforts to broaden the number and scope of case studies featured in this publication. This year we are proud to showcase more than 40 “promising partnerships.”

All promising partnership practices are 2010 TAPE Awards finalists or winners. The awards applications are reviewed independently and scored by judges across Texas who represent business, non-profit and/or education organizations.

Throughout the profiled partnerships, you will notice common themes: building strong relationships, the use of data and evaluation and the need to create a common mission. These themes were echoed in the recent literature review conducted by TAPE, *TAPE Policy Brief*.

The scoring matrix used by judges was influenced largely by the findings of the policy brief and emphasized careful planning and implementation of partnerships as well as evaluation to document outcomes and effects. A summary of the findings of the TAPE literature review as well as the matrix are included as part of this year’s *Powerful Partnership Practices Across Texas* publication.

Our endeavor to catalog successful collaborations is the beginning of your partnership library. From this library we invite you to gather new ideas, identify elements of successes, learn lessons about longevity and ultimately feel re-energized in your own work by seeing the success that are possible. We hope you will continue to build your library and maintain a rapport with others who are passionate about education partnerships by regularly visiting our blog and forums at www.tape.org.

As long-time advocates for community and business engagement in education, we at TAPE know that companies can and do successfully engage in education partnerships when all stakeholders possess the know-how and commitment. TAPE is here to help assist you with the knowledge needed to bring all the voices to the table to speak a common language.

Given the current confluence of trends, the need for partnerships in education has never been greater.

We invite you to enjoy reading these examples of effective partnership programs and the opportunities that exist to replicate their efforts in your communities.

Promising Partnership Practices Matrix

	PROMISING	EFFECTIVE	EXEMPLARY
Promising Effective Exemplary			
Partnership Clarity of Shared Mission/Goals			
Coordination of Services			
Inclusion of a Diversity of Stakeholders			
Justification			
Use of data/evidence in designing program of service			
Clarity of need being met among students/community			
Impact			
Clarity of Evaluation Strategy			
Progress/Impact on Students			
Progress/Impact on Community			

Exemplary

These programs demonstrate highly effective outcomes for students and community partners. Designed using data, strong evaluation, and meet a clear need in students and community.

Effective

These programs demonstrate adequate outcomes for students and community partners. Designed using some data and evaluation, and some need is demonstrated for services provided.

Promising

These programs demonstrate some promising but inconsistent outcomes for students and community partners. Designed using some data and evaluation, and need is partially demonstrated for services provided.

Ellen Morrissey for
Texas Association of Partners in Education
November 2009

Literature Review - Summary of Findings


Most school districts and/or individual school campuses seek community, non-profit and/or business support to broaden educational experiences, support student learning and enhance curricular and family success. Research shows that organized programs that support the development of partnerships improve schools, increase student achievement, strengthen families, and energize communities (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Due to the shifting demographics and socioeconomic status of students and their families across the nation, schools are serving an ever greater population of “at-risk” students. With diminished resources from federal and state funding sources, partnerships are needed to increase schools’ capacities to effectively serve students. While many nonprofit, state and community-based organizations exist to serve youth, neither the school nor community agencies working in isolation have the resources to interrupt patterns of risk (Anderson-Butcher, 2006). This calls for an expansion of partnerships between communities and schools and a sharing of resources within those partnerships.

Community involvement in education dates back over 100 years to schools’ recognition that mothers needed to be provided information on child -rearing practices and the importance of education (Woysner, 1999; Woysner, 2003). Since that time, partnership activities have expanded greatly to include not only families, but also community and business stakeholders. The federal government has passed legislation supporting community & family involvement in education. With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB) enacted under President George W. Bush’s administration, schools that receive Title I funding must hire Parent and Community Outreach Coordinators to work on increasing beneficial partnerships with families and communities to help schools that are failing to meet standards. While legislation, such as NCLB, remains fragmented and often does not provide adequate funding, the impetus exists, on a federal level, for the creation of effective education partnerships.

School and community partnerships take many forms and range from informal support and donations of goods to streamlined wraparound services for student and families. In considering the multiple levels at which schools link with other agencies and business, Chrislip (2002) identified a continuum of partnerships that includes: networking, coordinating, cooperating, collaborating and integrating (or merging). At each increasing level of interaction the give and take between stakeholders increases, as does trust and time. This continuum illustrates the full spectrum of partnership activities that may be undertaken by a school district and potential partners. In addition, the spectrum provides a “road map” to navigate from a simplistic partnership to one that will have a much greater synergistic effect, as it clarifies the different resources and commitments necessary to progress partnerships.

According to Donaldson (2005), building collaborations across sectors involves the following steps that complement the continuum: (1) identify relevant stakeholders; (2) define a shared vision; and (3) implement the vision and develop the stakeholder group. These steps emphasize a deliberate and careful planning process as well as ongoing maintenance of collaborative activities. This level of attention to cultivating partnerships so that all affected parties have a clear role and are involved in and supportive of the process is present in much of the literature about the most effective partnerships

While data on the benefits of education/community collaboration are compelling, the process is not without challenges. These challenges fall across the spectrum, from the conception of an idea through evaluation of the success of a partnership or program. Of primary concern is the lack of funding available to sustain collaborative processes and undertakings. Education partnerships, because they can impact so many different areas, are challenging to evaluate effectively (Sanders, 2000). Another challenge is the lack of training for educators and school professionals in how to



develop and sustain community and family involvement. This lack of training is also evident in what appears to be a gap in knowledge about the importance of community involvement and its potential for positive impact on educational outcomes for youth. Additionally, collaborative leadership, or “power sharing,” during the development and oversight of the partnership can prove challenging to the success of a collaboration.

While the challenges identified above are varied and complex, the potential for partnerships is great. Before implementing collaborations it is helpful to examine and understand lessons learned from other partnership practitioners so that organizations are successful in implementing partnerships. Throughout the literature on collaboration and partnerships between schools and communities, a few themes emerge as promising practices:

Creating a shared mission: In examples of model collaborative processes, it appears that part of the success of the partnership depends upon a commitment of all involved parties to one mission.

Including a diversity of stakeholders: Successful collaborations between communities and schools need to include a diversity of stakeholders for different sectors and with different areas of expertise. A community and school partnership needs to include the voices of parents, students, city leaders, community members, school staff and others who have a stake in the process and the outcomes of the partnership.

Employing skilled facilitation: Because of the time commitment required in creating a successful partnership, the process of facilitation is quite important in making things run smoothly.

Focusing on maintaining relationships: As partnerships develop, individuals and organizations learn to work together. In order to maintain effective working relationships, partners in collaborations should consider the way that they will nurture and maintain relationships.

Creating community support: Schools are integral parts of communities and, as such, partnerships should be transparent and open to the community. Making work visible and accessible to community members is helpful in garnering support for the efforts of the collaboration.

Focusing on the needs of students rather than needs of agencies or collaborating partners: The goal of any partnership with schools is ultimately focused on student success. Therefore, all the work that the collaboration undertakes should be focused on those outcomes rather than what individuals or agencies need.

Using data and evaluation: The most effective programming is informed by data and subject to ongoing evaluation. Collaborations should maintain a focus on using evidence-based practices and evaluating the work that they do in order to best serve the community and the students.

Creating a clear strategic plan: Planning using logic models and theories of change should be encouraged. The collaboration needs to consider where it is going and how it plans to achieve its goals. Taking the initial time to create a strategic plan will save time in the end and help the collaboration focus on the mission of the organization in a way that is credible and consistent.

When these deliberate strategies are undertaken by all stakeholders throughout the life of the partnership, the outcomes will be great not only for the students but also for the entire community.

About TAPE

The Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE) is a statewide membership association made up of school district, business, non-profit, higher education, Workforce Board and Chamber of Commerce professionals. All representatives of TAPE work on a local, regional or state level to build community support for education through partnerships. These education partnerships have a lasting impact on the youth they serve.

TAPE provides research, publications and valuable training on how your community and school districts can work together to form innovative and sustainable partnerships!

Mission

The mission of the Texas Association of Partners in Education is to provide leadership and expertise for schools, families, businesses and communities to build partnerships that enhance student success. The central purpose of our association is to strengthen student success through volunteer, community and business/school partnerships. We hope to enhance the success of young people in school and prepare them to be responsible citizens who contribute significantly to the economic, civic, and social environments in which they live and work.

History

The Association has a 30 year track record of supporting its members in creating effective partnerships to enhance student success. Originated in 1979 as the Texas School Volunteer Program (TSVP), we served as one of the original 12 affiliates of the National School Volunteer Program (NSVP). In 1992 the name was changed to reflect the diversity of membership and the group was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. A state office was opened in Austin in 1996.



Tape Membership

Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE) exists to serve our members. Our purpose is to educate and promote the partnership profession, to facilitate networking and to help our members become more valuable professionals. Through your involvement with TAPE, not only will you develop and hone your leadership abilities but you will also have the opportunity to make important contacts leading to valued, long-term relationships. Membership in TAPE is a professional benefit to organizations at a valuable price. TAPE provides several resources to support you in your partnership efforts:

Real Change

Make a difference. Join our mission to enhance student success.

Build partnerships by providing leadership and expertise for schools, families, businesses and communities.

Relationships

Network and collaborate at Regional Partnership Planning Forums and Trainings.

Connect with other professionals using the membership directory you receive.

Share experience as part of our members-only online community.

Join your peers in our upcoming professional partner mentoring program.

Recognition

See your name on the TAPE web site and in the TAPE e-newsletter.

Post events and job openings on the TAPE web site and e-newsletter.

Be eligible to receive recognition through our TAPE Education Partnership Awards.

Nominate partners to receive recognition through TAPE Education Partnership Awards.

Rise to Leadership

Write articles and make presentations.

Serve on committees or on the TAPE Board of Directors.

Resources

Stay informed through our training programs including webinars and workshops.

Receive the TAPE e-newsletter.

Access the experts through phone consultation.

Support your case with members-only admittance to the document vault.

Reduced Fees

Register for TAPE conferences and trainings at reduced rates.


Participate in all TAPE webinars at no additional charge.

Enjoy a 20% discount on DeHavilland Associates fall webinar series.

Enjoy a 20% discount on KELL Partners technology consulting services.

Enjoy discounts with SEARCH Institute on products and conferences.

To learn more about membership in TAPE, or to join, visit www.tape.org



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Jacobs Volunteers Are Like Big Brothers and Sisters

Focus On Needs

Increase Student Achievement
Recognized School (TEA)
Science and Writing Skills
Public Support and Confidence in Schools

Partners In Progress

Jacobs Engineering, Houston
Benavidez Elementary School, Houston ISD

Thousands of Jacobs Engineering employees have made a difference at Benavidez Elementary School over the last 17 years. The partnership that began in 1992 with just a small volunteer base to help tutor Benavidez students with special needs has expanded into a comprehensive year-round partnership including: tutoring, classroom speakers, mentoring, pen pals, Junior Achievement, a community garden, and special event volunteers (Fall Festival, Field Day, Science Fair, Family Math Night, and field trip chaperones).

Benavidez, a low-income school with 1,000 students from predominately immigrant populations who speak 30+ languages, has steadfastly earned *Acceptable* or higher Texas Education Agency (TEA) ratings. This is rare for a school with students from such impoverished backgrounds. Thus, volunteering in the classrooms at Benavidez has paid huge dividends in the academic performance of students. Classroom tutors – the backbone of the partnership – work with students individually and in small groups. They establish long-term relationships with the youth and serve as role models to help influence and enhance students’ decision-making skills.


Similarly, volunteers reinforce classroom studies through other types of support. In 2008-09 alone, 70 pen pals provided 63 fourth and fifth grade bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) students the opportunity for much-needed practice in English composition, grammar, spelling and reading comprehension. Fourteen Junior Achievement volunteers taught in 15 classrooms, instructing

approximately 360 students through five to six one-hour sessions with first, third and fifth grade students. The annual book drive provides new and gently used children’s books for the school’s lending library and 50 classrooms.

Jacobs, along with other volunteers, built the Benavidez Community Garden and Wildscape. The garden, pond and wildscape are unique teaching resources, and the garden is a source of produce for families of participating students. Volunteers help in all phases of the gardening. As one of the district’s oldest and most viable partnerships, Jacobs also provides financial assistance to Benavidez (Holiday Toy & Clothes Drive, Holiday Food Drive, Recycling, Stocks, Special Collections and the Jacobs Foundation). Jacobs volunteers have used their human and financial resources to raise \$250,000 to meet the needs of Benavidez since the school opened its doors in 1992.

Teachers were helped by the extra pairs of eyes, ears and hands of Jacobs volunteers. The financial donation of \$16,581 by 979 “stockholders” and an additional \$15,404 in 2008-09 helped buy teaching materials that helped the entire school.

Evolving into a year-round partnership has been an unexpected positive impact. This was due to the dedication and vision of Jacobs’ coordinator. No one could have imagined that the same coordinator would still be leading the partnership 17 years after it began. The coordinator, who has worked with five principals, recruits volunteers for the regular school year and the summer program. Books for the annual book drive are collected during summer months.



At the beginning of the school year, mock Benavidez stock is sold to finance educational materials, supplies and equipment for Benavidez.

Jacobs' academic assistance component of the partnership can be evaluated on the basis of TEA ratings for Benavidez. The trend of *Acceptable* and higher TEA ratings attests that mentors, tutors, pen pals, and the lending library have helped student achievement. In 2008, the school received an *Unacceptable* rating, but after a year with tremendous support from Jacobs and the hard work of excellent teachers, the 2009 TEA rating improved to *Recognized*. In addition, student knowledge accrued from the practical experience of having hands-on learning in the pond, garden and wildscape improved the Science Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores of fifth

grade students from 46 in 2007 to 67 in 2008 and to 82 in 2009. The TAKS writing scores for fourth grade Spanish-speaking students were 89 in 2007, 94 in 2008 and 95 in 2009, due to teachers' lessons and pen pals' help.

The Jacobs partnership supports Houston ISD improvement goals: Increase Student Achievement and Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools.

Two critical factors of the Jacobs-Benavidez partnership should be considered by people interested in replication: having a capable and dedicated coordinator working closely with the principal(s) over time to match resources with the school's changing needs and including numerous ways to become involved. During this 17-year partnership there has always been something for everyone to do.

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MJB Wood Group Mentors Motivate Students

Focus On Needs

Reading and Math Skills

Partners In Progress

MJB Wood Group, Inc., Irving

John Haley Elementary School, Irving ISD

MJB Wood Group Inc., a local small business, and John Haley Elementary have become a close “family” since they became partners more than two years ago. Volunteers from MJB Wood Group Inc. quickly developed a great rapport with students and staff.


Employees come to the school on a weekly basis to mentor students in reading and math. They work with English-speaking and bilingual students struggling with reading. Although they predominantly work with first and second grade students, at different times they have also taken on mentoring older students who need positive role models in their lives.

The MJB Wood group does more than mentoring at the school. Since they became partners, they have collected toys, food and clothing items for families needing assistance during the holiday season. When school copy paper was in short supply, the MJB Wood Group collected donations from their employees and supplied 60 cases of copy paper. In reward for their donation the employees were allowed to wear jeans to work. In addition to supporting students and their families, the group helps faculty and staff. For example, the group has given monthly awards of gift certificates to staff who were nominated by the Parent Teacher Association Board (PTA). One day during Teacher Appreciation Week, they provided lunch for faculty and staff. During the school field day, some MJB Wood Group employees supported PE staff by volunteering to be in charge of activity stations.

Students have made tremendous growth in their reading levels. At the end of year, the struggling readers have

made enough growth in their reading levels to be considered *On Level*. The volunteers have become very popular with the students and classes they work with each week. Students work hard on improving their reading because they want to impress their mentors with their growth in reading, and in some classes, their ability to speak better English. Students in the bilingual program look forward to getting extra practice with their English in the areas of reading and speaking. The students are motivated to practice their English on their own because they want the volunteer in their class to be proud of their improvements. Working with volunteers has helped students overcome their shyness when speaking the English language, because they are excited and motivated to improve their ability.

The partnership is evaluated by evidence of increased reading and math skills. A variety of tests are used, including Woodcock Munioz Scores, Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)/Tejas Lee and Developmental Reading Assessment/ Evaluación del Desarrollo de Lectura (DRA/EDL) Reading Levels. Another indicator of progress is the number of Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) and Accelerated Math Instruction (AMI) students from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. The two programs are for students who are below grade level or struggling in the areas of reading and/or math. Those students receive extra small group instruction time with the classroom teacher and a person outside the classroom. This outside instruction is part of the total support MJB Wood Group provides the school.



There are numerous examples of success and progress achieved through the support of the MJB Wood Group. For example one bilingual student progressed from a *Below Average* Reading level of 2, to reading *On Level* at 14 by the end of the year. There are also numerous examples of classrooms being positively impacted. In one such class there were 8 students identified for support through AMI; by the end of the year only three students still needed AMI support. These are both examples of how impactful MJB's volunteer work has been and how much it has benefited the students and staff.

Replicating the partnership between MJB Wood Group Inc. and John Haley would not be difficult in other

campuses or districts. What makes this partnership work so well is that volunteers from MJB Wood Group Inc. are eager, excited and dedicated to volunteering with students. MJB has dedicated a coordinator to ensure the success of all its programs and ensure regular effective communications between the school and MJB employees. The Coordinator from MJB Wood Group demonstrates a positive example by organizing fund raisers, gathering volunteers and donating his time, and he serves as an outstanding role model not only for his team, but also for the students and school staff.

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Students Learn the Connection Between Science and Jobs

Focus On Needs

Math and Science Skills

Meet or Exceed State Standards in Core Areas

TEA Recognized Campus Status in Science

Increase in Community Partnerships

Partners In Progress

Rolls-Royce Energy Systems (OSyS), Inc., Houston

Optimized Systems & Solutions, Houston

Blue Ridge Elementary School, Fort Bend ISD

Rolls-Royce Energy Systems, Inc. (Rolls-Royce) and Optimized Systems & Solutions (OSyS, formerly Data Systems & Solutions), were looking for ways to have a positive impact on the community. They wanted to “adopt” a Title I campus that was making academic strides and would benefit from additional assistance. Blue Ridge Elementary School needed a business partner to help spark students’ interest in science and math. The organizations formed a well-fitting partnership since the very nature of Rolls-Royce and OSyS business supports reinforcement of math and science concepts.

Rolls-Royce and OSyS provide numerous levels of support to Blue Ridge Elementary students and teachers. Employees from both companies assist the school as mentors and volunteers for school-wide programs. The companies also make monetary and in-kind donations to the school.

To help Blue Ridge Elementary students and staff prepare for the start of school, employees from Rolls-Royce and OSyS donated their time and resources toward several back-to-school initiatives. In 2008, they helped with landscaping; assisted with classroom setup and other staff needs; provided “welcome” bags for teachers; decorated hallways; and hosted a back-to-school breakfast on the first day of school.


As the relationship between Rolls-Royce and OSyS volunteers and Blue Ridge staff strengthened, business support for the school increased. Representatives from the company have provided support in areas where funding was not available as well as in academic areas of need. They have

given equipment, school supplies and office furniture. They also have given funds for field trips, Science Days, Saturday tutorials and the school’s bilingual program. Rolls-Royce and OSyS employees volunteer their time at the school, serving as guest readers in the school’s Readers are Leaders program and as science fair judges. The volunteers even create unique fundraisers to help the school; for example, a tailgate party during lunch at their worksite.

Two years ago, Blue Ridge missed achievement of Texas Education Agency (TEA) *Recognized* status in science by two points. Rolls-Royce and OSyS employees stepped in to help. They met with the campus science specialist to develop hands-on science activities aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Additionally, the students toured the Rolls-Royce Houston Service Center and the OSyS Houston facility that repairs power turbines and compressors for the oil and gas industry. The company also engineers and packages compression and power generation units. During the field trip, students toured the facilities and participated in various science experiments including an egg drop, making a rocket and participating in a balloon race. They discussed real-world applications of math and science with Rolls-Royce and OSyS employees. From this field trip they gained a better appreciation of science and various jobs in the field, and they learned to recognize the correlation between math and science.

During the 2008-09 school year, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) science scores at Blue Ridge



Elementary increased by 13 points from (73 to 86). As a result, Blue Ridge Elementary attained a *Recognized* rating by the TEA which was a campus goal. Student and staff morale has improved, given the school's accomplishments.

As a result of their local and global community involvement efforts, the Rolls-Royce Energy Systems and OSyS Houston offices were honored by their corporate offices and presented the 2009 America's Community

Project Award and 2009 Global Community Partnership Award, respectively.

It is possible to replicate this type of program on other campuses. The success of the Blue Ridge, Rolls-Royce and OSyS partnership lies in the strong relationship between campus staff and the company's committed employees. They see the difference their efforts have made at Blue Ridge and are motivated to do more.

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Verizon Mentoring Builds Academic Success and Sense of Community

Focus On Needs

Completion Rate

Encouragement toward Post Secondary Education

Partners In Progress

Verizon Hispanic Support Organization, Irving

MacArthur High School, Irving ISD

The partnership between MacArthur High School and the Verizon Hispanic Support Organization began about six years ago. Irving ISD strongly encourages and supports academic partnerships with local corporations to strengthen schools. The Verizon headquarters in Irving is not quite a mile from the school, so it seemed like a natural match. The Hispanic Support Organization at the Verizon headquarters approached MacArthur about forming an academic partnership focused on improving student performance and behavior and on promoting post-secondary education options for the students.

All the Verizon mentors have earned their bachelor's degrees; some have sent themselves back to college in a non-traditional manner. Over the past ten years Irving has become more diverse. The partnership with Verizon was an excellent opportunity to create a program to support the academic success of MacArthur High School's Hispanic students.


Students attend bi-monthly meetings with their mentors. Different topics are discussed, such as health and wellness, scholarship and financial aid information, choosing the right college or program, setting career goals and communicating effectively. Often homework is assigned, such as composing a college essay or preparing for a college interview.

