How to prepare your child for one of the most important years
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44 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
14 MIDDLE SCHOOLS
7 TRADITIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS

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16 NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS
5 MILITARY APPOINTMENTS

60,483 STUDENTS

4,391 GRADUATES IN 2021
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16 NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS
5 MILITARY APPOINTMENTS

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Share your thoughts!
NEISD seeks your input as we explore options for 3-year-olds. We invite you to fill out a brief interest survey using the QR code here.
There's a classroom at Castle Hills Elementary School brimming with toys. It's filled with buckets of blocks, magnets and crayons.

In one corner, you'll find dozens of Octoblocks that can be put together to build massive structures.

And on a table, there are tiny robots ready to be coded to accomplish various tasks. And who can pass up the colorful toy dinosaurs?

Hannah Norman is the teacher in that classroom. She's been at Castle Hills for 12 years.

She calls her classroom the Makerspace. It's also the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Technology (STEAM) Lab.

“"This is the lab that really encompasses STEAM, and it brings it all into one home," said Norman. "I get to see kids having fun, and they don't realize that they are learning. They are going through every step of the engineering process. Asking questions and planning. They are just doing it almost without thinking."

Through various innovative and hands-on lessons, students learn how to think critically. They make mistakes and learn from them. It's a fun class that gives students confidence and opens their eyes to new opportunities.

"It doesn't matter what you know when you come in here," said Norman. "You can be anything. You can build anything. You can see these kids who might struggle with reading or struggle with science, and they come in here, and they are in their element, and they can do anything they want."

The great news is that Makerspace and STEAM activities can be found in many classrooms and libraries across the District.

It's a way to engage students, spur their creativity and help them develop a love of learning. And if you ask Hannah's students, it's working.
North East ISD parents begin a movement

When a group of North East ISD parents noticed that some families around them weren’t sending their children to their neighborhood public school, they couldn’t understand why. They knew what a wonderful experience they were having and how vital public schools are to the community.

“We saw the need to get the parent perspective out there,” said Oak Meadow Elementary School mom Terri Pease.

Let’s face it, no one can give you a more honest opinion about a school than a parent. They see what their children are doing, they interact with the staff and they form relationships with other parents. If you have a question, they are the people to ask.

So Terri along with parents Genevieve Sugalski, Cristy Burguete, Cameron Vickrey and Jeff Jackson co-founded a grassroots organization called RootEd to promote the benefits of neighborhood public schools. That was four years ago. Today, RootEd has 180 parent members in eight Bexar County school districts.

“We just love our neighborhood schools and that’s what inspired us,” said Sugalski. “I don’t think we are that different from other parents, but we just truly had a passion and worked so well together.”

Step one is getting the true facts out about public schools and a lot of that is done through social media. A hashtag system has been extremely helpful. Whenever anyone posts about school events or things their students are doing in school – which many of us do – they can add the school’s RootEd hashtag which makes it easy for anyone to find when they are doing online research about a school.

Another priority is bringing the school community together. In addition to promoting campus events and parent involvement year-round, they came up with an event called a “Future Football Game.” It’s been a huge success.

A “Future Football Game” gives elementary and middle school students the chance to see what life could be like at their future high school. Elementary students are invited to sing the national anthem and run out on the field with the players, while middle school students play alongside the high school band.

“We wanted to do something that would draw families to their future high school,” said Sugalski. “We see it now at the games - middle schoolers running around, elementary students mesmerized by the dancers and parents reliving their good old days! It’s the best night and we’re so excited that everyone has embraced this.”

RootEd reps have also been empowered to advocate on a higher level, even testifying at the state capital for additional public education funding.

“I’m truly proud of our RootEd reps. They are amazing humans and we are really excited to see where they are going to take it,” Sugalski.

These amazing humans are making real change and bringing back the personal neighborhood connections that were getting lost. If you are interested in becoming a part of RootEd, email info@proudlyrooted.com.
A day full of SURPRISES
The North East Educational Foundation (NEEF) showed up at several campuses in October with a big surprise for some North East ISD educators. The surprise came in the form of grant checks totaling $316,000.

At Larkspur Elementary School, Principal Cody Miller received a $15,000 grant to create a musical playground. The money will fund percussion instruments so students can play and experiment with music outdoors!

“Music is another language and playing music has direct cognitive and affective benefits,” said Miller. “Having musical instruments available in the school park and playground area is very rare. This grant will bring percussion instruments to Larkspur children and provide kids a space to engage in making music.”

Students enrolled at STEM Academy at Legacy of Educational Excellence High School will have one of the most advanced technological tools at their fingertips. STEM Academy Director Jennifer Jensen received a whopping $78,000 to purchase an Anatomage Table, which allows students to manipulate and interact with virtual cadavers in their classrooms.

“The Anatomage will enable our students to participate in a virtual world as they explore the human body,” said Jensen. “Students will be able to learn about how diseases impact the body by taking an in-depth look at actual specimen slices of the human body. Incorporating this equipment into our program will enable students to examine all of the body systems to see how they interact with one another.”

Career and Technical Education Program Coordinator Cori McGhee received $18,950. This will help fund Vex Robotics kits needed for the new middle school Robotics I course at 10 middle schools. Using the kits, students will build, code and operate their own robots.

“Utilizing Vex Robotics kits offers real-world, hands-on experience,” said McGhee. “The earlier we can reach the students, introduce STEM, and spark that interest the better.”

She hopes the grant will also help grow student interest in cybersecurity and STEM programs while preparing students for a future at NEISD’s newest high school magnet program, the Institute of CyberSecurity & Innovation.

In total, NEEF awarded 37 innovative grants this fall. Grant applications for next year will open in January 2022 and all NEISD educators are encouraged to apply.

NEEF is a private non-profit charitable corporation that raises money to enrich educational opportunities for NEISD students. Thanks to the investment of dedicated community members and business partners, NEEF funds a wide range of innovative classroom projects and Districtwide initiatives, including cutting-edge technology, community gardens, special education resources, STEAM programs, and much more.

To learn more, visit www.northeastfoundation.org
Congratulations to our Johnson High School and Reagan High School Marching Bands!

Both placed in the TOP 10 at The Bands of America Grand National Championships in November! After a highly competitive contest, Johnson placed 7th and Reagan placed 9th in the nation!
At 13-years-old, Jane Moody looks like your average middle school student. She’s currently an eighth-grader at Lopez Middle School. But she recently accomplished something unheard of for someone her age. Jane invented and successfully acquired a patent for an adaptive hand device to help people with mobility impairment.

“I came up with a writing device for people with dexterity issues, so all they have to do is slide their hand in and they can write using their elbow, shoulder or torso without having to apply any pressure,” said Moody.

The idea came to her as a 10-year-old in Suzanne Horan’s Gifted and Talented (GT) class at Wilderness Oak Elementary School. Horan challenged her students to come up with an invention that would change the world. The prompt made Jane think about how her dad’s best friend, Joe Holt, had been diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease.

ALS weakens muscles and impacts physical function. This includes the ability to write. Jane’s invention, aptly called “The Joe Holt,” aims to help people struggling with dexterity and mobility. While Jane’s invention went through the design phase, an incredible connection revealed itself. Mrs. Horan knew Joe Holt. In fact, they had been neighbors for 15 years!

Jane presented her idea at the fifth-grade science fair and the feedback was overwhelming. So many people encouraged Jane to patent her idea. Now, three years later, it’s official.

“I am beyond proud,” said Horan. “I loved that she had a growth mindset the whole way and she followed it through. My goal is for them to better this world and inspire them to make a difference. I want them to know when they think of others they enrich their own lives.”

Holt did not live to see the patent process through, but Jane and her family are determined to move forward with the process in honor of their friend. The entire experience inspired Jane who now has big dreams of becoming a biomedical mechanical engineer when she grows up. Her field of interest? Prosthetics.
Imagine having to send your children to school, while also worrying about basic needs, such as food, your child’s school supplies, clothing or dealing with a language barrier. This is the case for many of our North East ISD families, which is why the District has invested in a special department that serves our families’ most fundamental needs.

NEISD’s Family Engagement department is tasked with developing and maintaining partnerships with parents, staff and community members so that our students can excel. At the heart of this department are 48 family specialists who provide support across 60 campuses.

Elizabeth De La Rosa, is one of those family specialists and has served her families at Wilshire Elementary School for the past 11 years. It is a nonstop job, but she wouldn’t have it any other way.

“It’s amazing,” said De La Rosa. “Even when you are having a bad day, you come to work and see these parents so happy to see you and it changes everything.”

From providing school supplies, clothing, weekend snacks and holiday gifts, Elizabeth has created many connections.

“We are very blessed to have a lot of businesses and sponsors that will donate to us,” said De La Rosa. “We have a church that provides school supplies and backpacks at the beginning of the year. And Fort Sam is a big partner for us. They provide mentors, do supply drives and even send volunteers for some of our school events.”