Students in the program are nominated for participation by their teachers, counselors or principal. The criteria for this program are wide in scope. Students must be Hispanic and show academic promise. They may be currently

underperforming in the classroom, yet exhibit tremendous potential. Some teachers may see that these students simply need more adult interaction. These students are chosen simply because they need more direction and focus.

Mentors are devoted to their students and communicate often with them via phone and email. The students also love to receive text messages from their mentors. Currently, more than 44 students and six mentors participate in the program. Meeting times are alternated so that students never miss the same class twice in a month. Because of the incredible relationships formed through this partnership the students feel that they have another person in their lives who helps keep them accountable. Students report that they are working harder than before they were involved in the program. Their grade point averages typically improve throughout the year, and many seniors receive more scholarships than they would have previously.

This program has had a critical unexpected outcome: a community has developed on campus. These students are part of something that many are competing to be involved in. There is a sense of pride in being involved in this little organization, which has become a "family." The mentors are excited about celebrating the successes of the students. The mentors get very connected to their students and are often overwhelmed with the circumstances many of them face daily. The first few meetings are difficult for mentors because they want to rescue these kids from their environments. They are indeed rescuing them by giving them hope and an example of success.



The partnership is evaluated annually at the district level to determine whether the program should continue. This is determined by the number of students involved in the program and the yearly retention levels. The Verizon mentoring program is incorporated into the Campus Improvement Plan to help raise the completion rate on campus and to encourage students to pursue a post-secondary education.

This program could be easily replicated at other campuses if their districts have corporations able and willing to provide enthusiastic and dedicated mentors. The strength of this mentoring program is directly related to the commitment level of Verizon mentors demonstrated throughout the years. The most important statistic of this partnership is that in 2008-09, 100% of the participating seniors graduated from high school.

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Partnership Helps Students Establish Career Paths

Focus On Needs

Fostering a Partnership with the Community
Increase the Number of Industry Certifications

Partners In Progress

CVS Pharmacy, Fort Bend
Fort Bend ISD

In 2004, Fort Bend ISD's (FBISD) Health Science Technology Department approached several businesses including local hospitals, pharmacies and other facilities to start a pharmacy technician certification program. The school district needed a corporate sponsor to allow students to do internships to complete their course of study while they prepared to take state certification exams. CVS came to the aid of the students. Both CVS and FBISD's Health Science Technology Department had specific shared objectives, including knowledge in the field of health care and the promotion of personal and community health. Each could further those objectives on a larger scale and more effectively through the creation of a partnership.


Once students successfully complete the curriculum and training offered by the district, in their junior year of high school they are allowed to participate in a paid-internship with CVS. Students who are interested in certification as a pharmacy technician participate in a 4-day-a-week, two-year internship at CVS Pharmacy. CVS intern students are required to comply with all laws – local, state and federal. They also must comply with Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO) requirements, as well as state and national professional guidelines. At the end of the intern's twelfth grade year and upon successful completion of a six-month course, at the age of 18, pharmacy interns are allowed to take the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) exam. Students in their junior year of high school are able to train in preparation for the next year.

The partnership provides many benefits, including hands-on experience for students, mentoring opportunities for pharmacists, employment opportunities and funding for scholarships. It also provides continuing education for interns and pharmacy technicians who want to complete a six-year pharmacy program.

The first two students in the pharmacy technician program are a testament to the partnership's success. One student is entering her last year of pharmacy school; the other is completing her senior year at UT Health Science Center and is pursuing a nursing degree. Both are still employed as pharmacy technicians at CVS.

Almost all students who have completed the pharmacy internship program at CVS have received scholarships from the company and/or part- or full-time jobs within the company. As a result of their experiences as CVS interns, many students have indicated that they work part-time at CVS as pharmacy technicians while they complete the education requirements to become pharmacists. With their certification, students are able to start an entry level job in their field of study making a starting salary ranging from \$12-\$17 per hour. Additionally, as employees, they can take advantage of large corporate insurance coverage and have the benefit of corporate tuition reimbursement.

The program has had an unexpected impact on the district. Due to the high pay and benefits, some parents of students have requested assistance from the district's Health Science Technology Department in their quest to obtain pharmacy technician certifications for themselves. Some



have successfully completed external pharmacy technician programs. This not only meets the needs of the family unit, but the community as well. Educating parents provides a stronger foundation and clear examples for students to follow in their college careers.

Since its inception, the FBISD pharmacy technician certification program has provided a foundation for future pharmacy technician students. With its rigorous curriculum, the program has grown from two students who expressed interest in and applied for the program in 2005 to over 40 applicants this year. Over the course of four years, 103 students applied for the pharmacy technician program but, to date, only 35 have been accepted due to the high academic and professional standards needed to complete the college curriculum. Of the 35 students who have participated in the program, 100% have passed the pharmacy technician certification boards. Sixteen of the students who have passed the PTCB are still employed as pharmacy technicians with CVS; half of these students were accepted into pharmacy school and are still employed by CVS.

This partnership supports the Campus Improvement Goal 2, by fostering a partnership with the community to support students and the school system. Objective 1.10 of the District Strategic Plan – Increase the number of industry certifications earned by Career and Technology Education Students – is also supported by the partnership.

The program can be replicated quite easily, if campuses are allowed to certify students as pharmacy technicians. Although there are a number of companies at which students can pursue a pharmacy technician internship, because of liability issues, many are not willing to allow students to engage in hands-on activities, such as compounding, in a commercial pharmacy setting. The leadership at CVS realizes their investment placed in students today have far reaching impact on future success. They are in essence training future long-term employees – future pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and acclimating them to the CVS corporate philosophy and the real world.

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Students Get a Window into the World of Finance

Focus On Needs

3 R's: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships

Math, Science and English Skills

Partners In Progress

Educators Credit Union, Waco

A.J. Moore Academy (Magnet School), Waco ISD

A.J. Moore's Academy of Finance is a rigorous four-year program that includes coursework in Business Support Systems, Recordkeeping, Accounting 1 & 2, Principles of Marketing, Banking & Financial Systems and International Finance. Educators Credit Union (ECU) has offered its expertise to staff and students over the last eight years serving in an advisory capacity and reviewing course curriculum. They also provide speakers and mentors to the students to enhance workforce development.

The guiding tenets of A.J. Moore Academy have always been the 3 Rs: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships, adopted from the International Center for Leadership Education (ICLE). The school has contributed relationship building and rigorous work, but Educators Credit Union has provided the third link, relevance. ECU has been instrumental in providing internship and job shadowing experiences. They are represented on the A.J. Moore's Business Advisory Board and have lent a helping hand in educating students via curriculum workbooks, guest speakers and other financial literacy material.

Educators Credit Union has been a relentless partner in offering on-the-job experiences to A.J. Moore students. Each year, juniors spend one day shadowing employees to become more familiar with the world of work and to gain a better understanding of how to be successful in the professional world. They also offer paid summer internships to help students understand how to better identify the skills needed in the areas of math, science and English. The partnership has given students the desire to do better in

these areas because they have been able to relate them to career opportunities.

Educators Credit Union has helped fund the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) *Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)* locally. This has been beneficial to the community. Through the VITA program, eleventh and twelfth grade students become certified tax preparers. The students then assist community members in completing their electronic income tax returns. Because of the financial help given by Educators Credit Union, students were able to prepare 1,719 returns that generated Earned Income Tax Credit of \$957,000, Child Tax Credit of \$482,000 and refunds of \$2,833,000. For the third consecutive year, the IRS placed A. J. Moore Academy in the top 5% of all VITA programs in the Dallas Territory. This program has given students another career opportunity and provided a way to serve the community.

This program supports the campus and district goal of relating what is learned in the classroom to the workplace. The students are required to write a detailed report on their experience and give a presentation on what they learned. teachers and the A.J. Moore Business Advisory Board then evaluate the reports to determine the success of the program.

This partnership that provides students the opportunity to relate classroom learning to the workplace could be replicated on other campuses with other financial institutions or businesses. It's a very simple concept, but one that is very beneficial to the student's academic success.



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Houston Collaborative Supports Workforce Readiness

Focus On Needs

Increase Student Achievement
Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools
Career Readiness

Partners In Progress

Houston ISD
Greater Houston Partnership Energy Workforce Collaborative

The Energy Collaborative Workforce Committee (ECWC) of the Greater Houston Partnership Energy Collaborative (GHP) brought together industry, education, economic development and community partners to strengthen the talent pipeline for current and future energy workforce needs. The ECWC concentrates on increasing student interest and awareness of math, science and technical careers in energy. The ECWC has strengthened and supported workforce-related projects in Houston ISD (HISD).

The *Science and Engineering Fair of Houston (SEFH)* is a competition for middle and high school students. Ranked as the largest regional science fair in the country, the SEFH has been challenged with organizational, financial and facilitation issues. In 2009, the 50-year anniversary of the event, members of the ECWF stepped in to help. They formed steering committees to organize and promote the event, solicit funding and enhance the program. The ECWF also helped institute a new aspect of the event: corporate and organizational booths for students to learn about the energy industry and career opportunities. With 1,343 student entries from 140 schools, hundreds of judges and volunteers were needed. The ECWF recruited more than enough volunteers for a successful event.


Houston A+ Challenge's *Teacher Externship* program allows K-12 teachers to spend one week at an organization or industry, preparing them to bring real-world connections and context into their classroom. In 2009, 204 area teachers went back to their classrooms with knowledge on careers, skill requirements in industry and examples of the relevance

of subject matter in the real world. That year, the externship program benefited an estimated 25,500 students. Companies/organizations affiliated with the Energy Collaborative Workforce Committee sponsored approximately 34% of the teacher externs in 2009.

Houston: Energy City of the Future Competition is the culminating event of a several months-long after-school project organized by the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment (CASE), a division of the Harris County Department of Education. As part of the project, middle and high school students work in teams of four to design plans for Houston's energy use in the year 2050. In 2009, ECWF members participated in the program for the second year. They served as judges for the competition, lending real-world advice on energy sources and accompanying careers. Twenty-two teams competed in the final program, which represented a 69% increase over 2008.

GeoFORCE Houston originated in South Texas and expanded into HISD in 2008. It is a summer program for outstanding students in grades 8 through 11. The purpose of the program is to inspire the next generation of geoscientists and foster increased diversity in the U.S. workforce. Two ECWF member companies, Exxon Mobil and Shell, are founding sponsors for the *GeoFORCE Houston* initiative. In 2009, 239 district students were involved in the program. Students participate on geologic field trips to locations such as the Grand Canyon.

EnergyVenture Camps are one-week day camps for students in grades eight through eleven. The camps are focused on the energy and petrochemical industries as well as



science, technology, math and engineering. The curriculum includes hands-on activities, chemistry experiments and team-building exercises. The 18 camps, which were held at San Jacinto and Lee college campuses, served over 290 students, with the majority of students coming from HISD high schools. ECWF members provided funding and guest speakers on technical careers for the camps.

Energy Academies are in three HISD high schools – Milby, Lamar and Westside. Established in the 2008-09 school year, they were developed by the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA). The academies have grown to serve 590 students in the Houston area. Sponsorship and involvement from the ECWF have helped increase the presence of the energy industry in the classroom. ECWF members have served as speakers and mentors for students. They also serve on the Industry Advisory Board and provide financial and in-kind support.

All of the FCFW sponsored programs are required to establish program metrics, which are discussed at quarterly meetings.

The GHP Energy Collaborative Workforce Committee is an excellent example of partnership in action. By setting aside individual company interests, the collaborative has shown that industry, education and community partners can come together to build the pool of talent for the area. Their joint efforts result in a greater impact on student achievement and teacher content knowledge. A similar collaborative could be formed for other growing Texas industries, such as aerospace, maritime and health care. The collaborative can be replicated by focusing efforts on one objective and selecting programs that are easy to implement, cost effective and support the partnership objectives. In part, due to the support and publicity received through the collaborative, several programs are being replicated in other areas.

Houston A+ Challenge's *Teacher Externship* program has been recognized nationally as a best practice program. Resulting curriculum developed by the participating teachers is made available to all. The Harris County Department of Education is exploring the possibility of expanding the Energy City of the Future program to nationwide competition. After participating in the ECWF meetings, representatives from EnCana Corporation are initiating plans for EnergyVenture camps in North Louisiana. A new energy academy was opened in Fort Worth in 2009. In addition, several other schools have inquired about the process of forming energy academies.

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Partnership Enables Careers in Oil and Gas

Focus On Needs

Math and Science Skills

Cooperation between Industry and Education

Partners In Progress

Independent Petroleum Association of America, Houston

Houston ISD

The Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) selected Milby High School as the site to launch its first academy in 2007. Two years later, The Academy for Petroleum Exploration and Production Technology at Milby High School has had access to a wealth of resources including Shell Oil, Society of Petroleum Engineers, Halliburton, Schlumberger, Oceaneering International, Houston Community College Northeast, the City of Houston and the University of Houston. This collaboration helped in the development of a career and instructional program designed to familiarize students with a multitude of career opportunities in the oil and gas industry. Based on a rigorous math and science curriculum, this initiative helps build the strong foundation necessary for college and workforce skills needed in the industry.

IPAA staff and participants have the ability to mobilize staff, industry representatives and community members to work together to achieve a common goal. Because of IPAA's generosity and commitment to education, students from the Milby learning community – living in the oil and gas capital of the world – have the opportunity to participate in this global industry.

The project goal is to provide students with an opportunity to continue their education beyond public school by encouraging high school completion, using the oil and gas exploration industry as a vehicle to facilitate student success in a recognizable industry. During their junior and senior years, successful students will have internship and externship opportunities that will help them build better

relationships with industry representatives and mentors while they are still in high school.

IPAA is an outstanding business partner and an excellent role model for other businesses wishing to develop much needed bridges between public education and industry. IPAA has made a financial commitment of over \$200,000 to fund teacher and student training initiatives that support the Milby High School endeavor. Teachers received additional training from both Rice University and The University of Texas to enhance their teaching skills in the areas of math and science. Two computer labs were also donated to support the \$27 million software used for real-time drilling at Halliburton for use at Milby High School.

In 2008, two new academies were added to the Houston ISD at Lamar and Westside High Schools.

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Mentoring Toward a Brighter Future

Focus On Needs

Math, Science and Writing TAKS Scores

Prepare to Dream Initiative

Partners In Progress

Mustang Engineering, L.P., Houston

Watkins Middle School, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

In Watkins Middle School 59% of students are *Economically Disadvantaged* and 55% of them are at risk of dropping out of high-school, not attending trade school or college. Thanks to Mustang Engineering, L.P. – Houston (Mustang), Watkins students have mentors to encourage them and to explore future post-secondary options that they may not have otherwise considered. All of Watkins students have school supplies and new classroom equipment to advance their learning in science and math because of Mustang’s support.

Watkins Middle School was proud to be adopted by Mustang’s Founders’ Legacy Program 3 years ago. Through an initial \$20,000 donation followed by \$10,000 donations the past two years Mustang and its employees have committed to Watkins students’ overall academic and personal success.


Monetary contributions have been used to strengthen math and science areas by providing and upgrading essential teaching tools to support academic achievement for all grade levels. Donated school supplies from Mustang assist economically disadvantaged students with resources to participate in their own academic achievement and boost their morale.

To encourage students participation in fine arts, Mustang invited the Watkins Choir to sing at their children’s Christmas party. Watkins art students also submitted their personal drawings focusing on health and safety to be included in Mustang’s yearly calendar.

To support students’ personal achievements, employees mentor at risk students. The mentoring program includes personal tutoring, creating a personal achievement plan and assisting students overcome obstacles that may hinder their opportunity to learn. The mentors have effectively established meaningful connections with the students that they have been paired with.

Mustang employees have adopted six families for the winter holidays, assisting them with paying bills and purchasing gifts for the children. This process also led to the employment of a mother who happened to have the skill set needed to fill a position at Mustang. Additionally, a Mustang employee found out that one of the families adopted the previous year was experiencing additional financial difficulties, and Mustang immediately contacted the family and is currently assisting them in getting back on their feet.

Other assistance included collecting \$400 from Mustang employees to place in Watkins’ lunch accounts for students needing assistance. They also supported Watkins teacher/student mentoring events with team-building activities from their professional staff and meals for teachers. Mustang beautified the grounds at Watkins with grass seeds, plants and flowers; donated 180 new dictionaries to support reading/language arts classes and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) writing students; and impacted approximately 160 students through building a “jacket structure” for Engineering Day. Mustang’s



Young Guns (Engineers entering into the business world) worked with science students, helping them experience hands-on science modeling.

Mustang's partnership can be replicated in other districts as long as there are strong support staff members on both sides of the partnership. Many large corporations like Mustang have a community outreach department to work with local schools.

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College Credits for Business-Minded Students

Focus On Needs

Increase in TAKS Scores

College Credit in High School

Partners In Progress

Stripes, Susser Holdings Corporation, Corpus Christi

Moody High School, Corpus Christi ISD

Moody High School and Stripes participate in a partnership under the auspices of the Corpus Christi ISD and Susser Holdings Corporation, DBA Stripes. Stripes is the retail arm of the Susser Holdings Corporation which operates more than 600 retail convenience stores and over 270 Laredo Taco Company and Country Cookin' restaurants in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. Moody's new Business and Professional Academy's Stripes Business Program was patterned after the school's original Academy, Health Science.

Stripes provides mock interviews and career fairs; a soft drink/coffee station in the faculty lounge; and recognition of faculty and student achievement.

Stripes trained Moody's Business and Professional Academy faculty members in a two-week, 40-hour-per-week summer externship. The training addressed the integrated knowledge and skills needed to manage a store.

Students have opportunities to work in outlets throughout the Coastal Bend area through their career preparation course, beginning in their junior year. The career preparation course requires students to work at least 15 hours per week and offers the opportunity for students to earn three credits toward graduation.

The program includes activities to develop students into Susser employees. This includes presenting information about employment; recruiting students through Career Fairs and Open House Night; mentoring students; participating in the Curriculum Committee and Business and Professional


Academy Advisory Committee; reviewing student employment applications; supervising student training; and co-teaching with Moody faculty in the classroom.

Moody's Business and Professional Academy, Stripes, and Del Mar College will partner to develop a career preparation course, designed to expose Moody students to real-life work experiences and encourage them to explore and assess career possibilities in the business world. They can earn Del Mar college credit while still in high school.

It is not the purpose of this program to train Moody students to be convenience store workers. It is the purpose of this program to allow high school students to explore, develop and excel in a variety of business operations. This program offers Moody students an opportunity to continue their educational and professional development by providing a clearly defined pathway toward becoming full-time Stripes employees and/or Del Mar students upon high school graduation.

The Stripes Business Program has 13 students in its initial year, with expectations of increasing TAKS scores and improving student achievement, just as the Health Science Academy has done over the past ten years. The Smaller Learning Community philosophy states that when we find relevance to where the students' interests lie, they naturally do better on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), as well as in their classroom.

Through meetings with Stripes personnel and through tours in their headquarters, students have realized that what



they see in a convenience store is a result of many people working together, not just the employees in the store. All of the “Stripes” students are eager to learn more about business and how they can develop their own dreams of becoming entrepreneurs.

This program promotes the goal behind Moody’s motto “The Moody Way – College Bound.” The students will graduate with up to 21 college credit hours and be prepared to enter the Del Mar College Marketing Associates degree, which Stripes promotes with their associates.

The prospects are bright for this program since it is modeled after the successful partnership of Spohn Health Systems with Moody’s Health Science Academy. Over the last ten years, Spohn Health Systems has gained almost 50 employees that remain loyal to their business. Many of those who have graduated from Moody’s Health Science Academy are pursuing their doctorate degrees and will someday come back to Corpus Christi to practice because of this successful partnership.

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A Great Habit Can Start with One Little Quarter

Focus On Needs

Personal Financial Responsibility
2nd grade math TEKS (2.3)
Rigor, Relevance and Relationships

Partners In Progress

TexasOne Community Credit Union, Houston
Holbrook Elementary, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, Houston

What will the economic headlines look like in 25 years? They could be better if others follow the lead of TexasOne Community Credit Union (TexasOne) in teaching personal financial responsibility.

During the 2008-09 school year, TexasOne led *Savings Day for Second Grade*. Given the recent financial crisis, TexasOne saw the value in teaching students about banking, identifying and counting money, saving and the determining the difference between needs and wants. They believed this would have a positive impact on families because students would gain an understanding of the value of money.

Two employee volunteers made a presentation that was fun and informative and gave each second grade student a Savings Card with a quarter. They incorporated second grade math Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) (2.3) into their presentation, which supports the district and school goal of improving student knowledge of math. They also supported the district and school goal of preparing students to be successful, independent, lifelong learners who contribute positively to their families.

This year TexasOne plans to extend Savings Day to additional grade levels. This partnership and program can be easily replicated by campuses partnering with banks or credit unions in their vicinity. Many of them are willing to provide educational programs to schools. TexasOne brought approximately 100 \$5.00 Savings Cards with a quarter in each to get students involved in saving. The only thing provided by Holbrook was the schedule for the presentation.

The savings project is just one example of TexasOne's ongoing community commitment. In the past the credit union has supported a variety of initiatives helping students, families and staff. For example, they have supported a first and second grade reading; tutoring and mentoring program, staff luncheons, meals at Thanksgiving and gifts at Christmas for several of Holbrook's families. In addition, they have sponsored fundraisers for classroom supplies, as well as student supplies and backpacks. They have also given funds for student incentives and contributed to a new playground.

The mentoring program greatly impacted student achievement. At the beginning of the year, three of the six students paired with TexasOne mentors spent considerable time in the office because of behavior concerns. As the year progressed, their referrals to the office became non-existent, as they learned new ways to problem solve. This maximized their time in the classroom.

The TexasOne Community Credit Union/Holbrook partnership can be replicated with a few basic steps. One of the necessary components is a business liaison who has a heart for the partnership and the capability to communicate the needs of the school with his/her organization. In addition, the school should create a needs and wants list, which may serve as a guide for potential business partners to use in helping the school reach its goals. Once these basics are implemented, a partnership can flourish. With both partners working together, student achievement and success will be positively impacted.