Family specialists also have access to many community resources when families need referrals for needs, such as housing and utility assistance, health care, counseling services and legal aid.

Around the holidays, they partner with Elf Louise, Blue Santa and the San Antonio Fire Department for holiday meals and gifts for families.

But because the District understands that parents are our students first and most influential teachers, the Family Engagement department also provides high-quality classes to all community members in a variety of subjects.

“Family specialists are here for at-risk families, but they are also here for every family,” said Araceli Dominguez, Assistant Director for Family Engagement. “For example, we have classes on how to get scholarships and how to help your kids prepare for college. We help them know the resources out there. All parents need help at one time or another with their children.”

Family specialists offer weekly classes at their campuses on parenting, health and safety, academic skills, community service and leadership. In some cases, parents will even request a class.

And at the District level, an annual Family Engagement Leadership Training is offered to anyone interested. Each year, hundreds of parents take advantage of the free training, and this year marks its 20th anniversary.

The goal is to work with parents and guardians so they can be more active and supportive in their students’ education. They can learn about internet safety, budgeting, stress management and more.

“If our parents are successful, our students are successful,” echoed De La Rosa.

Because so much goes on when our students are out of school, and because our world has changed causing unforeseen burdens on our families like never before, NEISD wants to help in any way it can.

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**20th Annual Family Engagement Training**

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Classes available in English, Spanish, In-Person and Virtually

neisd.net/fet
Whether it is providing school supplies, giving out emergency clothing and holiday gifts to families, or teaching important life skills classes to parents, NEISD Family Specialist Elizabeth De La Rosa comes to the aid of her families at Wilshire Elementary School. She is one of 48 Family Specialists across the District with a shared passion for helping others.

“We want our families to know that we are here to support them in anything they need. Because we don’t want anything that’s happening at home to make students miss school or feel bad.”

-- Family Specialist Elizabeth De La Rosa
NEISD honors two men for hero qualities

What is a hero? Most would say it involves an individual with exceptional character, achievements and selflessness.

North East ISD’s Heroes Stadium received its name to honor and praise members of the District and community who made a positive impact in the lives of current and future generations. Every two years, NEISD adds a new community member to the Wall of Heroes. This year, the honor was given to two very special people.

At a ceremony on Oct. 22, Michael Bailey and Reagan Greer were unveiled as the newest inductees to NEISD’s Wall of Heroes. One was an educator who brought Texas history to life, the other was a parent and community member who lived a life of service to others.

Bailey taught Texas History at Bradley Middle School for 25 years before retiring recently. During that time, he won many educator awards and acknowledgments at the local, state and national level. Since 1999, he has worked daily to establish and grow the Mills Spring Cabin for thousands of students and guests.

Visitors travel back in time on the complex that includes an authentic 1800s cabin, general store, school house, trading post and museum. And it’s all found on the Bradley campus. His passion and dedication built the complex log by log. He still works as the curator to this day.

“I’ve taught in a classroom for 25 years,” said Bailey. “I started a program I was hoping could help promote and preserve Texas History. And this just sets it in stone that we did the right thing.”

Bailey was joined that evening by his wife Eirene, his mother who he describes as his hero, and many other family members, friends and colleagues.

Receiving the honor posthumously, Greer was a Churchill High School graduate. Aside from being a student leader from a very young age, he was also a dedicated parent volunteer when his children were enrolled in NEISD schools. He served as president of the band booster club, member of the sports association and served on NEISD’s District Education Improvement Committee. He was also instrumental in planning Churchill’s 50th anniversary celebration. He served the greater community in many roles including Justice of the Peace for Precinct 3 and Bexar County District Clerk. He was a successful businessman and was very active in giving back to the community. He passed away in 2019 after a battle with cancer.

Along with many family members and friends, Greer’s children Ryan, Austin and Elizabeth Greer were on hand to unveil his plaque and speak on their father’s behalf.

“My dad was dedicated to serving others in all aspects of his life,” said Elizabeth. “He was an incredible role model who led by example better than anyone I know.”

The passion and dedication of Michael Bailey and Reagan Greer exemplify true hero qualities, and the District is proud to honor them in this way.

Nominations for the next Wall of Heroes inductee will be reviewed in the summer of 2023. For more information, visit: neisd.net/wallofheroes
Advertise with North East ISD and become a featured vendor.

For information, contact Cynthia Ann Salazar, Facilities & Business Marketing Coordinator
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