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KCBD-TV Gives Education “Star Power”

Focus On Needs

Character Education
Parental Involvement

Partners In Progress

KCBD-TV, Lubbock
Lubbock ISD

KCBD-TV, the local NBC affiliate, partners with Lubbock ISD (LISD) by providing regular airtime for district information and activities, as well as working with students in the annual *U-Can-Share* food drive for the South Plains Food Bank.

At no charge, KCBD provides a three-minute weekly segment *Out and About in LISD* during its morning show. For this segment, the LISD communications director gives a live school district update and brings a pre-produced feature story. The story “packages” are posted to the KCBD web site for parents and schools to access. KCBD also provides free airtime for a monthly 15-minute school district update program *Inside Lubbock Public Schools*, with all content determined by the school district. In addition, the station includes the daily school lunch menu in the morning show.

The airtime provided by KCBD for LISD is valued at more than \$40,000 with a publicity value of more than \$130,000. The benefit to the community is priceless in terms of academic achievement, safety and lifelong learning. KCBD donates its airtime to keep LISD parents informed of school issues and opportunities to be involved in their children’s education. According to a 2001 Gallup Poll, students with involved parents display more academic motivation and commitment to learning after graduation. The same poll concluded that parental involvement is considered the most powerful deterrent to school violence and peer abuse.

Although 70% of Lubbock community members do not have children in the school district, those stakeholders

vote in bond elections and make other decisions that impact the viability of LISD. By keeping community members engaged in the schools through the free programming, KCBD benefits LISD students.

As part of the district’s character education program, LISD and KCBD partner with the local food bank for a massive week-long food drive every December. KCBD uses LISD student representatives to assist in the live telecast during each newscast of the *U-Can-Share* week and recognizes every school for participation in the food drive. The partnership increases participation and provides a real-life opportunity for character education.

Of last year’s total community contribution of \$100,000 and 360,000 pounds of food to the South Plains Food Bank, LISD students donated almost \$6,000 and more than 83,600 pounds of food.

Although it is difficult to quantify what would have happened without this KCBD partnership, it is fair to point out that during this partnership, all LISD bond issues have passed, and the district has maintained a positive community perception, with more than 300 participating members of the LISD Partners in Education program.

The first objective in the District Improvement Plan is “Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.” The district has been well served in meeting this goal through the partnership with KCBD-TV.

This program could easily be replicated in other districts with a generous media partner and district video production capability.



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Fox 26 Building Better Minds

Focus On Needs

Improving Public Support and Confidence in Schools
Creating a Positive District Culture

Partners In Progress

KRIV-TV Fox 26, Houston
Houston ISD

Building Better Minds (BBM) is a program of KRIV-TV Fox 26. BBM is focused on portraying the positive aspect of public education in Houston ISD (HISD). These broadcasters are committed to presenting an accurate and informative depiction of students, administration and events.

Fox 26 BBM helps HISD achieve two of its adopted goals: improving public support and confidence in schools and creating a positive district culture. The district works with BBM daily to discuss positive story ideas.

By going into the schools, BBM is providing positive reinforcement for students, schools and the larger community. The students and schools associated with the BBM stories help to shed a positive light on the featured campus. That positive publicity attracts good teachers and students which can impact student achievement.

An unexpected impact of the BBM program is the publicity value. Each time a positive HISD story is shown on this major media outlet, the district is portrayed to the public in a positive light. The stories are also shared with the HISD Board of Education and community members to make them aware of programs and events in the schools.

The Fox 26 BBM program is evaluated daily. HISD uses a video monitoring service to assess its daily television coverage. The service monitors the number of viewers for each feature, the number of stories shown and the monetary value of the air time.

An example of the program's impact is the rollout of the district's *Parent Student Connect* system which allows

parents and students real time access to students' grades. The number of persons registering per day increased dramatically after a story was featured by local media. The increase was as follows: 1,646 parents and students registered on September 28th compared to 2,986 on September 29th after the media coverage.

The Fox 26 BBM initiative has the following charge:

FOX 26 salutes the teachers, volunteers, students and parents who work hard to make the future bright. The visions of HISD and this program are aligned, which helps make this collaborative partnership a success.

Other school districts can replicate the success of this partnership by having dedicated staff to work with the local media, developing relationships with the education reporters in the area and sharing positive stories about the district with the local media.

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Students Take the Lead in Going Green

Focus On Needs

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

Graduation Rate

Reducing Energy Costs

Partners In Progress

State Farm Insurance, Austin

McNeil High School, Round Rock ISD

Highly diverse Green Club members at McNeil High School are finding their own ways “to go green” and influencing many others along the way. With a State Farm service-learning grant of \$95,568, they are implementing *Green Cell*.

The project consists of multiple strategies to promote environmental awareness and energy conservation. By connecting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning objectives to real-world applications, students are gaining critical knowledge and skills related to the emerging field of green energy. First, the McNeil High Green Club adopted one of McNeil High School’s portable buildings as a solar energy demonstration site. They painted it, are installing solar screens and may install more insulation in an effort to save energy and showcase the district’s first *Green Cell* portable building. The school is partnering with Austin Energy to install solar panels at the school to collect the sun’s energy and educate the community about alternative energy and green technologies. Internet technology will allow students to track solar energy use and carbon off-sets and share them on the web.

A team of students visited the Round Rock ISD (RRISD) Energy Management Department to discuss their project and took a tour of the facility. They learned about the district’s ability to track energy use (and loss) through computer sensors. Students have also interacted with community partners such as State Farm and Austin Energy. As they have researched and planned the project,


students have discussed the most effective ways to reduce energy waste and employ solar technologies. Not only have students gathered data and made decisions, but they have also learned about the real-world challenges in getting things done and how to switch gears in order to achieve success.

Other classes in the school are getting involved and tying in their curriculum to the environmental issues. Media/Technology students are filming the project. Environmental science students are researching the issues. Students are also gaining experience with leadership. They have presented to the RRISD Board of Trustees and spoken at Service Learning Texas’s Summer Institute.

McNeil High students will be educating younger students about the importance of thinking green. They are developing a presentation for after-school programs on elementary and middle school campuses. Members will also demonstrate how solar energy works by using solar kits and getting kids involved in hands-on activities.

The Green Club is inspiring the school district to look at new ways to teach about environmental protection and energy. Students have hosted a meeting with teachers from across the district and are hoping to inspire more teaching about alternative energy and more service-learning. The school district has expressed a strong interest in using the Green Club to further STEM learning for all grades.

The Green Club members and RRISD will continue to share strategies and resources so that other high school students can get involved. Part of the project goal is for



Green Club members to inspire students in other districts to start Green Clubs on their campuses, and give them a Green Club starter kit. They encourage elementary schools to use the *Watt Watchers* curriculum which is free in the State of Texas. The members plan to host a meeting with science teachers on ways that they can include more information about energy conservation and green energy in the school curriculum. They will attempt to collaborate with other schools and be a resource. In addition, the McNeil High

students meet with other high school students from across the state at the annual free Youth Environmental Summit held at Southwestern University in Georgetown where they network and share ideas.

Other districts and campuses could easily follow in the footsteps of the Green Club and pursue similar goals with their own students, while enhancing meaningful learning in science, technology, engineering and math.

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Partnership Raises College Expectations for Lockhart Students

Focus On Needs

Increase in College-Readiness

Increase in College Enrollment

Partners In Progress

Lockhart ISD

Austin Community College, Austin

In recent years, future goals have changed for Lockhart students. College is now an expectation in the community, due in large part to a Lockhart ISD (LISD)-Austin Community College (ACC) partnership. Three programs work simultaneously to ensure that Lockhart high school students have access to college-level career and technical education, dual credit courses and pre-enrollment college services prior to high school graduation.

One of the most successful of these is the *College and Career Preparatory Programs (CCPP)* implemented in 2006. A core feature of the program is that ACC serves as the contractor for LISD's college and career programs and, in particular, the Career and Technology Education (CTE) program. Among the many responsibilities of CCPP are the application for and oversight of the Federal Perkins grant supporting CTE curriculum oversight and teacher professional development to ensure rigor and relevance in all CTE programs. The CTE program enables students to earn credit-in-escrow through the *Tech Prep* program. This credit will count for college credit after one successfully completed semester at ACC. This type of partnership is unique to Lockhart and Austin ISD (AISD).

The *Early College Start (ECS+)* program began in 2001. It was created in Lockhart alongside offerings in other districts. ECS+ is ACC's dual credit program, offering college-level courses to qualified students at the high school level. ACC initiated a unique program in Lockhart called ECS+. New in fall 2009, ECS+ enables a student to complete one full year of college through dual enrollment course offerings at Lockhart High School. ECS+ focuses

on the completion of the core curriculum and has multiple points of entry for juniors and seniors.

Beginning in 2006, the *College Connection* program was established to provide college pre-enrollment services to all high school seniors on the Lockhart High School campus. Seniors graduate with permanent acceptance to ACC; are ready-to-register (having received one-on-one advising); and are knowledgeable about how to pay for college. Upon graduation, seniors receive a lifetime acceptance letter to ACC.

These programs assist students with different academic needs, and each is an important piece of LISD's partnership with ACC. Together, LISD and ACC are increasing the college-going culture in the Lockhart community.

In CCPP/*Tech Prep*, Lockhart has 16 high school courses articulated in eight college program areas. In 2008-09, 1,601 Lockhart students enrolled in CTE, and 424 of them enrolled in articulated classes. In fall 2009, 78 students enrolled at ACC and collected 327 credit hours of articulated credit. The number of students collecting articulated credit at ACC has increased by 236%, from 22 students collecting credit in fall 2007 to 78 students collecting credit in fall 2009.

With respect to ECS and ECS+, 33% of Lockhart High School 2009 graduates received three or more college credits via dual credit and *Tech Prep*. The unduplicated headcount enrollment for ECS+ grew by 14% from 2007-08 to 2008-09. Annual enrollments are expected to grow substantially in 2009-10, as the fall 2009 unduplicated headcounts is 177 students. ACC offered 26 restricted sections on the Lockhart

High School campus during 2008-09. ECS is a powerful tool for post-high school entry to ACC. In 2007-08, 39.7% of ECS students across the ACC service area became traditional students after high school graduation. ECS students also perform better on average than traditional students, showing a 4.1% higher retention rate from fall 2008 to spring 2009. ECS provides exceptional savings for students enrolling in four-year colleges or universities after graduation. In one example, a student attending Texas A&M could save about \$9,064 for 24 hours of college credit tuition and fees, plus two semesters of room and board.

In 2008-09, *College Connection* served 276 seniors in applying to ACC, a rate of 94.2% of the Lockhart High School senior class. Of those students, 247 (84%) completed a college-readiness assessment test (the ASSET) to determine readiness for college under the Texas Success Initiative (TSI). The ASSET test fee of \$29 was waived for each student, for a savings of \$7,163. 50% of those seniors had a face-to-face advising session about college choices and goals.

The LISD-ACC programs serve as benchmarks to model in other areas of the ACC service area. As a result, Austin ISD has adopted a CCPP, and Georgetown ISD has adopted ECS+.

The LISD-ACC high school outreach partnerships are evaluated by (1) number of participating high school students in each program; (2) number of college credit hours transcribed while students are in high school (ECS and ECS+); (3) number of college credit hours earned in high school and claimed at Austin Community College after students have completed one semester at ACC (CCPP/Tech Prep); (4) number of articulated courses (Tech Prep/ECS); (5) number of ACC applications received by Lockhart seniors during the College Connection event; (6) a goal of 100% seniors served (College Connection); and (7) number of students in LISD who attend a postsecondary institution.

These programs support ACC's Master Plan goals to meet the state challenge for "Closing the Gaps," which calls for an increase in postsecondary enrollments by 2015, with added emphasis on increasing enrollments from underserved populations, such as minority students and first-in-family to attend college.

ACC's institutional "Closing the Gaps" goal is to increase student enrollment by 41,243 by the year 2015. In fall 2009, ACC had a 13% enrollment increase from fall 2008, to 40,803. The college's enrollment goals are close to being met in advance of the deadline, in large part due to partnerships such as these with LISD. In fall 2008, enrollments to ACC from LISD increased by 33.3% from fall 2007.

The LISD-ACC partnership programs are replicable between other campuses and districts, providing the infrastructure and dedication are equal in scope to what ACC has experienced with Lockhart. The *College Connection* program is being replicated across the state by grants from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. ECS is a model dual credit program offering ECS+ as an early college model conducted fully on the high school campus. CCPP has been adopted in AISD.

These programs combine to improve the LISD college-going rate from well-below average to average in Texas. In the fall 2006, 63% of Lockhart graduated seniors from 2005-06 did NOT enter higher education in Texas. That number decreased to 54% by fall 2008, which is equivalent to the average rate in Texas.

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Tutoring and Mentoring by City Employees Pays Off in AISD

Focus On Needs

English Language Proficiency
Improvement in Academic Achievement
TEA Campus Recognition

Partners In Progress

City of Austin
Austin ISD

Created in April 2002 by an Austin City Council Resolution, the *City of Austin (COA) Mentor and Tutor Program* was designed to encourage City employees to participate in the Austin ISD (AISD) as mentors and tutors with a focus on low performing schools. The City allows employees up to two hours of paid time during the employee's 40-hour work week to participate as a mentor or tutor in an AISD-approved program.

In spring 2007, the City took steps to increase participation. The City worked with Austin Partners in Education (APIE), a non-profit organization, to administer the program, conduct background checks and provide training. The individual schools were responsible for establishing their mentor needs and a sign-in procedure that allowed APIE to monitor volunteer participation records.

The city committed staff to the oversight and management of the partnership. The Director of Libraries was assigned to serve as the corporate sponsor, and two Community Liaisons for Austin Energy were assigned to coordinate City-wide management of the program. In addition, each of the City's 36 departments designated at least one employee to act as a volunteer coordinator.

During fall 2008, City volunteer coordinators conducted over 60 presentations, recruited almost 450 City volunteers and provided all executive support to department volunteer coordinators. Additionally, they communicated weekly with APIE to ensure accurate tracking and training of all new volunteers. Of the nearly 450 volunteers recruited from over 8,881 eligible City employees, about 230 participated as tutors, and 215 employees participated

as mentors. These volunteers represented about 5% of the eligible City workforce.

The tutors work with students in a variety of subjects and grade levels. The majority of tutoring programs offered are based on a model of small group tutoring where one tutor works with three to four students using supplied materials that support the school's curriculum.

Volunteers are also given the opportunity to support other organizations through this program. In 2008, 15 City employees volunteered in the Help One Student To Succeed (*HOSTS*) program at Metz Elementary, and at least 20 volunteers worked within the Austin Public Library's after-school program, *VICTORY Tutorial*. Volunteers are also given the opportunity to participate with Junior Achievement. City employees who choose to participate in these programs during working hours are eligible for all benefits received by those who volunteer with APIE's programs.

Great success was evident through the multiple programs offered through APIE. One of the greatest achievements during 2008-09 year was in *College Readiness*, a two-tiered program, offering both classroom presentations and small group tutoring to high school juniors and seniors. Nearly 30 City volunteers participated in one or both of these components to help students who are eligible for graduation meet the stringent TSI/College Readiness standards. Through this program, over 320 seniors achieved the TSI standard, exceeding APIE's goal by 100 students.

The *Partners in Math (PIM)* program, to which the City provided 40 volunteers, helps middle school students

develop confidence and an interest in math. Of the nearly 340 students served by this program during the 2008-09 school year, the total number of students passing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) was 7% higher than those not involved in PIM.

Ten City volunteers participated in the *Partners in Literature (PIL)* program, which operates in middle and high schools, providing tutoring in reading comprehension. While no data are available, teachers report that students served by this program are more attentive and participatory in class.

The *Partners in Reading (PIR)* program, which had 68 City volunteers, operates in second grade classrooms, focusing on improving reading fluency through word games and timed readings.

PIR's sister program, *Compañeros en Lectura*, provides similar fluency tutoring to bilingual students. The City provided 38 tutors to this program during 2008-09. In both programs, students made 7% more improvement in reading levels between the beginning and end of the school year than comparison students.

The City provided seven volunteers to APIE's middle school *Partners in Technology (PIT)* program to work with students on rebuilding computers and troubleshooting hardware and software issues. Additionally, over 208 City volunteers actively participated as mentors in two programs during 2008-09. APIE offers a school-based mentoring program that allows volunteers to meet with a student once a week during lunch. This program, the *Seedling's Promise*, targets children of incarcerated parents for mentoring. The *HOSTS* program and its volunteers are included as one reason the Academic Rating of Metz Elementary has gone from *Acceptable* to *Recognized*.

The *COA Mentor and Tutor Program* supports several AISD goals including improving student achievement by increasing TAKS scores and decreasing performance gaps. It helps campuses achieve *Recognized* or *Exemplary* status. Additionally, it supports improving students' preparation for college and career by increasing the number of students meeting Higher Education Readiness Component and testing at or above the criterion for SAT/ACT exams.

Mentoring and tutoring support decreasing dropout rates and increasing attendance rates. The City volunteers also support increasing English Language Proficiency.

The *COA Mentor and Tutor Program* may be unique in its approval of paid administrative leave to accommodate participation in such a partnership with a school district; however, an organization of any size could replicate this partnership. A significant investment of time must be spent in establishing the partnership and preparing co-sponsorship documentation with the school district such as, memoranda of understanding between participating organizations. To ensure success, one or two people should be assigned to serve as the main marketing and recruitment liaisons. It is also import to adopt internal procedures defining how the program will be executed and monitored.

APIE has established a similar program for state employees to participate as mentors and tutors based on the City of Austin's model.

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Loving Lamkin – It’s about Making It Your School through Service

Focus On Needs

Relationship Building

Skill Development for At-Promise Students

Partners In Progress

Cypress Bible Church, Cypress

Lamkin Elementary School, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Loving Lamkin volunteers from Cypress Bible Church do whatever it takes to build relationships with students and staff that support a nurturing, safe and relevant learning and teaching environment. Sometimes they are like cheerleaders, standing by a student to encourage academic success. Sometimes they spoil teachers with goodies, coffee, school supplies for the classroom, or encouraging notes. Whether they are mentoring, tutoring, reading in the classroom, or attending a school function, it is obvious that they have made Lamkin Elementary “their school.”


Loving Lamkin was created to be a program that positively changed the school climate by building community relationships, cultivating a good reputation and helping staff and students in tangible and practical ways. *Loving Lamkin* serves and enriches the school by recruiting mentors, tutors, volunteers, and readers for classrooms from Cypress Bible Church. With only five volunteers in its first year, 2008-09, *Loving Lamkin* has grown to over 18 mentors and volunteers. This represents a 200% increase in volunteer hours, mentors, support, and resources for Lamkin since the inception of this partnership.

Many participants of *Loving Lamkin* mentor and/or volunteer several days a week. For example, during the first week of school, *Loving Lamkin* volunteers supported the school’s program, *Leopard Express*, and endured the heat as bus buddies to ensure that students arrived home safely. They also support the staff with refreshments and tangibles, such as school and office supplies, making them feel appreciated and cared for.

Members have also provided support by adopting families during the holiday season by supplying gifts for those in need. Since its inception, *Loving Lamkin* has made the school a better place to learn and grow. Lamkin became an *Exemplary* rated school this year. This strong example of community outreach has inspired other schools and administrative groups to approach their communities with renewed expectations. A local private school will begin volunteering at Lamkin this year after learning more about *Loving Lamkin’s* successes. A neighboring church began gathering members to become mentors at Lamkin and will begin working as a community mentor partner during the upcoming school year. This example of commitment is a model for how a community can make an immediate and lasting difference.

Lamkin Elementary’s Campus Improvement Plan for 2009-10 begins with District Goal 1A, “The district’s schools will maintain an engaging environment conducive to student learning and employee effectiveness.” *Loving Lamkin* supports this area of focus 100% and maintains the expectation of a high quality education that has been a Cypress-Fairbanks tradition for decades.

This program could be easily replicated in other districts with churches or civic groups who want to help students realize their full potential. It only requires a handful of mentors and tutors to begin. One key strategy for success in the *Loving Lamkin* project was getting buy-in from school staff. Input from staff is instrumental in all stages of planning and implementation. Having a small budget for



start-up expenses is helpful to cover costs for recruitment/ marketing materials, postage, kick-off activities at the school and refreshments for meetings.

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16 Years and Counting: Hurst Church-Bellaire Elementary Still Going

Focus On Needs

Academic Achievement

40 Developmental Assets

Guidance Principles of Exceptional Character

Partners In Progress

First United Methodist Church of Hurst

Bellaire Elementary School, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD

Having enough school supplies for all students on the first day of class is not a problem at Bellaire Elementary in Hurst. Before the first bell rings, about two truck loads of supplies worth about \$7,500 are distributed to classrooms, ready for students in need. The supplies for 300 children are just one manifestation of the partnership of First United Methodist Church (FUMC) of Hurst and Bellaire Elementary School, which began in 1994.

FUMC congregation members of *Volunteers in Public Schools* mentor, tutor and read to students weekly throughout the school year. The mentoring program is a critical component of the Bellaire after school tutoring program. These dedicated helpers range from youth to senior citizens and ministers to lay persons. Many FUMC volunteers have become like extended family to students from single-parent and/or low-income households.

Annually, the congregation sponsors clothing drives to furnish new clothes for many students, Thanksgiving food baskets for more than 100 families, a Christmas shopping spree for 50 children and a coat drive during the winter months.


Monetary donations to Bellaire cover field trip fees for economically disadvantaged students, toiletries, school supplies, shoes, emergency clothing for the school clinic and various other items. Volunteers also supply nutritionally appropriate snacks for school holiday parties and wrapped books for the holiday book exchange. Church members give Bellaire staff members a boost with notes of appreciation in faculty mailboxes and treats in the staff lunch room.

One of the year's highlights is the holiday shopping spree sponsored by the church's youth department. More than 50 Bellaire students participate. Each child is given between \$50 and \$100 to spend at Target on gifts for their family members. The children are picked up at their apartment complex office and taken to the store to shop. Students wrap gifts at the church and enjoy a pizza party before they are returned to their apartments.

Much of Bellaire's improvement in student achievement can be attributed to the partnership with FUMC. The tutoring assistance is absolutely invaluable. FUMC members who have mentored various Bellaire students have helped improve their self-esteem, which has enhanced their academic performance.

Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD works to incorporate the 40 Developmental Assets® into school and community life. Every time FUMC members donate school supplies, food, or clothing, or provide tutoring and mentoring, they demonstrate all the asset categories – support, empowerment, boundaries/expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

The district's "Guiding Principles of Exceptional Character" cover respect, responsibility, honesty, compassion, courage, perseverance, self-control, commitment, initiative and cooperation. The counselors and schools work together to develop these qualities in all children to help make them good citizens. The volunteers at FUMC certainly help model positive characteristics and provide the perfect



climate to help students learn about positive relationships, which help them make positive decisions.

The FUMC Hurst-Bellaire Elementary School partnership could be replicated in a school district with a large church interested in assisting a local school. The scope of such a partnership would be determined by interests, needs and resources. A new partnership that starts small can grow.

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Boosting Student Self-Esteem One Shirt and Skirt at a Time

Focus On Needs

Self-Esteem

Partners In Progress

H-E-B ISD Council of PTAs

Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD

Maybe kids should not care about whether they are dressed like other students in their school, but they do. Wise teachers have always understood that situation. That's why teachers began The Clothes Closet in 1987 in the Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD (HEB ISD).

When the operation outgrew the physical closet where the items were stored, the school district provided space at one of its schools. The job eventually became unmanageable for the teachers, so the Council of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was asked to run the operation. HEB ISD provided room in the FEW Center and a portable building to house the Clothes Closet.

Over the years, the PTA has worked with the school district to verify the need of students through school nurses at each of the 27 campuses. The Closet allows students two visits per school year. They may select up to five tops/shirts and five bottoms/pants, shorts and skirts. With the use of donated funds, the PTA Clothes Closet also furnishes five pairs each of new underwear and socks and one pair of new tennis shoes. Boys receive two new white t-shirts and girls get a new bra, if available. Girls can also select a dress, if available. School supplies, ranging from binders and backpacks to rulers and crayons, are also available to students who have been referred to the Closet.

An appointment via a phone call must be made after the Closet receives the written request from the school

nurse. The paperwork uses the student ID, which ensures student privacy and gives the Closet a tracking number.


Typically the Closet serves routine needs; however, with board approval, service is also available for victims of natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes, and fire.

With additional support from community donations, the Closet has been able to supply students clothing for special occasions. For example, they can get prom or banquet dresses, or even a senior cap and gown sets, when they are available.

The Closet is operated by PTA volunteers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The hours were recently changed to include one evening each week. Donated items that are not acceptable per the school dress code are passed on to other nonprofit organizations in the HEB area. Volunteers monitor the items available and assess what additional items may need to be purchased.

Receiving gently used clothes, new undergarments and new shoes greatly increases students' self-esteem. Children can concentrate on schoolwork without the fear of being teased about how they are dressed or feeling self-conscious about their clothing or shoes.

All partners have been surprised by the sharp increase in needs of students and their families; the number served through the Closet has grown steadily each year. With the help of HEB ISD administration, a payroll deduction program was put in place to help raise funds for the purchase



of shoes, socks and underwear. Now, the PTA is working with the school district to involve all the other clothing distribution centers to coordinate efforts to serve families more efficiently.

There is no official evaluation process for this partnership; however the number of students is tracked from year to year, as are statistics on donations. When there is a need for clothing and/or shoes, and the items are available, the Closet will serve the student.

This program can be, and has been, replicated in many school districts in Texas and throughout the country. The operation within each district varies with respect to who is responsible for the management and oversight of the program and how items are distributed, but the results are the same: increased self-esteem for students and increased success for the district.

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Career Readiness Starts at Home with Early Reading

Focus On Needs

Early Literacy
College Readiness
Career Readiness

Partners In Progress

Houston Area Urban League Partnership
Houston ISD

Securing a good career for young men and women starts at home when they are barely out of the toddler stage. Houston Area Urban League and Houston ISD (HISD) partnership programs are geared towards shepherding boys and girls from pre-school through school and college and on to the workplace.

The Houston Area Urban League has provided services for thousands of students and families for more than 41 years. Recently, the Urban League adopted and implemented Scholastic Book's *Read and Rise* program, providing ongoing training on early literacy and the importance of reading to 25 HISD elementary schools. Twenty-five thousand parents and caregivers have received *Read and Rise* parent guides and training.

The Scholastic training curriculum is research-based and comes with parental guides, magazines and books. The free magazines and books help build or enhance home libraries. Four hours of parent training is provided in English and Spanish. The curriculum provides parents with learning tools, hand-on tips, techniques and routines to assist their children. The skills that parents learn can be transferred to helping their children with school work as they get older. Learning how to work with their children at home helps parents support school learning and also instills the importance of education.

In addition to training, all participating families and children received more than 250,000 Scholastic Books and *Read and Rise* magazines; with each family receiving up to seven free Scholastic Books and three magazines to


build or enhance their home library. Eight-thousand of the participating families have been tracked over a three-year period, and the outcomes have shown great results. Over the three years, these 8,000 families have received quarterly evaluations, one additional Scholastic Book at a six-month level system and one additional *Read and Rise* magazine each quarter.

Three schools (Atherton, Bastian and Woodson) received a *Read and Rise* Family Training Night, Scholastic books and \$1,000 for their school literacy programs in 2008-09.

The *Read and Rise* Circles have drawn more than 300 parents to their children's school on several nights and helped build relationships with parents and teachers.

This program has helped move participating schools with an *Unacceptable* Texas Education Agency rating to *Acceptable* and *Exemplary*.

Another successful program has been the *National Scholarship and Service Fund for Negro Students (NSSF) College Fair*, co-hosted by the League. This program works with high schools throughout the district to connect their students with local, state and national colleges and universities. In addition, the League sponsors the *National Urban League Incentive to Excel and Succeed* youth leadership chapters for high school students, which focus on helping students graduate from high school and college. In six of the last nine years, the League has been recognized for this outstanding program and named National Urban League Chapter-of-the-Year.



The *Read and Rise* Circle outcomes have been measured by pre- and post- evaluations and through the League's data tracking system. Each family received quarterly evaluations and reading alerts. The evaluation tracks parent/caregiver success with child progress as its baseline. Evaluations are entered into the database and calculated to show the percentages of the program's successes. The 2008-09 evaluations have shown that 78% of the parent/caregivers responding have increased their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, compared to 76% the year before. Key concepts include early milestones of reading; building block of reading; key principles of oral language development; importance of role-playing together; building routines for reading and learning at home; how to question for learning; how to build a plan and implement a parent-teacher conference; how to

identify a struggling reader; and how to build a work station at home for reading. Children have benefited 1 to 1.5 grade points. Parents/caregivers reported that *Read and Rise* was the major factor in developing their children's skills at home to help improve work at school.

Finally, of the HISD students who have participated in the *National Urban League Incentive to Excel and Succeed* youth leadership program, 128 have received college scholarships and graduated from college. Some of these students were the first ones in their family to graduate from high school, and many were the first ones to go to and graduate from college.

The partnership supports HISD's goals of improving student achievement, keeping students in school and improving public support and confidence in schools.

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Basketball Tournament Brings More than Money to the Pasadena ISD

Focus On Needs

Grants for Innovative Programs
Community Service by Students

Partners In Progress

Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Pasadena ISD

What started as a project to help the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce stay connected with Pasadena ISD (PISD) and keep contributing money to its educational projects has turned into a hot spot for college basketball scouts. No one at the Chamber of Commerce would have imagined this would be the outcome when they started the *Texas Invitation Basketball Tournament* in 2003.

Incorporated in 1992, the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation was formed to provide education grants, with an emphasis on educational programs and activities that either have no funding or are underfunded by normal operating budgets. These grants allow teachers to provide innovative instruction that increases student achievement and expands community involvement.

In 2003, a full-time director for the foundation was hired and the foundation began operating as a part of PISD. Not wanting to completely remove itself from the foundation, the Chamber of Commerce created the *Texas Invitation Basketball Tournament* as a way of continuing its support and funding for the foundation. The tournament would be for PISD and other area high school teams with the games played at all the districts high schools and the main gym.

In big football country, getting the community involved in the basketball tournament was not easy. The first year, the tournament featured 48 boys teams and 16 girls teams. Word about the Texas Invitational quickly spread, and soon teams from all over Texas and Louisiana were asking to participate. Seeing the advantage of including these out-


of-town teams – an influx of business for restaurants, hotels, and stores – organizers agreed to add them.

In 2006, the McDonald's Corporation came on board as an underwriter for the tournament, and it became known as the *McDonald's Texas Invitational Basketball Tournament*. The tournament is run solely by community volunteers and sponsored by local businesses and industries. It has rapidly become one of the most respected and sought-after tournaments in the nation, hosting the top 48 boys and 32 girls teams. Scouts from major colleges look forward to the tournament, as it gives them one location to see top teams and players.

Tournament proceeds have had a significant funding impact. In 2003, the tournament contributed \$25,000 to the Education Foundation. In 2008, the tournament's goal was to contribute \$125,000 and that goal was met. The 2009, goal was \$150,000, however based on sponsor contribution levels, organizers expected to surpass the goal.

Over the past six years, the Education Foundation has issued more than \$695,000 in grants, of which \$385,000 was contributed by the Texas Invitational. These grants were awarded to educators who implemented creative curriculum that is not covered by standard budgets. One program that received funding was for the study of biodiesel energy, and another was on technology that helps to improve students' skills in reading and math. Other grants helped the arts and music programs and updated library research resources.

The program is evaluated by the size of the contribution the tournament provides the foundation as well as the



value of grants the foundation is able to award to teachers and schools.

The partnership supports both campus and district goals by funding grants to teachers for innovative programs. All grants must be approved by the district to ascertain that the purpose of the grant aligns with the campus/district goals. The partnership also gives students the opportunity

to perform community service, one of the district goals, by acting as hosts for the visiting teams.

Other districts could replicate the program with other sports or with other “levels” of athletics (1-A, 2-A, etc.). The vital piece of this partnership is that it is a partnership. The district, city, foundation, or chamber could not be successful in this project on its own.

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Saturday Volunteers Improve Skills and Confidence

Focus On Needs

Improvement of Math and Science Scores

Partners In Progress

Satya Sai Organization, Houston
Elkins High School, Fort Bend ISD

When the alarm goes off on Saturday mornings, a group of Satya Sai members don't hit the snooze button. They head to Elkins High School in Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) to help students improve their math and science skills.

Members of the Temple Satya Sai Organization sought to expand their existing tutoring program from Houston ISD to surrounding school districts. Elkins High School in FBISD became their obvious choice. It didn't hurt that Renu Bhargava, the Biology I Honors and Biology II Honors/Advanced Placement teacher at Elkins High School, is a member of the Temple. Program coordinators from the Temple met with the campus principal and the *Saturday Math & Science Workshop* began in January 2008.

About 20-22 individuals tutor 80-90 students every Saturday morning for two hours. They use textbooks, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) books and handouts prepared by the teachers. These Saturday morning treks have paid off for these volunteers and their students. Math and science scores have risen dramatically.

Students in ninth through twelfth grade who have been selected based on TAKS scores are invited to attend the Saturday workshop. Invitation letters are sent to the parents of the students outlining the workshop and the goals, which ensures the parents' support. Attendance is not mandatory, but the morale among those who do attend has improved. The students are divided into groups, spending one hour in a science laboratory and the second hour receiving math

tutoring. Working in small groups allows them to address specific problems and provides valuable practice that builds confidence needed to master TAKS objectives.

By the beginning of February 2008, Bhargava was receiving emails from teachers commenting on the difference they saw in the students who attended the workshop. As these students became more confident in these subjects, their self-esteem grew and test scores improved. The number of discipline referrals among the students in this program decreased.

The program began by providing tutoring in Integrated Physics and Chemistry, biology, algebra and geometry and, due to its initial success, has expanded to include chemistry and TAKS support for math and science. This year the tutors will start using the Gizmo program to hold virtual laboratories.

This partnership program could be replicated on other campuses and in other districts. There was little cost involved in starting the program. Once the program was approved by the principal and background checks of volunteers had been completed, the program began. One of the challenges new programs should be prepared to face is attendance; not every student comes every Saturday. There are at least 10% of students absent, with new students coming in every Saturday, so students may not always be paired with the same volunteer.



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Waco School Kids “Go Buggy” Over Raising their Scores

Focus On Needs

Reading Comprehension and Math Scores

Partners In Progress

Waco Kiwanis Club

Doris Miller Elementary School, Waco ISD

With so many games, gadgets and gimmicks in the world today, it’s not easy to capture kids’ imagination, but the Waco Kiwanis members’ *Bringing Up Grades (BUG) Club* did. Participation in the club stimulated competition and inspired students to bring up their scores.

The Waco Kiwanis Club started the BUG program to help students improve in academic areas of weaknesses identified through benchmark assessments. The program addressed reading comprehension and math scores. Adopt-a-School partners of the campus provided some mentoring and tutoring.

Every grade level was eligible for the BUG Club. If a student’s grade point improved, he or she became a member of the BUG Club. Membership brought with it a BUG Club t-shirt and a chance to win a new bicycle. Members also received a certificate from the Kiwanis Club at a special awards ceremony. The school staff and administration supported the club by wearing the t-shirts and decorating the schools with BUG Club posters and signs.

The BUG program encouraged students to work harder and become more serious about learning. It also gave them a sense of pride about their grades. They wanted to be a member of the club not just for the shirt, but also to show they improved their grades.

The BUG Club served two of the most economically disadvantaged elementary schools in the district: Doris Miller Elementary School and J.H. Hines Elementary School. Through the BUG club, teachers and students

worked together to achieve the common goal of improving reading and math scores.

Because every student had a chance to be a winner with the BUG Club, not just the honor students, the school experienced more parental involvement on campus. Parents participated in the awards ceremony and encouraged the children to keep improving their grades. This was an unexpected positive impact this program had on the schools.

Through the BUG program, Doris Miller Elementary School experienced dramatic results at all participating grade levels. As a result of the program, 127 second to fifth grade students showed improvements in their report cards in one or more academic areas during the first semester.

The following is a comparison of Doris Miller’s Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores from 2008-09 in reading, one of the focus areas, for the BUG Club.

2008: Reading: All - 64%, AA - 61%, Ec Dis - 66%

2009: Reading: All - 72%, AA - 71%, Ec Dis - 73%

The campus TAKS scores in reading increased from 64% to 72%; reading for African-American students increased from 61% to 71%; and reading for *Economically Disadvantaged* students increased from 66% to 73%.

This program could be easily replicated because it is based on the student’s grades from grading period to grading period. Kiwanis Clubs in other districts might be interested in sponsoring the program.



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MOCAH Collaborates with Houston ISD for Art Enrichment

Focus On Needs

Visual Art TEKS

Fine Arts Instruction

Campus and Community Beautification

Community and Parental Engagement

Service Learning Experiences

Diverse Funding Partners for School-Based Art Programs

Partners In Progress

Museum of Cultural Arts Public Art Program, Houston
Houston ISD

Since the organization was co-founded by artists Rhonda and Reginald Adams in 1999, the Museum of Cultural Arts Houston (MOCAH) has provided over 12,500 Houston ISD (HISD) students and 30 schools with unique and innovative experiences with arts-in-education projects and programs. These activities have included 16 permanent art installations through the *School Park Program (SPARK)*, and dozens of murals and art-residencies on elementary, middle and high school campuses across the district. Examples of how MOCAH partners with HISD schools are collaborations with the High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (HSLECJ) and Phillis Wheatley High School.

“Fruits of the Fifth Ward,” a mural depicting 21 notable individuals who are natives of the Fifth Ward or have made significant contributions to the Fifth Ward, was created by 40 Phillis Wheatley High School students. The project began after the History Channel gave MOCAH a \$10,000 Save Our History grant to create a mural depicting the history and heritage of the Fifth Ward, one of Houston’s oldest neighborhoods. With an additional \$10,000 grant from the Mayor’s Office, MOCAH leveraged local businesses, alumni groups and additional community support into the project which resulted in a 16-foot high x 65-foot long ceramic tile mosaic mural with a total cost of \$150,000. The mural is located directly adjacent to Crawford Elementary School.


In the spring of 2009, at least 24 students from the High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

accrued more than 60 community service hours as they worked alongside Reginald Adams, the Executive Director of MOCAH, to design and produce a 300 square-foot tile mosaic mural for their school’s SPARK park.

MOCAH has spent more than \$2 million in cash and in-kind resources to provide arts-in-education projects and civic art commissions throughout Houston, providing over 90 professional and emerging artists with opportunities to work directly with local youth in the public school system.

MOCAH projects and programs address a key cultural void within the inner city and urban communities; the lack of exposure and access to the arts. Despite the growing number of museums, galleries and arts spaces in Houston, large populations of children and their families have limited exposure to these creative and cultural destinations. With this understanding, MOCAH projects and programs function as outreach tools to serve youth within HISD public schools and underserved communities. MOCAH projects are created to engage youth in acts of creative self-expression that teach about issues facing the community; provide hands-on experience in the design and production of public art; strengthen relationships between students, artists, community and local businesses; and result in cultural and artistic landmarks that beautify their campus and communities.

Student participants discover a profound sense of community when they become active players in the visual enhancement of their own environment. Upon completion of a MOCAH project, students have a deeper connection



to their peers, campus and community. Their connection to the community reinforces their self-esteem and self-worth, which ultimately gives them greater confidence in the classroom.

“Fruits of Fifth Ward,” the mosaic mural project developed in partnership with Phillis Wheatley High School, was selected as a finalist in the 2006 national Save Our History Awards program. Four students from Wheatley High School were given a four-night all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C to participate in the national awards program at the Smithsonian Institute. The project placed a national spotlight on how students, a school district, community organizations, local businesses and a municipality can collaborate successfully in support of arts-in-education projects.

Evaluation of MOCAH projects and programs is based on the following criteria: number of youth served; contact hours between student and professional artist; academic, attendance and behavioral performance of the student pre-

and post-involvement in MOCAH projects and programs; community and parental engagement; funding goals; and ability to meet timelines.

Campus and district goals supported by MOCAH projects and programs include: alignment with visual art Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); provision of fine arts instruction to in-school, after-school and enrichment programs; campus and community beautification; community and parental engagement; service learning experiences for students; and establishment of diverse funding partners for school-based art programs.

MOCAH projects and programs are easily modified to meet the site-specific needs of any particular campus within or outside the district. MOCAH has ten years of experience in building partnerships between schools, youth, businesses and local residents. These strategic alliances have resulted in more than 95 public art projects in schools and the community throughout Houston.

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ASB Programs Mix Fun with Learning at Lubbock Schools

Focus On Needs

Positive Behavioral Expectations
Goal-Setting and Career Choices
Personal Financial Responsibility

Partners In Progress

American State Bank, Lubbock
Lubbock ISD

The American State Bank (ASB) puts a little fun and a lot of time and resources into Lubbock schools. ASB has partnerships at James Whiteside Elementary, O.L. Slaton Middle School and Cavazos Middle School. The bank also has a district-wide partnership with all 37 elementary schools and four high schools called *ASB Run for the Team*. The bank helps students develop personal independence through education and knowledge.


One partnership program between ASB and LISD is the *Savings Association*. In the program, students have the opportunity to get hands-on work experience in the world of banking. ASB works with parent volunteers to interview students who are interested in being “tellers” or “personal bankers” for the *Savings Association* at their school. Students complete a math quiz and answer several questions during the interview process. From the interviews, ASB chooses the “bank employees.” ASB then provides a small “gift” to the new account holders. The student money is held in an account that is set up under the school’s name, and the parent volunteers keep records of each child’s money. Once students reach the agreed upon amount, which is normally \$20-\$25, they are advised that they can come into the bank to have their money moved into an account in their name.

At the end of the year, ASB hosts a luncheon for the student bankers, the ASB bankers, parent volunteers, teacher volunteers and principals. At the lunch the student bankers go on a bank tour/scavenger hunt to the different departments to learn more about how banks work.

ASB also works with the *Positive Behavior Support Program (PBS)* in LISD. The bank contributes funds and time to the program. The PBS program establishes safe and effective school environments that enhance academic achievement by improving student behavior through teaching and encouraging positive school-wide behavioral expectations in a consistent manner.

ASB Run for the Team is a district-wide program that pairs athletics with academics. According to research, students begin to take ownership of their school work and actions in school in third grade. This prompted the bank to give third-grade students a chance to be rewarded for determining their future goals. One third-grader at each school is named a *Run for the Team* winner. All third-grade classes participate, and determine a class winner through an essay contest, art contest or another creative way to express their future goals. The bank takes the student winner to the feeder high school’s football game. Bank employees attend the game and discuss with students their future plans. Students stay on the sidelines during the game and interact with cheerleaders, bank members, teachers, coaches and other high school representatives. The bank hosts a banquet for third-grade winners and their feeder high schools, where each student winner receives a \$100 savings bond.

The programs promoted by ABS have a tremendous impact on the students’ thought processes about their future plans. ASB employees encourage students to pursue their interests and strive to see each child’s individual strengths. One of the unique aspects of the ASB partnership programs



is the well-rounded student support it provides. In all ASB partnership programs, students, teachers, principals and family members are included at every event. This presents students with a unified front of positive reinforcement.

The amount of money donated and the number of volunteer hours given to each school is invaluable. Principals and teachers will testify to the boost in confidence and realization of goals that the programs offer LISD students. Not only do their programs benefit the students by helping them set career goals and increasing their financial responsibility, but they also give high school students opportunities to work as interns, and learn about banking and money policies.

ASB provides all these programs at no cost to the district. Bank employees spend time in schools encouraging and providing guidance to students through these partnerships, and they ask for nothing in return. The company has specific staff to run the *ASB Run for the Team* program. Although many other employees are involved, the company pays for this employee to take ownership of the district-

wide program. ASB employees enjoy participating in the programs, and the district, teachers and principals appreciate their enthusiasm.

Since ASB began the *ASB Run for the Team* program and the *Savings Association* at schools, students are more aware of how handling and saving money affects their future and influences career choices.

School districts or banking institutions wishing to replicate ASB partnership activities should: (1) have the initial program communication come from the superintendent to the wide-ranging school personnel involved (elementary teachers, high school principals and coaches and athletic department staff); (2) hire or recruit existing bank staff to oversee the program; (3) develop collateral pieces; and (4) develop and allocate budget for staff, banquet cost, student football jerseys, savings bonds, and other items.

Communication between business, school staff and students' families is crucial for success. Partnering businesses should be committed for a number of years for maximum benefit to students.

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Partnership Aims To Put ALL Students on Pathway to College

Focus On Needs

Create College-Going Culture

Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies Skills

Partners In Progress

Bastrop Education Foundation, Bastrop

Bastrop ISD

Imagine a college-going culture that starts in the school district, infiltrates every grade level in every school and spreads throughout the community. This is exactly what is happening in Bastrop ISD (BISD). With their partners, the Bastrop Education Foundation (BEF) and the Texas Pioneer Foundation in San Marcos, BISD is implementing a *P-16 Partnership for Post-Secondary Readiness, Participation & Success for ALL Students*. In their eyes, success will be achieved when all students have the skills to succeed after high school, in college or other post-secondary workforce training. Working toward this outcome means helping students and their families overcome barriers to higher education.

The partnership began in the spring of 2007 after a BISD high school student survey taken in the spring of 2006 showed that only 46% of students agreed that they were given opportunities to learn about college and career opportunities at school. These numbers were a direct reflection of the district's college-going rates for this graduating class. Data provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) show that only 38.7% of Bastrop students in the class of 2006 were enrolled in higher educational institutions in Texas, compared with almost 50% at the state level.

There was no coordinated P-16 plan in Bastrop to ensure that all students understood and engaged in college readiness activities at each level of their education in the BISD system. Each school level acted independently, leaving


students and parents unsure about what was expected from one grade to the next.

The BEF has given tremendous support throughout all stages of implementing the BISD P-16 Partnership including: providing funding to support the initiative; helping write a grant to obtain additional funding to conduct the college readiness activities; having BEF members serve on a local P-16 council to write goals and objectives for the partnership; and volunteering in many activities conducted in 2007-08, the first year of implementation. BEF also reached out to the community for participation and support.

Most data collected in the 2007-08 year was used as baseline. After year one, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores for all tested grade levels and subjects showed increases in the four content areas: math, writing, science and social studies.

The most unexpected impact after a year of the partnership came from the results of a student survey in the spring of 2008. When asked if they were given opportunities to learn about college and career opportunities at school, 70% of the students agreed, a significant increase from the 46% reported in 2006.

Another surprise was the willingness of campus staff to embrace this partnership through all of the activities completed in year one. With the support of the BEF, the College/Career Center at Bastrop High School was expanded through the addition of staff and volunteers to help students



get information. Additionally, a new center for college and career materials was organized at a middle school located in the far western part of the district.

Activity accelerated during the second year, with another middle school creating a college and career center for students and parents. Middle school and high school students took field trips to area colleges. High school students also learned about college life and admissions processes from college representatives visiting their campus. The elementary and intermediate schools participated in college and career activities during the year including a career day and information about colleges shared in morning announcements and on bulletin boards. A noteworthy collaboration between the BEF and the district is the annual *B.E.S.T. College Night* at the high school. This event attracts over 3,000 parents and students from Bastrop and the surrounding communities of Elgin and Smithville.

BISD was recognized by the Austin Chamber of Commerce and received the ‘Fast Launch’ Award for the significant steps taken to increase the number of students who enroll in higher education. Notable gains within the district include PSAT testing for all freshmen, sophomores and juniors enrolled at Bastrop High School. Additionally through P-16 initiatives and programs, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submission rates increased by 50% in Bastrop’s primary zip code, and the number of college applications submitted by graduating seniors increased from 31% to 51% during the second year of the partnership.

Over the five years of this partnership, evaluation will include data from Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) student achievement, college enrollments, college readiness rates, SAT/ACT/AP/dual enrollment results, completion rates and eighth grade algebra participation and passing rates. Much of the data will not be available until the release of the state AEIS report in December. Some data, including THECB data, will not be available until next summer.

This partnership can be replicated in other districts. First, districts need to recognize the need for such a coordinated effort to promote a college-going culture and the academic achievement to succeed in high school, college and beyond. Partners should work with the district to develop goals and objectives based on student and community needs. It is also crucial for partners to reach out to the community, communicating about activities of the partnership and soliciting support and participation from parents and other residents.

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At-Risk Students Get Insights and Training in Legal Profession

Focus On Needs

Reduce Potential Student Drop Out
College and Career Readiness Preparation

Partners In Progress

Houston Bar Association (HBA)
Communities In Schools (CIS), Houston

Career possibilities come alive for many at-risk students who have never been outside their own communities as they learn and work alongside professional staff in the downtown Houston legal community through the *Houston Bar Association (HBA)/Communities In Schools Houston (CIS) Summer Legal Internship Program*.


The Houston Bar Association (HBA), a non-profit professional association of attorneys, partnered with Communities In Schools Houston (CIS) during the spring of 2009 to create the program. It gives high school students an opportunity to participate in an eight-week paid student internship with Houston area law firms, governmental and non-profit legal entities. The partnership with the HBA is new to CIS and has revitalized a 19-year-old summer legal internship that was known as the *CIS/John Eikenberg Summer Legal Internship Program*.

Placements have included the South Texas College of Law; Harris County District Clerk's office; Centerpoint Energy; U.S. District-Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod's Office; District Attorney's Office-Juvenile Division; Lone Star Legal Aid; Houston Volunteer Lawyer's Program; and prestigious law firms like Baker Botts; Gibbs & Bruns; Abrams, Scott & Bickley; Law Office of Rusty Hardin; Andrews Kurth; Fulbright & Jaworski; Baker Hostetler; Bracewell & Guiliani; Epstein, Wickliff & Hall; Gooden & Gooden; Jones Day; King and Spalding; Symser, Kaplan, and Veselka; Susman Godfrey; and Vinson & Elkins.

Students learn about the legal profession while working in a professional environment. In addition to learning marketable skills, all student participants attend weekly seminars about the legal profession with a common thread in each presentation to graduate from high school, research college opportunities and absorb the professional skills gained through the internship program. The internship includes visiting with federal and county judges along with the Harris County Sheriff. Participants also prepare for a mock trial and observe a moot court.

The impact of the HBA/CIS partnership is dramatic. The partnership allowed for the summer legal internship program to expand from 12 students to 48 students, and to create an additional 36 positions. With the increase in student participation and internship placements, the youth involved have the opportunity to learn about a variety of professional legal settings.

Students who had never had a job – nearly 95% of participants – were trained in clerical duties such as filing and typing. Other transferable and marketable skills that were mastered included using computers to electronically file legal depositions and other documents, using customer service skills and answering the phones. They also learned professional etiquette including appropriate attire and how to handle conflict in the workplace. Learning these skills transformed these young people from high school students to marketable career-ready young adults.



The partnership leveraged federal funds and law firm sponsorships to give the students a paid internship. This allowed the students to earn a pay check for entry level positions. A student survey indicated 31 students (65%) used these funds to support their families. Others indicated that the money would be used for future college expenses.

From the first year of this partnership, four lives were forever changed when a law firm/governmental entity offered these students employment. They could work to support their families, save money for college, and/or use the funds to support their college enrollment. The four firms that hired the students were Abrams Scott & Bickley, Baker Hostetler, Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, and the Harris County District Attorney's Office-Juvenile Division.

Evaluation of the program includes student surveys that assess how students felt about their placement and internship experience. There is also a supervisor evaluation to assess the program and the student's placement.

The program supported two goals in the Houston community and Houston ISD: to reduce the potential for a student dropping out of school and to prepare students to be college and career ready.

The *HBA/CIS Summer Legal Internship Program* supported these goals by giving students exposure to professional environments that reinforced the idea that with a high school diploma you can achieve stable employment even at an entry level position. Further, it illustrated what can be achieved if a student graduated from high school, attended college and even continued with graduate studies (like a law degree).

In many instances, students drop out because they need to support their families. This partnership allowed students to earn money to support their families, reducing stress for students and the risk of them dropping out to support their loved ones.

Students were mentored by staff and lawyers at the firms/governmental and non-profit legal entities, and were encouraged to prepare and attend college. Their mentors reinforced the importance of financial aid/scholarship research and career readiness. One firm (Andrews & Kurth) expressed an interest in paying for college preparation classes for its student intern.

This partnership program will continue to expand. It can be replicated by any non-profit organization, school district, or community that has a Bar Association or a group of lawyers interested in helping young people learn about the legal profession. Paid internships can be supported by the law firms or funding can be secured through entities like a workforce development organization.

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San Marcos Addresses Education Equity and Closing the Gaps

Focus On Needs

Culture of High Expectations for All Students

Career and Technical Education Programs for Workforce Readiness

Partners In Progress

Seeking Opportunities, Achieving Results (SOAR)

San Marcos CISD

Education and community leaders in San Marcos were determined to avoid the common problem of duplicating efforts or resources when they created *Seeking Opportunities, Achieving Results (SOAR)*. They wanted to address educational equity and closing the gaps for all students as efficiently as possible.

SOAR is a collaboration of San Marcos educational partners including Texas State University, San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District (SMCISD), the San Marcos Education Foundation, the San Marcos Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce. More entities are joining SOAR as the group works together to encourage further collaboration among all educational partners in San Marcos.


SOAR began as a PreK-16 partnership between most of the educational entities of the community. The intent was to pool resources, ideas and talents to use them for the greatest advantage for education. Since most of the partners were members of the Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, using that group as a starting point was a natural choice. The SOAR mission is to provide opportunities to increase educational equity and academic achievement by closing the gaps for all San Marcos school children through community engagement. The group has sought to increase early childhood readiness among San Marcos residents and close the gaps in academic achievement by increasing college access and workforce development.

Initiatives include: partnering with Success by Six, AVANCE, and Early Childhood Summits; beginning the

San Marcos Educational Fair; producing career awareness posters; developing educational messages for the San Marcos community; beginning deliberative dialogues for first-generation college students and families; developing college access projects; and participating with the Early Childhood Infrastructure San Marcos & Hays County study. SOAR established a website for better communication.

The SOAR initiatives quickly spread through the community. The first action was printing career-based posters that were distributed in all schools and many community buildings including the public library and youth centers. The intended message was “Education Pays.” SOAR hosted the *First Generation Pre-College Dialogue Series* in Spring 2007 for families that did not have experience with the college application process. It was well attended and was repeated in spring 2008 and 2009, with increasing numbers each year. In addition, SOAR hosted the first annual *Education Fair* (targeting low-income families, but open to all) in 2008, with an overwhelming response. In summer of 2009, SOAR partnered with the United Way of Hays County for the Success by Six initiative, providing over 500 book bags filled with over 1,000 books to low-income, at-risk families with preschool age children. SOAR also produced and paid for an “I Believe in SMCISD” booklet of facts and bragging points about the local school district.

It is difficult to monitor student achievement, but family participation has been outstanding, with numbers growing each year at each event. An unexpected impact of the partnership has been the enthusiastic participation



by local businesses who want to do “their part” for local education, coming out on Saturdays to work and making donations to projects.

Thus far, evaluation of the SOAR partnership has been largely based on increased awareness and participation since 2007. The *First Generation Pre-College Dialogues* have grown significantly each year. At the first *Education Fair* in 2008, the attendance was around 1,200. In October 2009, the attendance was over 2,000. This number was based on a “passport” that attendees received as they entered the room. As the attendees went from booth to booth, their passports were stamped. The passports (with the holders’ name and three survey questions) were dropped in a box for drawings for donated prizes such as bicycles and iPods®.

SOAR has addressed two major goals of the SMCISD: providing a culture of high expectations for all students and preparing students to excel in a changing workplace by providing career and technical education programs. Through the Pre-College Dialogues, “Education Pays” posters, the Education Fair and the book bag and books given to at-risk families of preschoolers, SOAR addressed these goals.

The SOAR partnership can be replicated in communities with a Chamber of Commerce. Having a local community college or university is an additional plus. The challenge is to get all entities to the table to discuss resources and ideas.

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The Texas 100% Campaign Gets Children Connected with Health Care

Focus On Needs

Decrease in Absenteeism

Health of Student

Partners In Progress

Children's Defense Fund – Texas

Houston ISD


The Children's Defense Fund–Texas (CDF–TX) *100% Campaign* was created to address the need to link 1.5 million uninsured children in Texas with health coverage, through an established, safe environment for families and children. It is a partnership with Texas school districts to identify and link eligible uninsured children with the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Children's Medicaid. Of the 1.5 million uninsured children, 850,000 are eligible for, but not enrolled in, CHIP or Medicaid.

In 2002, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) developed a statewide grant to increase enrollment in CHIP and Children's Medicaid by eligible families through the creation of a sustainable outreach initiative to link Texas students with health coverage beyond a three-year grant period. Forty school districts participated, including Houston ISD (HISD) of Harris County, as well as Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, Edinburg, Mission, Mercedes and Edcouch-Elsa ISDs of Hidalgo County in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). The initiative was called insure-a-kid® (iak) Texas Grants for School Outreach. CDF–TX, the grantee for Houston and the RGV, partnered with the Departments of Special Projects, Health and Medical Services, Parental Involvement and related departments of the various school districts to implement the iak project. The projects were successful in both Houston and the RGV.

To complement the original goals of the iak initiative and to further integrate outreach, follow-up, sustainability and project expansion, CDF–TX developed the *100% Campaign*, which was launched first in Houston ISD

in 2007 and continued through 2009. The purpose of the partnership was to systematically link uninsured children to CHIP and Children's Medicaid through schools using the data captured on school enrollment forms. The *100% Campaign* used the health insurance question added by the former iak partnership to school enrollment forms to identify every uninsured child by campus. Using that data, outreach staff would then follow up with the families of uninsured children to link them with affordable health coverage options — CHIP and Medicaid for those who qualify, and Harris County Hospital District, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) or community clinic for those who don't. Individual campuses provided tremendous support to the project by recording automated phone calls to families, publicizing enrollment opportunities on school marquees, hosting health fairs, posting information on school web sites and sending information and applications home to families. Based on the success of the pilot project, CDF–TX had also sought additional funding in 2005 from the Houston Endowment to expand its school-based outreach initiative into the remaining 19 school districts of Harris County, beyond Houston ISD. This initiative reaches a population of more than 500,000 students in Harris County. The *100% Campaign* has attracted interest in several districts statewide.

The CDF–TX *100% Campaign* is in its third year of implementation. Positive impacts on student achievement, attendance and attendance-linked funding for districts are expected. Children without health insurance are 25% more



likely to miss school because of illness. According to a 1996 report of the Texas House of Representatives Committee on Public Health, school districts lose \$4 million per day in funding because of absenteeism.

The *100% Campaign* is evaluated by the following measures: number of campuses who adopted and supported saturation of the *100% Campaign* model; number of uninsured students identified in targeted feeder patterns; and number of uninsured families contacted and linked with a healthcare resource.

HISD is the seventh largest school district in the nation, with a student enrollment of about 200,000. All five regions implemented the *100% Campaign* model, including four hospital partners (St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities, Memorial Hermann Healthcare Systems, Texas Children's Hospital/Health Plan, and the Baylor/Methodist

Community Health Fund) who supported the initiative financially by adopting regions. HISD financially supported the fifth region. More than 220 campuses participated. The campaign identified 23,000 uninsured children through a health insurance question added to school enrollment forms. The campaign distributed information to the families of more than 32,440 children, and the families of 2,926 children were provided direct assistance in applying, renewing or resolving barriers to their CHIP and Children's Medicaid coverage. Nearly 8,500 children did not qualify for CHIP or Medicaid but were linked to alternative health resources such as FQHCs, free and low cost community clinics and the Harris County Hospital District Financial Assistance program.

With appropriate resources, the project could be replicated in other school districts.

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Food 2 Kids Makes Weekends Better for Many Children in Lubbock

Focus On Needs

Student Nutrition

Partners In Progress

Junior League of Lubbock

Lubbock ISD

One day, a member of the Junior League (JL) of Lubbock spotted a young boy in a classroom eating from three lunch boxes. The little boy was eating so fast he did not even stop to look up at the woman. After some investigation, teachers discovered that the child had barely eaten all weekend. With the help of the Junior League member, the school was able to arrange for the family to receive assistance from the South Plains Food Bank.

This prompted further research into the issue of hunger and children. The South Plains Food Bank discovered that one in four children are at risk of going to bed hungry at night. While Lubbock ISD (LISD) provides free or reduced breakfast and lunch during the week to more than 50% of children in the Lubbock area, many of these children have limited or no access to food on the weekend. Partners in Lubbock set out to solve the problem of ensuring that as many children as possible had access to food during the weekends.

In 2006, The Junior League, in association with the South Plains Food Bank and LISD, created *Food 2 Kids (F2K)*, which was modeled after *American's Second Harvest Backpack Program*. Sacks of food are sent home every Friday with children identified as being potentially at high risk for suffering from hunger during the weekend.

F2K initially served five elementary schools within LISD; only four years later it has grown to serve 17 out of the 37 elementary schools throughout LISD. Although items in the sacks vary from week to week, sacks distributed to children may include: peanut butter, crackers, cereal, juice boxes, fruit cup, toaster pastries, trail mix, pudding and

meal-ready spaghetti. All included items have a long shelf life and require little or no preparation.


Although the Junior League of Lubbock sets aside close to \$80,000 to manage the F2K program each year, the League relies heavily on the kindness of volunteers and the Lubbock community to provide monetary donations and supplies to keep the program running.

Children who suffer from chronic hunger often experience illness and exhibit negative or distracting behaviors such as hyperactivity, irritability, anxiety, stress, or withdrawal. They also have difficulty forming friendships and getting along with others. Most important, hungry children have a short attention span, lacking the ability to concentrate and are at risk for repeating a grade in school.

Since the inception of the F2K program, principals and teachers have seen improvement in children who suffer from hunger. Teachers have noticed the students in the program are more alert and active in the classroom. Additionally, teachers have noticed that students are not showing as many signs of hunger, and absences have decreased for participants.

Surprisingly, the Junior League of Lubbock and the South Plains Food Bank are providing the sacks of food completely free to students. As the cost of food and the number of sacks increase, the League and the Food Bank are still able to provide for an ever-growing number of hungry children who attend LISD elementary schools.

Evaluation of the F2K program proves difficult; however, the rise in the number of children needing assistance



for food over the weekend is proof enough that the F2K program has an effect on children. Students receiving sacks of food for the weekend are missing fewer days school and acting more appropriately while in the classroom. Children who come to school well fed are more apt to learn and retain the skills and knowledge taught in the classroom, ultimately leading to higher test scores and greater success.

According to the F2K Coordinator, several other Junior League organizations throughout Texas are hoping to replicate this program in their communities. Other Texas leagues hoping to emulate this program often call upon Lubbock F2K providers for helpful advice. For more information regarding replication efforts in your community, contact your local Junior League.

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Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Is More Fun for Houston Children

Focus On Needs

Student Achievement via Better Nutrition

Positive Culture

Community Involvement

Campus Beautification and Renovation

Partners In Progress

Recipe for Success Foundation

Houston ISD

Along with partners, Gracie Cavnar of the Recipe for Success Foundation is working hard to convince children that food does not grow in drive through windows. In 2006, she conceived of the concept for Recipe for Success with Houston ISD (HISD) in mind. She believed that if the program could prove successful in the seventh largest school district in the nation, it could work anywhere. Recipe for Success is dedicated to fighting childhood obesity by changing the way children understand, appreciate and eat their food.

With professional staff and volunteer assistance from 45 of Houston's finest chefs who participate in the innovative *Chefs in Schools*[™] program, Recipe for Success works with over 3,000 elementary children monthly, using the unique *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*[™] program that makes healthy eating fun.

Recipe for Success is determined to put children in touch with healthy whole foods through fun, hands-on activities, thereby increasing their intake of fresh fruits and vegetables. From 2006 through 2009, Recipe for Success has served select HISD elementary schools located in underserved communities. At these schools, Recipe for Success fine-tuned its *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*[™] model and continues to fund programming.

This program includes five core initiatives: (1) Staff works with team nutrition leaders in each elementary school, implements programming, mentors school wellness committees, and forges community collaborations to help establish a campus-wide culture of health; (2) *Chefs in*

Schools[™]—Professional chefs volunteer to teach monthly cooking classes to fourth graders using a curriculum and delivery designed by the organization's staff of professional chefs and educators; (3) Recipe Gardens – Organic gardens, designed and built on each participating campus, serve as outdoor classrooms where Recipe for Success professional horticultural staff give monthly gardening lessons and mentor teachers; (4) Students learn in *Eat This!*[™], *Kids Dig it!*[™] and *Eat This, Baby!*[™] – cooking and gardening after-school classes for Pre-K to fifth graders; and (5) *Eat This! Summer Camp*[™] – an innovative curriculum that introduces 9-, 10-, and 11-year-olds to the principles of food marketing, and participants research and create recipes, test them on other students, design packaging and sell their products.

For years, educators have recognized the link between nutrition and learning, and recent studies showing that well-fed children are more successful in school than poorly nourished children back up the anecdotal evidence. From the prenatal time period throughout childhood and into adulthood, nutrition plays a pivotal role in an individual's intellectual and physical development.

From 2006-09, Recipe for Success offered complimentary programming in five pilot elementary schools: Briscoe, Gross, N.Q. Henderson, MacGregor and Rodriguez, amounting to over \$1,050,000 programming support to HISD in these schools.

Participating school campuses have also benefited from the Recipe for Success network of partners who

have volunteered for campus beautification projects and other activities.

Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*™ will be made available to other selected schools on a cost-recovery basis.

Since its inception, over 10,000 Houston school children have participated in Recipe for Success programming. Recipe for Success programs are evaluated on the number of youth served, actual contact hours between student and chef, and community engagement. After being a part of Recipe for Success, the students have increased their daily intake of fresh fruits and vegetables and exhibited changed attitudes toward new foods. They have also gained information and practices that will guide them for life, including a broader understanding of healthy foods and how to easily prepare food from scratch. Their modified behavior and attitudes have carried through to family activities and food choices, affecting a cross-section of the community. Recipe for Success estimates that for every child directly involved in *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*™ programming, at least 1.5 parents and 1.5 siblings and others benefit from their enthusiasm and new attitude toward nutrition.

This partnership has supported the following campus or district goals: student achievement (direct parallel between good nutrition and student achievement); positive district culture (use of volunteers and other partners; powerful sense of community and a shared direction among personnel, parents, students and the public); facilities improvement program (beautification and renovations on school campuses).

Recipe for Success is working to expand to 40-plus Houston area schools and districts. In the coming year, Recipe for Success will work with the City of Houston Health Department to implement programming in city community centers. Dozens of other centers and schools are making plans to begin various facets of the programs. The organization will continue to grant the *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*™ program to Briscoe, Gross, N.Q. Henderson, MacGregor and Rodriguez elementary schools.

A new Recipe for Success Program Guide will be launched in July 2010 with a summer seminar to train and certify educators. This guide will provide hands-on training for both the kitchen and garden class delivery, and provide participants with additional resources. These efforts will make Recipe for Success available to more schools and communities by the fall of 2010.

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Community Partnerships-Health

Fit Family Fun Run Has Fiscal and Physical Benefits

Focus On Needs

Student Physical Fitness

Community Partnerships

Funds for Benefiting Academic Achieve and Equipment Purchases

Partners In Progress

Scanlan Oaks PTO, Fort Bend ISD , Missouri City

Scanlan Oaks Elementary School, Fort Bend ISD , Missouri City

The Scanlan Oaks Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) organizes an annual *Fit Family Fun Run*. Students and their families register to participate in various races, including 5K, ¼ mile, toddler trot and others. Medals are awarded to all participants, and awards are presented to the top finishers in each category. Various booths operated by representatives from local hospitals and other health and fitness organizations are set up on the school grounds.

Post-race activities, including healthy food stations, moon walks, rock walls and dunking booths are provided for families to enjoy together. This partnership has evolved into a massive community-wide event – almost all staff members join in the event, either as participants or volunteers. Many families who are not zoned to Scanlan Oaks Elementary also share in this worthwhile event.


Before Scanlan Oaks Elementary opened its doors in August 2004, a parent concerned about children’s health and obesity had the idea to actively promote health and fitness in the neighborhood school. As a result, a group of parents in the Scanlan Oaks Elementary PTO decided to raise awareness of the importance of exercise and healthy lifestyles by hosting a Fun Run for the students. Over time, silent and live auctions became part of the Fun Run experience, and all proceeds from the auctions and the event benefit the students and staff at Scanlan Oaks Elementary, making the run a successful annual fundraiser.

The Physical Education teacher at Scanlan Oaks Elementary promotes a healthy lifestyle and fitness in her classroom daily. To build upon the fitness concepts taught in

class, she started an after-school club called Fit Express for third through fifth grade students. Each Monday, students and volunteers participate in fitness-related activities including running. Fit Express members wear special shirts that identify them at the Fun Run, and they train on Mondays to prepare for the one-mile run.

What began as an idea to promote health and fitness has surpassed the anticipated outcomes. Students who participate in the Fun Run have an increased level of physical fitness, and they make healthier food and snack choices. Because of the partnership, there has been an increase in the number of hours students engage in physical activity and a reduction of time students spend playing video games. The most unexpected, yet significant impact is the fundraising. Proceeds from the Fun Run enable the PTO to purchase educational enrichment materials, instructional technology, much needed playground equipment and other critical items for the school. In addition, runners from outside the community are getting involved by attending and participating in the Fun Run. As a result, it has become a great community-wide event for not only Scanlan Oaks Elementary but the surrounding community as well.

The program is evaluated by the number of students who participate in the event. Student participation in the Fun Run has increased every year since its inception in Spring 2005, when approximately 480 students participated. It has grown to about 800 participants, and fitness levels of those students have increased.



The partnership with the Scanlan Oaks Elementary PTO supports Goal 2 of the Fort Bend ISD District Strategic Plan. The Fun Run specifically supports the Fort Bend ISD Coordinated School Health Program goal. However, through the fundraising aspect, many of the Scanlan Oaks Campus Improvement goals are supported. Goals for this year include supporting science, technology, math and reading. As a result of the success of the Fun Run and other fundraisers, the Scanlan Oaks Elementary PTO has purchased SMART boards for every third through fifth grade classroom, set

aside funds for professional development and provides monies to the science department to purchase lab materials. Scanlan Oaks has also seen an increase in the number of volunteer hours at the school, due in part by the involvement of the school's PTO.

With the assistance of a strong volunteer base, PTA/PTO or booster program, this type of partnership program can easily be replicated at other schools. Program costs are an estimated \$12,000 to \$15,000.

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St. David's Dental Program Rescues Smiles Across Central Texas

Focus On Needs

Student Dental Health

Partners In Progress

St. David's Foundation Dental Program, Austin
Round Rock ISD

Children's smiles across Central Texas are healthier and brighter because of partnerships between several Independent School Districts and St. David's Health Foundation Dental Program. The effort began in 1998 as the Central Texas Children's Dental Health Collaborative, a school-based screening and sealant initiative, with one part-time dentist and an assistant.

The program is now operating six vans staffed by six full-time dentists, a dental hygienist, and eight dental assistants. The program now serves over 71 elementary schools in six school districts.

The dental program came to Round Rock ISD (RRISD) in 2008, and it has had a great impact on the district and the children it serves.

With a mission to make oral health accessible to underserved children and their families by bringing care to them, this fleet of mobile dental clinics collaborates with local schools, community-based agencies, and other partners to promote healthy smiles, prevent dental disease and deliver free dental care to those without other resources in Travis, Williamson and Hays counties. They not only provide dental care for the children, but they also inform children and their parents about proper dental hygiene.

Dental disease in children is five times more common than asthma and seven times more likely than hay fever. In addition, 50% of tooth decay remains untreated in low-income children, resulting in pain, dysfunction, poor

appearance and children who are underweight.

Overall, failure to prevent dental problems has long-term adverse effects that are consequential and costly. In particular, unchecked dental disease compromises children's ability to attend school regularly and ultimately their ability to learn. Dental concerns can also lead to poor self-esteem, to inability to speak or even eat, further compromising their ability to be successful in school.

Of the 1,900 students screened in the RRISD, 81% of them returned to Theo, the mobile dental van, to receive \$435,394 worth of free dental care. The average value of dental treatment per child was \$784. These 555 students may not have sought out or been able to afford this care had the mobile clinic not been available and accessible.

Additionally, while the program has moved to different campuses this school year, the dental program is continues to offer parent education classes at the schools it served last year, spreading the impact even farther.

The extent that the program affected student confidence, attendance and academic success has been a surprise. Despite their Title I status, every campus that was served by the St. David's Foundation Dental Program achieved the Exemplary rating.

The dental program could be replicated in other areas of Texas where generous and knowledgeable dental health organizations are willing to allocate resources for equipment and personnel.



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PTO Partnership Pays Off for Children and Community Cooperation

Focus On Needs

Student Fitness
Parent Involvement
Improved Environment

Partners In Progress

Willbern PTO, Houston
Willbern Elementary School, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Willbern Elementary students now have an asphalt track around their large shady playground. Gone is the uneven dirt track which was too often unusable because of weather. Raising \$60,000 over ten years was a daunting task, but the parents just would not give up. They wanted their children to have the health benefits the new track would bring.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) partnered with the Reid Road Municipal Utility District (MUD) to raise sufficient funds. Working with the district and the MUD, PTO members finally reached their goal, and the track was completed in the fall of 2008.

The track is used regularly by Physical Education (P.E.) classes as well as during recess. Students have a safe environment that encourages the development of healthy exercise habits. Also, the track is used by the community, which further promotes involvement of families in their children's health.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD focuses on preparing students to be productive citizens. This is not measured just by grades and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores, but also by promoting healthy habits that students will develop and continue throughout their lives. Students at Willbern combine their academic success with the running program provided through the P.E. classes.


One unexpected benefit of the track was the positive relationship that was fostered between the members of the school community. School staff and community members

came together with their common purpose as they struggled through the "red tape" and hurdles that come up with any construction project.

The track continues to be a uniting force in the school community. Families and staff members enjoy fun runs twice a year to celebrate holidays. The involvement of the MUD has fostered additional interest in developing the area and even expanding the track. The community and school see the track area as a place to be enjoyed by all.

In addition to daily use during recess, P.E. classes use the track 37 school days each year. The activities on the track range from Jogging Club days to timed runs and seasonal fun runs. With almost eight weeks of use each year, there is little room on the P.E. calendar for delays caused by weather. Prior to the paving of the track, it was not unusual to see sunny skies above and a dirt track topped with two inches of water. Finishing the running programs came down to the last days of the school calendar, causing stressful delays in the end-of-year fitness report to parents and determination of students eligible for P.E. awards.

The paved track has allowed greater flexibility in time spent outside for all of the running activities. Even if the grass is wet or there are mud puddles around the area, the raised track is dry. Last year, the school was able to finish Jogging Club days and timed mile runs earlier in the school year, allowing the students to run in cooler spring temperatures and giving the P.E. teachers more time to complete their statistical recordkeeping.



This partnership supports the campus improvement plan goal of maintaining a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning and employee effectiveness.

The partnership could easily be replicated in other schools. To help others considering such a project, the Willbern PTO would be happy to share its successes and challenges during the entire process.

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Irving Partnership Puts At-Risk Students on Career Pathway

Focus On Needs

Career Preparation
Math and Science Scores
Social Studies Scores
English Language Arts Scores

Partners In Progress

City of Irving – Water Utilities
Union Bower Center for Learning, Irving ISD

At an alternative high school, Union Bower Center for Learning, at-risk students in the Applied Technology career pathway can prepare to become valuable water industry employees. Upon graduation, students in this pathway qualify to take the state exam for Class “D” Basic Water and Wastewater Collections 1 licensure.

In the summer of 2008, City of Irving’s Water Utilities representatives and the Director of Career and Technical Education in Irving ISD met to explore a partnership to meet a common need – development of potential employees with knowledge of the water industry and the ability to obtain licensing through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. A tour of the City’s Water Utilities department was planned for all students in this pathway. This began the successful partnership between the school and the Water Utilities Department, which continues to grow.

The program began in the 2008-09 school year. The City of Irving’s Water Utilities committed to providing 20 hours of hands-on instruction. Employees visited the school almost every Friday, engaging students in activities such as meter repair, sample collection, confined space training, leak detection and dead end main flushing of water pipes. Students went on field excursions to water treatment and waste water treatment plants in Dallas and Carrollton.


In its second year, course enrollment has doubled. Students who had been at risk for dropping out have stayed in school, improving grades and behavior in order to take part in this program. These students have seen the application of math and science classroom information in the daily tasks

of a water utility worker, and they have improved state test scores. They have made the direct connection between school and future economic success.

At the beginning of the program, an advisory council was established to provide ongoing evaluation of the partnership and the program. The group meets quarterly throughout the year. Membership consists of a Union Bower administrator and counselor, the Applied Technology instructor, the participating representatives from the City of Irving’s Water Utilities department, Union Bower’s Career Preparations Coordinator and two student representatives. Members examine curriculum successes and challenges.

When the partnership began, there was no curriculum for this subject at the high school level. Development of the curriculum required a huge investment of teacher time and resources in learning the material and developing basic lesson plans.

The program has helped Union Bower Center for Learning meet one of its campus goals: improve student achievement by providing a rigorous and relevant grade 9-12 curriculum, with a performance objective of a 50% passing rate, including Texas Growth Index (TGI), on the state assessment for students in Mathematics and Science. Students enrolled in Union Bower’s new career pathways, which includes Applied Technology students, showed a significant leap in scores in Math, Science, English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores. These data show



the significant progress made in the 2008-09 school year, compared to the past academic school year.

The key to this program's success has been the full partnership between the Water Utilities Department and the teaching and administrative staff of Union Bower Center for Learning. Replication of this program on other campuses or in other districts will depend on the collaborative efforts of the district's administration and their local City's Water Utilities. Fortunately, skilled water employees are needed throughout the state and nation, making this program an easy choice for educators to pursue. New partnerships would not face the challenge of curriculum development as they could use the model developed in Irving.

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Students Receive Expectation Graduation Rooms for Making the Grade

Focus On Needs

Improve Student Achievement

Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools

Partners In Progress

Hashoo Foundation USA

Houston ISD

Expectation Graduation Room is part of a larger project, *Expectation Graduation*.

It all began when the Hashoo Foundation USA presented \$25,000 to Mayor Bill White's *Expectation Graduation* program to support the City of Houston and Houston ISD (HISD) initiative to help students stay in school and graduate.

In 2004, 50 at-risk HISD students from Robert E. Lee, Ross Sterling, Jack Yates and James Madison High Schools signed a "YES Mayor White, I Will Complete High School" Commitment Card, promising that they would graduate in 2009. Hashoo Foundation USA, in conjunction with HISD, *Expectation Graduation*, the *City of Houston Digital Inclusion Initiative* and *WeCan* program created the *Expectation Graduation Room* pilot project. It was an incentive award package to recognize the students who fulfilled their commitment and graduated. Thirty-three HISD students were awarded the package.

Program objectives were to recognize the students' success and provide hope and encouragement; to enhance the home environment; to encourage dialogue between students, teachers, parents, local organizations and businesses about how the learning environment influences student achievement and what action steps should be taken to equip students with the resources and opportunities to address those challenges and build better lives.


Based on this criteria, students were awarded the *Expectation Graduation Room* "package" which included: a refurbished computer; desk; desk lamp and chair; twin

size bed; pillows; two sets of sheets; blanket; mattress pad, dust ruffle and comforter; night stand and chest of drawers; a Good Bear of the World, a Tsunamikas doll; and a t-shirt. The rooms serve as a visual representation of the students' success, supports the families' involvement in the students' education, and reinforces the students' commitment to grow academically and socially. They also provide a quiet place for students and family members to work and reflect.

Every year since 2005, *Expectation Graduation* events have been hosted for students who completed the commitment to graduate. Students have been treated to such activities as a Beyonce concert, NBA All-Star weekend festivities and professional basketball games. These events were used to provide positive reinforcement to students.

The success of the *Expectation Graduation* program is determined by the number of students who signed commitment cards in 2005 and graduated from high school in 2009. The 2009 graduation rate is not available, but projections are that it was much higher than the 68.2% graduation rate of the 2008 class. HISD has made tremendous academic gains with a record 200 HISD schools receiving an *Exemplary* or *Recognized* rating in 2009. Even more significant is that from the 2009 graduating class, 50 at-risk and/or homeless students fulfilled their commitment to graduate.

Two district improvement goals are supported by the *Expectation Graduation Room*. It supports "Goal 1: Improve Student Achievement" because students successfully fulfilled their commitment to graduate from



high school. “Goal 3: Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools” was supported because the *Expectation Graduation Room* award project was possible because local organizations, businesses and universities worked collaboratively to reward students for graduating in spite of the obstacles they encountered. Those collaborating were City of Houston Department of Education, City of Houston General Services, City of Houston, *City of Houston Digital Inclusion Initiative*, *WeCan*, Wal-Mart Foundation, Leela Krishnamurthy and friends, Tech Corps Texas, University of St. Thomas, ORR Textiles Company, Ramada Inn, Star Furniture, Wal-Mart, Greater Houston Women Chamber of Commerce, The Divas, Montanez Baylor Foundation and Hashoo Foundation. Students and their families were

also connected to resources and services available to them through United Way *THRIVE*, Furniture Bank, Dress for Success and ACCION Texas to help them reach their full potential.

The *Expectation Graduation* program has been replicated. The *Reach Out to Drop Out Walk* has already been replicated in 11 Texas school districts in six cities. Similarly, the *Expectation Graduation Room* can easily be replicated as a culminating reward to motivate students to stay in school and graduate. There are plans to replicate the model in other cities in Texas. All it takes is the commitment of the students to graduate, incentives to motivate them to do so, and the collaboration of the community to reward them for graduating.

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Spring Branch Schools Benefit from Good Neighbor Program

Focus On Needs

Community Involvement

Character Building for Students

Neighborliness is blossoming in Spring Branch ISD (SBISD). Individuals and organizations are looking for ways to be good neighbors for their schools. They want to be part of the district's *Good Neighbor Program*.

The SBISD *Good Neighbor Program* was created to encourage, support and recognize civic engagement in schools. The objectives are: to elevate the breadth and depth of partner involvement; to foster strategic dialogue about school-community partnerships; and to publicly recognize the good works of those corporate, community, educational, governmental, and faith-based groups as well as individuals who support the schools. The program is also designed to encourage the schools to give back to the communities they serve. In order to be recognized as a Good Neighbor, an organization or individual must commit to accomplishing three or more activities in a school year to support the district, a campus, the teachers, or the students.


The *Good Neighbor Program* affirms that the schools and the communities are inextricably linked, with each dependent upon the success of the other. The program was conceived by district-implemented Community Action Networks that brought together schools, civic associations, apartment management, law enforcement, and community organizations to dialogue and build support for the students – especially those in high poverty areas. A program committee, including several SBISD trustees, developed the program structure, materials and annual recognition event.

The *Good Neighbor Program* was started in 2006 with 55 organizations recognized as Good Neighbors. That number grew to 120 in 2007 and 170 in 2008. Even with the economic downturn and disastrous effect of Hurricane Ike, 156 Good Neighbors were recognized in 2009.

Although there is not enough space to list all the ways that these partnerships have positively influenced student achievement, here are a few examples: students with mentors and tutors have shown improvement on test scores and attendance, and they showed an increase in the number of 40 Development Assets®; middle school students benefited from college trips and saw that college could be part of their future; community members helped high school students navigate the college application process, as well as fill out Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms, helping these students to receive thousands of dollars in financial aid; Pre-K students learned to love reading from the community members who read with them each week, and the children received their own books to take home.

In the SBISD 55% of students qualify for free or reduced-lunch programs. Over 8,000 students, a quarter of the 32,000 in the district, benefited from the school supply drive; others received uniforms, and many of their families had assistance with basic needs provided by the Good Neighbor partners.

An annual booklet lists all the activities for each Good Neighbor. Another avenue of recognition is an annual video which highlights a handful of partners and includes the logo



of every good neighbor partner at the end of the video. The video, which is posted on the district website, serves as a recruiting tool during the year.

An unexpected impact of the program was the friendly competition it created among businesses. Many saw what other Good Neighbor partners were doing and were challenged to do that and more. The program also provided a vehicle to ask the partners to do more. If they were doing one or two activities, it was easy for them to do another activity and be recognized as a Good Neighbor. The feeling of pride in the community and the great networking opportunity at the annual recognition event are also bonuses. Program leaders receive many inquiries from organizations wanting to know what they can do to be part of the *Good Neighbor Program*.

Each year the Good Neighbor Advisory Committee reviews the process and evaluates what worked and what could be done better through a survey. Neighbors receive a banner, yard sign, or plaque to identify them as a Good Neighbor for the year. All of the survey respondents said they proudly displayed the signage. Ninety-seven percent indicated that being a Good Neighbor had a positive value for their business or organization. Each year organizations continue to inquire about the program and desire to be part of it. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of SBISD campuses that qualify as Good Neighbors – they must complete at least three activities that benefit another campus, organization or the community. That number has grown from five campuses in 2007 to 29 campuses this year. Students are learning to be good neighbors and the value of community service. Just this year, a fifth grader asked her friends to give school supplies instead of birthday presents so she could donate the supplies to needy students in the district.

The *Good Neighbor Program* supports several of the district's educational goals: students, parents, and the community will be active partners with the educators in students' education; the district will ensure that all students will have a strong foundation in ethics and character development; and the district will be the premier college-focused district in the Texas and will prepare all students for success after high school graduation.

This program could be replicated by other districts. A Good Neighbor Advisory Board or Committee to oversee the program is needed. The SBISD program had funding from the educational foundation to get the program started. It is possible to have sponsors (Good Neighbors) that are willing to fund the program and be recognized at the annual event.

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AIM Gets Results with Significantly At-Risk Students In Humble

Focus On Needs

Improvement of Academic Achievement

Reduction in Dropout Rates

Personalized Support

Some significantly at-risk students in Humble Middle School know how good it feels to pass certain Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests for the first time. They are experiencing the benefits of a new mentoring program designed especially for them.


The *Academic Individual Mentoring (AIM)* program is designed to provide support for students at significant risk of school failure. Mentors meet weekly or at least twice a month with their students during lunch or advisory class (30-40 minutes) to discuss their academic progress toward goals set in the beginning of the year. Mentors review progress reports and report cards and give practical suggestions for success. Mentors also share wisdom of their past experiences to inspire and encourage students to overcome life challenges. In addition to giving academic assistance, mentors inquire about and elicit student's personal problems or concerns.

The program was developed to help reduce the student dropout rates, to personalize support and to increase student achievement. Participating students faced numerous behavioral, socioeconomic and academic challenges that were adversely affecting their efforts in school. In partnership with families and community members, the program helps at-risk students develop intellectual, artistic, emotional, physical and social skills so that they can become life-long learners, complex thinkers, responsible global citizens and effective communicators. Overall, this program gives to these at-risk students the skills needed for a successful life in a rapidly changing world.

The AIM program began in the fall semester of 2008 at Humble Middle School, a Title I campus in Humble ISD (HISD). The program for this middle school was developed and managed by the HISD At-Risk Coordinator. He solicited and signed up mentors from Greenspoint Business Club, Humble Rotary, Hispanic Executive Society International (HESI) and other community businesses and groups.

Achievement, passing and promotion rates increased for participating students. No doubt the interaction and guidance of the mentors contributed to this increase. Increased self-motivation, greater academic focus and sense of self-worth are significant affective results. Some students passed certain TAKS tests for the first time. Throughout the year numerous teachers and staff noted significant changes in students being mentored. Many parents noted changes in their children's grades and behavior. Several parents have met with mentors to express gratitude. Mentors have expressed how rewarding their experience has been and often refer others for the program.

The school district was not expecting the overwhelming response from the community about the AIM program. Over the summer months, the district received numerous phone calls and emails from local businesses and community members who wanted to sign up for the 2009-10 school year. They not only signed up to be mentors, but local businesses such as Joe's Crab Shack, Outback Steakhouse, and Continental Airlines offered to partner with the district to facilitate socials for the mentor, mentee and parent(s)



and facilitate field trips for the students so they can explore careers in various fields.

Program evaluation was based on the total number of mentors (43), the number of students participating (34) and TAKS and promotion rates. Prior to entering this program, these at-risk students were either failing or near failing all classes, attendance was very poor, and their physical and mental health was extremely concerning. At the end of the school year, 100% of the participating students were promoted. Half of them passed all TAKS test. Nearly 70% of the mentees saw improvements in their grades from the first semester to the second semester. Also noted was a marked improvement in the students' overall sense of self-worth, pride in appearance and confidence.

The HISD At-Risk Coordinator is working with a non-profit organization, Student Success Agenda, to implement the AIM mentor program in Houston. Suggestions for others interested in replicating the program include (1) provide mentor orientation meetings in the fall and post them online; (2) at the first mentoring session have an administrative staff person formally introduce the child to the mentor and reiterate the AIM program purpose; and (3) celebrate results with fall and spring mentor appreciation events. The HISD At-Risk Coordinator would be happy to share more details and forms for replicating the program.

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Real Men Read Mentoring Program Succeeds In Houston

Focus On Needs

Improve Academic Achievement

Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools

Inspired by the president's call for more Americans to volunteer in their communities, Houston ISD (HISD) Trustee Paula Harris (District VI) and Texas State Senator Rodney Ellis implemented *Houston Real Men Read (HRMR)* in 31 HISD schools in 2009. HRMR is a mentoring program in which men commit one hour of their time once a month to read aloud to second, fifth, and seventh grade students. HRMR places emphasis on the premise that reading is fun, the community cares, and a commitment to education can ensure success.

More than 200 men answered the call to serve as MENTors for at-risk students. They were from a wide range of career paths, including lawyers, doctors, police officers, HISD administrators and retirees, and custodians. In addition to reading books to students, MENTors talked about their professional careers and how they achieved their goals.

An online training module was created to help MENTors prepare for their classroom experiences. MENTors were assigned to all 21 elementary and ten middle schools in Ms. Harris' district. Ms. Harris raised more than \$73,000 from ten corporate sponsors to purchase 13,839 books that Scholastic provided at a reduced rate. After HISD Curriculum Department personnel assisted with developing the appropriate reading list, MENTors read books from the list in their assigned classrooms on the second Thursday of each month. Each student received three books to create a home library. They also received a copy of the book read to them each month to grow their home library.

HRMR impacted student achievement in five ways. First, due to Trustee Harris' phenomenal citywide recruitment effort and the help of State Senator Ellis, enough mentors were recruited to volunteer in 200 classrooms that impacted 4,500 students in its first year. Second, having a male mentor was especially helpful for students living in households without men or positive male influences. Third, reading aloud by MENTors had a profound effect on the students. It allowed students to hear inflections, phonetics of words and rhythm of language, which they do not hear when they read silently to themselves. Students became engrossed in the MENTors' facial expressions, gestures and dramatizations as they listened to the books. Enthralled students listened to every word and then engaged in follow-up dialogue. Fourth, HRMR gave 13,839 books to 4,500 students to promote reading and to encourage the students to continue reading at home. The home libraries that were created and/or enhanced benefited not only, the participating students, but also their siblings. Fifth, the questions and discussions encouraged critical thinking as well as verbal and listening skills.

The books were a gift that the middle school students truly appreciated, as evidenced when one class burst into spontaneous applause when they were told that the books were theirs to take home. Who would have imagined that middle school students would be as excited about fantastic, engaging books as they are about iPods®, Wii® and electronic games. Project planners had wondered if

the students, especially males, would like being read to or appreciate the books. Students cherished the books and enjoyed the attention of the MENTors. Students took every opportunity to thank their MENTors for reading to them. Many dialogues started because of the books, and it was not considered “nerdy” to be seen reading the books.

A survey was developed by HISD Research and Accountability Department to give mentors an opportunity to describe their experience in the HRMR program. Overall, the results from the HRMR survey were positive. The majority of the comments (94%) were categorized as “positive experience.” Approximately 86% responded that they would volunteer again the next year. An overwhelming majority of mentors (96%) stated that they would recommend others to participate in HRMR, compared to 4% who stated “maybe.” Responding to the question of whether the HRMR program encouraged them to increase their involvement in other volunteer opportunities at the current or another campus, 69% stated “yes.” The improvement most often suggested by mentors was to expand the program across the school year. Of the 31 participating schools, TEA rated eight *Exemplary*, 13 *Recognized*, seven *Acceptable*, and only three *Unacceptable*.

HRMR supports two of the district’s goals by promoting reading. HRMR supports Goal 1: Improve Student Achievement. Reading is the foundation of all academic subjects and underpins life-long learning. Students must be able to read for math, science, history and other subjects. By purchasing Scholastic books, both home and classroom libraries were enhanced so that students learned at school and reinforced the learning at home. HRMR provided much needed human resources to help enhance reading programs in the 21 elementary and ten middle schools in District VI. MENTors showed students how much can be learned from reading and that reading opens the door to life.

The response by 200 Houston area men to Trustee Harris’ and Senator Ellis’ call for a few good men to volunteer to read aloud to students in HISD classrooms supports Goal 3: Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools. HISD had been asking community members

to “put the public back into public schools,” and MENTors eagerly accepted the challenge. Many of the District VI schools did not have business partners or many males active in the parent organizations or parental involvement activities. MENTors helped close this gap. The presence of doctors, lawyers, businessmen, policemen, district administrators and custodians on school campuses filled the need for more male presence and community involvement at schools, if only for one time a month.

The HRMR program can be replicated since it is a replicated program itself. Specifically, it is modeled after the successful program in Chicago Public Schools. HRMR can be easily adapted by schools to meet their respective needs by determining the number of MENTors needed and the amount of corporate sponsorship needed to purchase books. HRMR was such a successful pilot program in the 41 District VI schools that it is being expanded to 51 schools as a district-wide program during the 2009-10 school year.

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Federal Grant Helps Round Rock Expand STARS Mentoring Program

Focus On Needs

Improvement of Academic Achievement

Decrease in Absenteeism

Round Rock ISD (RRISD) received a grant from the Department of Education – Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools to expand *Supporting, Teaching and Reaching Students (STARS)*, its existing student mentoring program. The grant allowed the school district to expand and improve service delivery.

Increasing pressure on schools to improve academic performance and meet academic standards has made school districts look for ways to help students succeed. Mentoring helps fill this need in the RRISD. The program provides youth with one-on-one attention that can easily be tailored to a child's specific needs, a proven method of bolstering a youth's academic performance. According to the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, mentoring is one of the core practices in effectively reducing dropout rates among at-risk students. It provides role models and a positive support network for students who need them most. Mentoring has been shown to have a positive effect on school achievement, graduation rates, self-esteem, attendance, securing entry-level jobs and participating in community service. Mentoring has also been shown to decrease disciplinary referrals, early pregnancy rates and drug and alcohol use. (http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/mentoring_tutoring/overview.html)


The STARS program is a school-based mentoring program that matches adult volunteers from the Round Rock and Austin communities with at-risk youth in Round Rock. The district partners with STARRY, which is part of the Children at Heart Ministries, a local faith-based social

service organization, to ensure that youth in counseling and foster care qualify to be matched with suitable mentors.

The STARS mentor program requires a minimum of 30 minutes of match time per week for the entire school year. All mentors are screened and trained before they are matched. They are also provided with ongoing training and support all year long. The grant enabled the matches to continue connections over the summer through a reading program at the Round Rock Public Library

During the 2008-09 school year, 474 matches were established, encompassing every grade level from K through 12. Volunteers were recruited through the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Round Rock, RRISD, area businesses, local faith-based organizations and non-profit organizations. IBM is a premier partner of the STARS program by providing women engineers as mentors at one middle school. The women mentor middle school girls in a one-on-one relationship that fosters a love for engineering.

Every new mentor attends a mandatory training hosted by the mentor coordinator. They are instructed in program policy and procedure in addition to several other topics, including the mentoring life cycle, communication and preparing for mentoring meetings. Mentors receive articles and tip sheets electronically to provide them with ongoing support and information. Newsletters are distributed quarterly to mentors to keep them abreast of current happenings in various schools and upcoming events. The newsletters also contain articles related to mentoring and pictures of match events.



The STARS program offers volunteers the chance to develop relationships with youth in a relatively structured, supervised environment. It also allows volunteers to meet with youth in a set place without having to coordinate transportation and activities. The program offers schools a way to help youth succeed. Because school staff refer youth to the STARS program, it reaches at-risk groups of youth who often have academic, social or behavioral problems.

The average number of unexcused absences for RRISD students is 5.85; the average number of unexcused absences for the STARS Program participants is 5.1. Forty-one percent of the STARS Program participants experienced an average decrease in absences this year.

Counselors reported that students in the program are positively impacted, and display higher levels of confidence and better behavior in school. Self-reported data indicate that 69% of students and their mentors reported improved grades and academic performance during the 2008-09 school year.

Feedback is collected regularly via an online survey from each student and mentor. Results of these surveys indicate that 92.2% of student participants have reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that their relationships have improved in terms of trust and the ability to set and achieve goals together.

An external evaluator ensured that the district had in place a good evaluation plan. The evaluator helped develop effective tools that produced value-added recommendations, allowing the district to have an excellent program based on best practices.

The STARS mentor program supports the mission of RRISD which is “All children will learn... whatever it takes.”

Once every year or two, the district prints a 30-page training manual. The district runs background checks on all mentors and district volunteers annually. Additionally, a person or team of people must be designated to recruit, train and track activity of the mentoring program.

Once a basic structure is in place, program costs can be minimal. In order to advance the mentor/mentee relationship a team-building event (or set of activities) is helpful, but not necessary. Additionally, a field trip can enhance the goals

of the program (e.g., a visit to a local college if district or program goals include college readiness). Community and business partners are especially helpful in thanking volunteers for their time by supplying small incentives or providing venues for the matches to meet and team build.

Most districts have a mentor program in place as it is considered a best practice for helping at risk-students who do not have positive adult role models in their lives. For any who do not, start up costs can be minimal. Securing the support of district and campus leadership is a critical piece of the program.

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Academy Students Bring Up their Test Scores and Enjoy Volunteering

Focus On Needs

Academic Achievement

Character Building

Self-Esteem

Childress Foundation Academy students bring up their test scores and build their confidence through many service learning volunteer hours.

The Childress Foundation Academy at Northbrook High School was established to help assure that students would graduate from high school, have opportunities to succeed in high school and beyond and help make the community a better place. For 15 years the Ray and Kara Childress Foundation has funded this program at Northbrook High School.

The segment of the program that has most impacted the students and the community is service learning. The students work with many local organizations, giving them hours of volunteer service. Each year the seniors design new projects for the program. They research local issues, make contacts and develop a budget of costs involved. They assess the work and number of student and adult volunteers needed to complete the project. Students then make presentations to a committee that decides which projects to pursue. Most importantly, the students complete hours and hours of service in order to make their community a better place.

The following are three projects that students have been involved with the last couple of years:

TURNING POINT CENTER HOMELESS MISSION

There is a high population of homeless individuals in the Houston area, and students decided to look into what


could be done for them. After meeting with the director of the Turning Point Center, a neighborhood organization, the students started helping in the warehouse organizing donations. This grew into helping provide meals on weekends. Now, on the first Saturday of every month, they prepare lunch for the 75 clients/residents at the mission. The students have also learned about homelessness in Houston through conducting research, having the director of client services speak at the school, and by interacting with the residents at the mission.

REBUILDING TOGETHER-HOUSTON

For 14 years students have participated in a Houston home repair project that helps low-income elderly citizens maintain their homes. Students have replaced doors and windows, removed rotten lumber, scraped, caulked and painted many houses. They have learned many carpentry skills, but more importantly, they have learned how they can make a difference.

TREASURE FOREST BUDDY PROGRAM

Three times a year students partner with one of the school's feeder elementary schools. Students are paired with fourth graders to offer a glimpse of high school life. In addition to touring the high school, the children also participate in fun activities — bowling, ice-skating, bocce tournaments, or miniature golf. Both the older and younger students have benefitted from this partnership.



The academy program has offered students many new opportunities for success. The most obvious impact of the students' involvement in the Childress Foundation's program is the positive change in their self-esteem and feeling of worth. When they help others, they see that they are making a difference. They realize the food they box up at the Houston Food bank will put food on someone's table and they know they are making someone's life better.

Through these opportunities, students also develop leadership skills. When a student is made group leader on the home repair project, he knows he is responsible for getting his crew to finish its portion of the job. He finds a way to follow through. This sense of responsibility and leadership grows as does his ability to mold his team and finish the job.

From the classroom perspective, the Childress program has had several positive effects. The students have better attendance and fewer discipline issues than the school as a whole. The students graduate, and many go on to college, aided by Childress scholarships.

The staff at Northbrook has been surprised by the students' eagerness to participate. When staff posts a signup sheet – looking for 20 volunteers – 60 students may respond. Last year 160 Childress students completed over 3,600 hours of service. Students have received recognition and awards for their leadership and involvement from The Houston Food Bank, Rebuilding Together-Houston and other organizations. The participants in this organization are 90% Hispanic and have lower incomes, and for many, receiving an award is a new and exciting experience. Through the partnerships, students have unique opportunities.

Each year the core teachers and members of the Childress Foundation Board evaluate the program. The students' accomplishments, progress, and projects completed are examined. The group also analyzes how best to use the funds. Improved academic success among participants is a strong indicator of success. Participants are typically ranked as average to below average when they enter the program. Last year, 100% passed the English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies Exit Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exam. Over 85% passed the Math and Science Exit exams. The students out performed the rest of the school on all four tests.

Three key factors would be involved in replication of the Childress program. First, a new program would need teachers and staff willing to donate their time and efforts. The Childress program has 165 students and eight to ten adults. Secondly, a new program would need a funding source to support the costs of transportation and other needs. Finally, a new program must have a facilitator to organize activities and oversee the students and their progress.

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Interns Harvest Food and Personal Skills

Focus On Needs

Setting and Achieving Personal Goals

Problem-Solving Techniques

Teamwork

In 2010, YouthLaunch's *Urban Roots* is in its third year of operation. Modeled after The Food Project in Boston, MA, it is a youth development program that connects youth from different backgrounds around Austin with sustainable agriculture and the community. In 2009, *Urban Roots* was awarded a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the US Department of Agriculture's Community Food Projects. In the same year the program was selected as an Impact Austin grantee (\$102,000 for the program over two years).

The organization hires 30 young people between the ages of 14-17 to work on its 3.5-acre urban farm. It is an excellent opportunity for the youth to learn the journey of food from seed to plate. First-year farm interns begin in February and finish the program in July. Every week in the spring, the farm interns work one day after school for two hours and all day on Saturday. In the summer, they work for six weeks Tuesday through Saturday all day. On full workdays, farm interns spend mornings planting, maintaining or harvesting crops. After lunch the youth are involved in team-building activities, games and workshops on various subjects including composting, money management, leadership and sustainable agriculture.


The youth come from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities and income levels, bringing a lot of different interests to the group. The youth learn how to celebrate their differences and work as a team while learning about fresh food and its impact on the environment.

Urban Roots harvested roughly 22,000 pounds of produce in 2009. Each year, 40% of the produce grown is donated to local hunger relief organizations. In 2009, this amounted to more than 8,000 pounds. The other 60% is sold at farmers markets, through its pilot Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and at local restaurants. The youth are involved in the distribution of food at soup kitchens.

Farm interns can apply for three second-year leadership positions once they have graduated from the introductory 6-month program. These youth leaders participate in recruitment and interviews in the fall and summer and serve as role models and leaders for the incoming youth the following spring. As "assistant crew leaders," "agriculture interns" and "outreach interns," these youth strengthen their leadership skills and acquire a new level of knowledge about agriculture and public speaking.

Urban Roots offers opportunities for the entire community to be involved with sustainable agriculture through volunteer days. Several times a month, youth lead volunteers on the farm, planting and harvesting many varieties of vegetables. Additionally in 2009, *Urban Roots* hosted 140 middle school students on the farm through educational tours to spend a half-day learning sustainable agriculture techniques through workshops, games and light tasks.

Interns from *Urban Roots* are trained in a number of different health and food-related areas. Not only do they learn how to plant and harvest different varieties of vegetables, but



they learn how to market. Each Saturday from March until July, the youth run the *Urban Roots* farm stand at the Austin Farmers Market Downtown. At the market, the interns learn how to manage cash transactions, practice their math and customer service skills and communicate to customers the knowledge they have gained throughout the program.

Urban Roots has a significant, lasting impact on the youth that participate annually. YouthLaunch engages an outside evaluation firm (Shore Research), and staff conducts pre- and post-program surveys to gauge programmatic effectiveness. The organization assesses both outputs and outcomes and looks for changes in attitudes, skills, knowledge and behavior in interns, while measuring the impact their service has on the community. Families are given a survey to help gauge their child's progress and how the program has affected their life outside of work. In 2009, the family survey reported 73% of the youth showed a great deal of change in their interest for healthy foods and the remaining 27% showed at least some change of interest.

Urban Roots youth are exposed to many different leadership and public speaking opportunities through workshops, market days, volunteer days and media events. Many participants begin the program as shy, reserved young teens and exit the program full of confidence and eager to explore new opportunities.

Replication of a program like this is multi-faceted. Farming considerations include securing land that has the infrastructure to support a farm (irrigation, cooler, produce-washing area, greenhouse and potentially a tractor). Programmatically, one needs to connect with partners such as hunger relief organizations (to donate to and to have youth work at), a farmers' market (at which to sell produce), and high schools (from which to recruit farm interns). With respect to the bigger picture, one needs to make sure that the targeted community is willing and interested in having the program.

The costs for the farm depends largely on the arrangement one can work out for the land and how much can be grown from seeds. Many plants need to be started in the greenhouse. The costs for the youth largely revolve around the educational stipends that they receive for

their work. It is important to understand how many staff are needed to run a program like this. A farm manager and a program director – two staff at the very least – are needed. *Urban Roots* started within the larger non-profit YouthLaunch which provided administrative and grant-writing support. By the time the program launched, *Urban Roots* had a grant and partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA and had one VISTA person on board – making a staff of three with 1.5 acres and 15 youth.

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Bastrop ISD Attracts Long-Term Mentors

Focus On Needs

Academic Achievement

Social Skills

Community Involvement

Who is eligible to be a volunteer in Bastrop ISD's (BISD) *Helping Hands Mentor Program*? The answer is simple: any person dedicated enough to spend the time it takes to make a positive difference in the life of a child. Some of the original mentors in the program have been partnered with the same students for ten years.

These volunteers impact student achievement in many positive ways, directly and indirectly. Students benefit through tutoring, learning more about their community and its needs, exploring career options and using their talents. A stable adult in a young person's life can be invaluable, particularly during a challenging time.

BISD is committed to creating and sustaining meaningful and long-lasting relationships between caring adults and youth with the *Helping Hands Mentor Program*. Mentors make a one-year commitment, although many of them remain with their students much longer. Each mentor spends 30 minutes to an hour with the student at school each week.

Teachers, school administrators, parents and even community members recommend students for mentoring. Students are not assigned to the program without their consent: they must first agree to be in the program and then permission must be received from the parents or guardians.

Mentors help kids learn to understand and communicate their feelings, relate to their peers, and develop relationships with other adults. In 2008-09, the *Helping Hands Mentor Program* focused on helping the students develop socially, because social skills benefit the children in other areas of

their lives. Mentors make every effort to involve parents in a way that does not threaten the youth-parent relationship.


Last year mentors in the *Helping Hand Mentor Program* contributed more than 5,500 hours of service to over 210 students. Students showed improved peer and family relationships as well as social skills.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores for all tested grade levels and subjects showed increases in the four content areas:

<u>TAKS</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
ELA	85.0%	89.0%
Math	72.0%	75.0%
Writing	88.0%	91.0%
Science	62.0%	65.0%
Social Studies	82.0%	86.0%

At the end of the year, each mentor has the opportunity to complete the program evaluation form mailed to the home address. At the end of the 2008-09 school year, BISD received 102 evaluation forms out of 210 sent. Over 70% characterized their overall experience with the program as "excellent," overwhelmingly noting both the training and the staff as excellent.

During the 2008-09 school year, one of the district goals was to encourage the community to participate as full partners in the education of all students. The Superintendent's charge was to establish a connection between the external school community and its resources to the internal school



community and its work. Through creativity, teamwork and leveraging resources unique to the community, *Helping Hands Mentor Program* has experienced tremendous growth and supports the district's goal of community connection.

The *Helping Hands Mentor Program* can easily be replicated in other districts. First, create a strategic plan that is unique to the district and community. Second, increase participation and strengthen volunteer relationships by focusing on promotional events and making personal visits to businesses and community-based organizations. Finally, establish clear roles and responsibilities for participants and campuses.

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TAPE Salutes 11 Volunteers

Outstanding school volunteers have one trait in common: a giving spirit. Giving has many faces and many manifestations in schools. When results on a test are not quite as good as anticipated, the volunteer does a little cheerleading and helps the student start again. If tragedy strikes in a student's family, the mentor may make a greater effort to stand by the child. Throughout the school year volunteers say "thank you" to teachers and staff with goodie bags and notes of encouragement.

Whatever these fine volunteers are doing they manage to do it with grace and good humor. This year the Texas Association of Partners in Education salutes 11 people who embody the qualities and spirit of great school volunteers. They represent many others who serve year after year.

These volunteers don't fit well into little boxes or categories. Their qualities keep spilling over from one category into another. For this salute, however, they are introduced in four categories: partnership advocates, persons of wisdom, role models and young leaders.

Partnership Advocates

A partnership advocate is not content to volunteer his or her own hours. An advocate is always looking for ways to widen the circle of volunteers.

Bill Kroger is an advocate and board member for Communities In Schools (CIS) Houston. He has supported the agency and its students for 20 years. He has served CIS, the community and young people by providing corporate legal services at no cost, advocating for summer legal internships and mentoring students. Over the course of Mr. Kroger's long relationship with CIS, he has assisted more than 500 students and convinced more than 100 law firms to participate in the employment program. He has convinced not only Baker Botts (the legal firm where is partner) but other law firms and personal associates to support young people and the mission of CIS by generating more than \$300,000 in financial and in-kind resources.

Under the direction of Mr. Kroger, the attorneys of Baker Botts and other legal professionals have reviewed CIS' articles of incorporation and by-laws, ensuring that they meet the needs of the rapidly expanding agency. Mr. Kroger has advised this agency with its pediatric program, creating agreements with partnering medical and dental providers in order to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) policies. In addition, Mr. Kroger and the firm have revised the personnel procedures and handbook. He has made numerous presentations advising CIS on labor

and employment services, organizational policies and pre-deposition investigations.

Mr. Kroger is a strong advocate for youth development. He was one of the original organizers of the *CIS/John Eikenberg Summer Legal Internship*. This 19-year program was co-created by Mr. Kroger so that at-risk students would have opportunities in the legal profession. It was his vision to partner with prestigious law firms, pairing students with mentors who meet weekly with students to discuss college, professional etiquette and personal goal setting. This past spring, Mr. Kroger leveraged his expertise and professional and personal relationships with colleagues like Barrett Reasoner, President of the Houston Bar Association, to create a new partnership with CIS. The new partnership, which was re-titled, the *HBA/CIS Summer Legal Internship Program*, has been expanded.

As a mentor, Mr. Kroger has supported students in his tenure as a board member. He has spoken at summer employment programs, mentored youth who were hired by Baker Botts and connected students to free legal services. In one instance, a high school student's mother was terminally ill. She wanted her eldest son to be the legal guardian for his younger siblings. Mr. Kroger connected this young man with free representation from the Houston Volunteer Lawyer's program so that his mother's wish would be fulfilled. When the boy's mother died, Mr. Kroger partnered with other CIS board members to ensure this young man would have the necessary resources to support his siblings. Mr. Kroger clearly understands that at-risk students need

help to become independent and productive citizens. It is for this reason that he volunteers at Sharpstown High School, one of the most challenging high schools in the 112 campuses of Houston ISD.

Bobbie Steinert has been the Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) *Shared Dreams Program* full-time facilitator for the past five years, but she has been involved in the program for 20 years. She began by volunteering to wash donated clothing at home.

The program provides basic clothing, toiletries and school supplies for FBISD students in need. With the help of volunteers, Ms. Steinert opens the facility three days a week to parents and guardians who qualify for services. This program is not funded by FBISD, so Ms. Steinert spends the rest of the week processing clothing donations and communicating the program's needs to Shared Dreams campus volunteer coordinators, local businesses, faith-based and civic groups and other area non-profit organizations. Over the past five years annual donations of over \$7,500 as well as donations of clothing and supplies, have been made to the program.

Ms. Steinert communicates regularly and collaborates with East Fort Bend Ministries and Second Mile Ministries to ensure that the program is running efficiently and that they are not duplicating efforts. Many of the Shared Dreams clients are non-English speakers. Ms. Steinert has improved communications by learning to speak Spanish.

Local Girl and Boy Scout groups visit the facility to volunteer and learn about the program, so Ms. Steinert has created scenarios and role-play exercises to help them understand the goals of the program and the needs of the students it serves.

In response to community interest in assisting FBISD families in need during the holiday season, in 2003 Ms. Steinert created "Holiday Cheer." She recruits churches, businesses and service organizations to sponsor approximately 45 families each year, providing food and gifts for over 150 children. School-sponsored clubs, students and staff throughout the district also participate by collecting food or items from a child's wish list.

Over the past two school years, every campus in the district has requested assistance. Ms. Steinert works closely with 69 nurses on 69 campuses and over 200 parent volunteers. She donates over 350 hours a year. When the program began in 1988, the needs of 400 students were met. Under her guidance, that figure has increased steadily, and in the 2007-08 school year, the needs of over 3,000 students were met. When the facility closed due to construction for the 2008-09 school year, Ms. Steinert was unable to have volunteers, parents and guardians at the facility. She did manage, however, to ensure that over 1,400 students still received services.

Research shows that students whose basic physiological needs are met are stronger academically. Having adequate clothing and appropriate supplies increases a student's self-esteem. Through the program Ms. Steinert has helped many students feel a part of— not apart from — the student body and helped them be successful in school. Campuses have reported fewer discipline referrals, and absenteeism has improved.

Demitria Wright, a biologist for CH2MHill Engineering, has been the partnership liaison between CH2MHill and Holbrook Elementary School in the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD for the last two years. She also has served as a mentor at Holbrook for four years.

As the partnership liaison, Ms. Wright was responsible for all of the communication between Holbrook and CH2MHill Engineering. Her knowledge, experiences and love of mentoring has eased many of the fears that individuals and groups had about partnering with schools.

Last year she organized and recruited mentors within her company, helped organize the CH2MHill *Annual Bike Giveaway Day* at Holbrook and coordinated a CH2MHill School Supply Drive for many economically disadvantaged students. She also secured prizes for Holbrook's *Saturday Schools for Success Prize Drive* for students going the extra mile to attend Saturday School. In addition, she spearheaded a wristband fundraiser within the company for one of the students battling Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Ms. Wright spent long hours with the Holbrook liaison planning a Business Partnership Recruitment Breakfast as well as a Business Partnership Recruitment Luncheon. She persuaded her company to financially support the catering and brought Caterpillar into the project. These activities broadened Holbrook's exposure and connected the school with more companies and organizations, including Comcast, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Houston and Multicultural Women of Texas. Her work in the 2008-09 school year led to Caterpillar's agreement to partner with Holbrook for mentoring. They provided 16 mentors for the 2009-10 school year. This new partnership allows more students to build positive relationships with adults and exposes them to career paths with Caterpillar.

Ms. Wright was also instrumental in helping facilitate communication between Holbrook and CH2MHill's lead person for *Engineer's Day* that brings engineers into the school to teach hands-on science activities to fourth graders.

This past year, Ms. Wright spent 20 hours in weekly meetings with her mentee. When an assignment took her to worksites out of state, she kept in contact with him by email through the mentor liaison. Her mentee liked science, so she shared her love of nature with him through books, pictures and interesting finds on her worksite. When they began their relationship three years ago, the child visited the office weekly because of anger and discipline issues. By the time his fifth grade year came around, he had two visits to the office, and his relationship with teachers and classmates blossomed. Finally, after this student's first year at Holbrook, he had failed both of his Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests. By the end of fifth grade, he passed two of his three TAKS tests, one of them being the Science exam.

Surely Ms. Wright's work played an important role in Holbrook moving from an academically *Acceptable* campus to a *Recognized* campus and being recognized as a Model School by the International Center for Leadership in Education.

Persons of Wisdom

From their experiences, persons of wisdom have learned how to apply their knowledge and skills in new situations. They can determine what is needed and how to accomplish it. Such persons of wisdom enrich schools across Texas with their volunteer service.

Dr. Virginia Dailey has been involved in education since 1965, starting her career as the fourth female professor at St. Edwards University and then becoming the first woman to serve as an administrator at that private institution. After retiring in 1996 as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Daily redirected her efforts toward volunteer work, particularly in education.

Her interest in furthering education has led her to involvement with Literacy Volunteers of America, elementary bilingual classes, mentoring children and serving on school district committees.

In the fall of 1997, she completed the training for Literacy Volunteers of America and began working with a bilingual class at one of Bastrop ISD's (BISD) elementary schools. While serving as a bilingual volunteer, she became a mentor and developed a strong relationship with several students. She not only mentored new students each year in the bilingual classroom, but she also had the opportunity to follow those original students throughout their educational careers.

In 1998, she began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in the community and throughout BISD. The district has learned through unsolicited feedback that parents of bilingual students observed noticeable changes in their children's attitudes toward school.

Every year since 1999, she has served on at least one district committee per year, including the District-wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC), Curriculum Review Committee, the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Committee and Campus Improvement Committee.

Experiencing very little positive interaction with peers or adults, the students Dr. Daily works with struggle with vocabulary and social skills. Under her tutelage and support,

they have made great strides both academically and socially. It has been obvious to the teachers of these students that Dr. Daily's influence, teaching styles and expertise have made a positive impact on the students. The teachers who work with Dr. Daily would like to have more volunteers with her wisdom and passion.

Don McGinty is a retired Shell Oil Company employee. He was eager to respond to a call for mentors at his neighborhood school, Quail Valley Elementary, in the Fort Bend ISD. That was at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.

He is not new to mentoring, having mentored in the prison system for seven years. He recognizes the value of meeting one-on-one with an individual. He understands the need for mentors not only for at-risk students, but also for those who are academically able. He knows that many students find themselves in situations at home over which they have no control. He believes all students can benefit from having a mentor.

Mr. McGinty is currently mentoring three students and is committed to meeting with them weekly for periods of about 40 minutes during the school year. Over the past two years he has mentored six students at Quail Valley Elementary and volunteered in different parts of the school. Because the students' self-confidence has grown and their attitudes have changed for the better, they have all shown marked improvements in academic work and attendance. He regularly attends scouting events and soccer games with his grandchildren and volunteers at these events, allowing him time to work with more students from the district.

This year, only one of the students he mentored last year remains at Quail Valley Elementary School. One student moved out of district and the other moved to another district campus. Mr. McGinty decided to follow that student to his new school so that they could continue to meet. Mr. McGinty recognized the value of continuing the relationship beyond the required year, especially since the child was in transition. Also when the need arose for another child to be mentored at the school this year, Mr. McGinty volunteered.

Unfortunately, during spring 2009, the father of one of Mr. McGinty's mentees died. Mr. McGinty gave extra time at school to this student and showed up at the funeral services. It was touching to see the student turn to Mr. McGinty for a hug.

Mr. McGinty refers to his mentoring as "payback to society." He recalls that a prison inmate he mentored said he might not be in prison if someone like Mr. McGinty had been in his life when he was young. That conversation gave Mr. McGinty the inspiration to start mentoring in schools.

Dr. Michael White, a life-long educator, has volunteered at Parkdale Elementary every Monday and Wednesday for ten years. He spends at least 180 hours tutoring and mentoring eight students each school year. He works with small groups of second, third and fourth graders. He makes a tremendous positive impact on these students' academic and emotional needs by promoting self-esteem and teaching strong study habits.

His passion for this school began when he taught sixth grade there from 1961-1964. He also taught at McLennan Community College for 40 years, and has taught classes at Baylor University. He spent two years training teachers at an institute in Liberia, West Africa. His passion for teaching and learning has been a priceless resource for the teachers and staff at Parkdale Elementary.

Not only does Dr. White serve as a tutor and mentor, he also spends time in the Gifted and Talented (GT) classes at Parkdale, teaching the history of Ancient Egypt. He shares stories of his visits to Egypt and brings unique objects for the children to see. He also donates books, magazines, games and other educational items to the GT classroom.

Every year Dr. White conducts a program called *Outside Discovery Learning*. He works with 380 children to plant flowers in the school's garden, incorporating math and science into the lesson.

Dr. White has donated to the library many books he purchased on his travels to other countries. Last year, he presented the school with a special edition "Pinocchio" book with the matching marionette puppet. He also helps

with all the campus extracurricular events. He even donates to the Fall Festival his own hand-crafted castle and doll house, complete with furnishings and actions figures.

Dr. White has had a tremendous impact on the success of Parkdale Elementary. This school received a *Recognized* rating last year, even though 80% of the students are classified as at-risk and 87% are on free and reduced lunches. Because Dr. White gives the students both academic and emotional support, they are able to succeed in the classroom. He personally works with the most challenging students to help them succeed. He tutored ten academically and socially challenged students last year; because of his help and encouragement, all of these children passed the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test.

Role Models

Many children do not have positive role models in their community and home environments. Positive role models, such as the people in this TAPE Salute, give their time and talents to bring constructive adult interaction into these children's lives.

Mark Daly, an American Airlines pilot, began reading to Donna Park Elementary first graders in Bedford six years ago. Once a week, he reads to each first grade class for 15-20 minutes. Through the years, he has touched the lives of more than 400 first graders.

Mr. Daly is a positive role model for Donna Park first graders. He walks into the room with a welcoming, announcer-style voice saying, "Good morning, everyone!" He shares his passion for reading with every first-grader each week. He reads with enthusiasm and expression, engages the children in discussion and keeps them spellbound. As a pilot, he has a broad knowledge of and love for geography. He brings pictures of countries and cities where Donna Park first graders were born and then locates those places on the map. Since Donna Park is rich in cultural diversity and students come from many different continents, Mr. Daly

chooses literature that is culturally diverse, representing different areas of the world. His respect for every child and every culture is a great model for students.

Mr. Daly's goal is to instill a love of reading in students by reading many genres. He often brings books by the same author and discusses likenesses and differences. He always has a purpose for the book he chooses, relating it to the lives of the students. Mr. Daly explains to students how his first grade teacher positively impacted his life and instilled in him a love of reading. He delights the students by sharing letters and stories he wrote when he was a first grader.

Having someone in addition to teachers model reading skills each week tremendously impacts each student's desire to read and helps them grasp the importance of reading in their lives. Many of these students have never been read to or engaged in conversation in their home setting.

Mr. Daly connects with first graders emotionally and cognitively. Emotionally, he builds relationships by taking time to listen attentively to students about their families and experiences. He tells students about his wife and two grown children and brings his wife to meet the students. Cognitively, students learn new vocabulary through stories and informational books read aloud, recognize distinguishing features of stories and continue to develop concepts of how print connects with spoken language.

Mr. Daly is the epitome of a positive role model for Donna Park first graders. He is greatly appreciated and respected by students and staff.

Barbara Adcock lights the pathway to literacy for many students in the Colony Meadows Elementary School in Sugar Land in the Fort Bend ISD. She is the curator of the Colony Meadows Guided Reading Library. Five years ago when the request went out for volunteers to help create the library, Ms. Adcock was the first to answer the call.

The library began with 25 sets of books and now contains 2,180 sets. Ms. Adcock has cross-referenced books by level, title and genre. This cross-referencing

allows teachers and students to select the appropriate books to improve reading scores. She also implemented the computerized system for checking books in and out. She and her husband continue to input new books into the computer and prepare them for student use.

Teachers use the books to provide instruction and reading practice for the students. Research has shown that when a student has reading material at the appropriate level, reading skills improve dramatically. Ms. Adcock has provided this access for hundreds of Colony Meadows students through her generous donation of time, supplies, and skills.

Special Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes also use the library and its resources. This library has enabled the Special Education teachers to match grade-level curriculum to a student's reading level. For example, if the science lesson was about the formation of tornadoes, the teacher would be able to find an appropriate grade-level book for the students.

The reputation of this Guided Reading Library quickly spread through the district. Other campuses asked Ms. Adcock to help establish their own guided reading libraries. She developed training days at Palmer Elementary and Fort Settlement Middle School for their volunteer parents. Over 1,200 students at Colony Meadows have benefited from the Guided Reading Library over the past five years. All students from kindergarten through fifth grade have access to the books in the library as a part of daily classroom instruction.

Even though Ms. Adcock's own son left Colony Meadows Elementary four years ago, she has continued to volunteer and guide the growth of the special library. She spends two to five hours weekly in the library, accumulating more than 150 volunteer hours last year. Over the past five years, she has given the campus the gift of her time and skills – over 600 volunteer hours.

The TAKS reading scores have continued to grow as more teachers and students use the special library. The number of students achieving commended status on the TAKS reading test has also grown. Ms. Adcock's role in that continuing success demonstrates what dedicated volunteers can accomplish.

Abhay Mars has been an integral part of Thursday mornings at Lowery Elementary School in the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD for the past five years through an extracurricular Chess Club for the student body.

“Check.” “Check Mate!” “Ahh man, I should have seen that coming!”

Those words drift from the cafeteria. One can almost hear brains working as students strategize to win.

Students cannot wait until they are in fourth or fifth grade so they can be part of the Lowery Chess Club, which teaches students much more than chess. It is a safe place where kids come together to learn problem-solving and social skills. Mr. Mars has not only taught the students the rules of the game, but he has also taught them how to plan strategies, solve problems, work with others and win and lose with respect for opponents and the game. Last year all of the students that participated in the chess club passed the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and a high percentage earned commended. In fact, 100% of the fifth grade chess members earned *Commended* on all three TAKS tests.

Mr. Mars also taught students how to be peer tutors. After a short time, he was able to step aside, letting the more advanced players teach students new to the game. He taught students to depend on each other for encouragement (“Wow, great move!”), problem-solve (“What do you think I should do now?”) and reflect on how to improve in the future (“Which move would you have done differently that might have helped me win?”). Club members were able to see each other not as adversaries, but as allies. Those relationships carried over into the classroom where they were connected and supportive of each other, uniting in other projects and problem-solving experiences.

Mr. Mars organized all the materials, including dozens of chessboards and chess pieces; made handouts and display boards of chess moves; maintained correspondence with parents; and supervised students each Thursday morning. At the close of each year, he brought parents and students together for a breakfast.

When Mr. Mars' youngest child graduated from fifth grade this year, he recruited a new parent volunteer to carry on this Lowery tradition and provided his successor with all forms and materials for a smooth transition.

Mr. Mars volunteered his service in other Lowery programs, including fourth grade Science Enrichment for two years. He taught classroom lessons with hands on experiments. He also helped with fourth grade Junior Achievement in the classroom and at BizTown, a mock city that allows students to run businesses and experience economics first hand. In addition, he also co-managed a *Destination Imagination* team, volunteered for *Readers in Action* and was a volunteer for field trips and holiday celebrations.

He has been described as an all round volunteer. He could also be called a great role model.

Mr. Mike Moss has been involved with Lubbock ISD (LISD) teachers, students and campuses for more than ten years. The hours donated and lives touched are countless. He has been in the classroom with students, supported teachers and faculty and served on educational boards.

Mr. Moss is an employee of Parkhill, Smith, and Cooper, an architecture firm, and serves as the firm's liaison to the school district. Parkhill, Smith, and Cooper and Bozeman Elementary School have an active partnership. He petitioned his colleagues to donate funds for an Open House and Christmas party at the school.

Over the summer, Mr. Moss spent several Saturday afternoons gathering teacher appreciation gift cards and goodies from other area businesses to be distributed to new teachers joining LISD.

Mr. Moss currently serves as the Partners in Education Advisory Board President, and for two years prior served on the Bylaws Committee. One of his goals as president is to "recruit strong, active, and admirable members." He sets a strong example of how to best serve students.

Mr. Moss represents his firm on the District-wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC), which includes teachers, parents and involved community business leaders. Individuals wishing to serve on the DEIC must be nominated and voted upon before assuming their role.

His passion for kids and kindness of spirit have left a lasting impression on the staff and students at Bozeman Elementary. His own efforts for the school encourages others to take pride in the school and themselves. Bozeman is in a lower socioeconomic area and as such, students at the school do not always have the same community provisions and opportunities found in other areas. Mr. Moss encourages students to devote themselves to education and better their lives. Students are enthusiastic and interested in Mr. Moss's profession as an architect.


The administration reports a 55% increase in student and teacher morale since the school became partners with Parkhill, Smith, and Cooper. Mr. Moss is not only a leader in his community, but also a strong advocate for LISD students, teachers and administrators.

Young Leader

Good news about high school students rarely gets aired or printed in this era of the 24-hour news cycle and social media. The focus instead is on bad or silly behavior of young people. The truth is, many young people are busy making good grades on their campuses and volunteering their time to worthy endeavors. They are leaders today and probably will be leaders far into the future.

Briana Gifford is a senior at Kempner High School and President of the student body. Determination is evident in her leadership style. For Briana, determination is like breathing, she just does it.

On a weekly basis, she spends between five to six hours volunteering and supporting youth leadership



activities and service projects. As student body president, she interacts with the approximately 2,600 students on her campus. Through her other community service projects, she has worked with students throughout the Sugar Land community. Many projects that Briana participates in not only impact her campus, but also the feeder pattern schools zoned to Kempner.

She is an active member of several service organizations including the Sugar Land Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, the Keep Sugar Land Beautiful (KSLB) Youth Board and the Fort Bend ISD Youth Advisory Board. In her advisory capacity for these organizations, Briana can keep the organizations abreast of student concerns and issues, and provide valuable input on how students can have a meaningful impact on the community.

With the help of Keep Sugar Land Beautiful, she has led many recycling projects at the Kempner High School campus. She has encouraged both teachers and students to recycle paper. She found recycling bins and had them placed in all classrooms and offices. Briana also contacted Paper Retriever to put a bin on campus. In order to seek approval

for this project, Briana had to present her recycling ideas to the school's senior leadership, including the campus principal. Once the project was approved, Briana organized students to empty the bins once or twice a week so the paper could be recycled.

Briana sought other ways to recycle. She enlisted the assistance of KSLB to place ten recycling bottle bins on the Kempner High School campus. She also advocated for Kempner High School to adopt the street in front of the campus, Voss Road, so students could make sure the street was kept trash-free.

Briana encourages activities that will engage student groups to participate in interactive activities such as "The Clash of Clubs." This project took many hours of planning. She researched interactive games that all groups could play. During the first year of the event, more than 100 students representing 13 student groups participated.

Briana stands out among other leaders because of her determination for improvement and her interest in helping others.

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