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Welcome back, LISD Family

DEAR READERS, what a whirlwind the first several weeks of school have been. As a community, it feels like everyday we are faced with something new. If you would have asked me at the end of last school year what I thought the start of the 2021-22 school year would have looked like, I would have optimistically said much more traditional. But throughout our preparations during those last few weeks - even days and hours - to kick off the year on Aug. 11, things changed very quickly. Our informal motto from last year - flexible and nimble - has definitely stayed tried and true as we opened our doors for the start of school.

Even in the midst of new challenges, our staff, students and families came together for an incredible first day. We welcomed more than 400 students and their families to the new LISD STEM Academy at Memorial Elementary; saw countless smiling faces as families dropped off their children across the district, some for the very first time; and partnered with tens of thousands of students across the district to start their learning journey with us.

We’re only a few weeks into this school year, and we’re already seeing amazing things happening across the district. In this issue of The Loop, you’ll read about LISD’s newest campus, Memorial Elementary; LISD’s annual back-to-school fair event that provided thousands of students free backpacks, supplies and more to start the school year; and the recent mental health fair summit our outstanding Counseling and Social Work department held at TECC-W in partnership with Denton County.

Needless to say, although we continue to trek through uncertain times, our schools - made up of some of the most incredible students and staff - continue to amaze me with their grit and determination. I look forward to seeing what the rest of this school year has in store for us, and am honored to serve as Superintendent.

I hope you enjoy this issue of The Loop, and I look forward to seeing you in our communities soon.

Kevin Rogers, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Lewisville Independent School District
Welcome home.

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- Guest Speaking
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Student Mentoring
- Student Internships
- Job Shadowing
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THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL always brings joy and excitement for students and teachers. But starting a new year off in a brand-new school? That’s a whole new level of enthusiasm and anticipation that students were able to experience at the opening of Memorial Elementary.

LISD’s fifth elementary STEM Academy, which is located off Josey Lane in Lewisville, opened its doors on Aug. 11 with a Hollywood-like premier featuring a red-carpet welcome as teachers and staff along with The Colony High School’s drumline greeted students on the first day of school.

LISD voters passed the $737 million bond package referendum in 2017 that included the construction of Memorial Elementary. Memorial serves Pre-K through 5th-grade students offering a unique education experience with a hands-on, collaborative learning environment dedicated to teaching students Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills. Memorial feeds into the Hebron and The Colony High School attendance zones and joins Bridlewood, Donald, Polser and Valley Ridge as LISD elementary STEM Academies.

“We are extremely excited to welcome Memorial Elementary Mavericks to the LISD family this year,” Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin Rogers said. “Seeing all of the dedication and hard work by our staff come to fruition the first day of school was incredible, and I look forward to witnessing the amazing things our students accomplish at our newest STEM Academy.”

Tasked with leading the school in its first year and beyond is Stephanie Lawson, who was appointed principal of Memorial back in February and has been with LISD in multiple teaching and administrative roles since 2005.

“I’m extremely honored to be the first principal at Memorial Elementary,” Lawson said. “It’s really a badge of honor for me, not only that I get to open the school but that I was entrusted by LISD leadership to do so in my first year as a principal.

“I’m truly blessed to have the staff I have at...
Fun, imaginative lighting creates bright spaces to stimulate learning about design.

Floor-to-ceiling art in unexpected places allows Memorial students the wonder of discovery.

Kid-friendly furniture throughout the school makes learning fun and comfortable.

DIFFERENT BY DESIGN
Open spaces throughout Memorial Elementary encourage multiple learning formats for groups of different sizes and for maximum teaching flexibility.
Memorial. I have a staff filled with wonderful people and they are making this happen with me. The fact they wanted to come on this journey with me means a lot. I don’t take that lightly.”

Memorial will house 460 students across Pre-K through 5th grade and has 25 teachers with nearly 50 staff members, giving Memorial a student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 18-1.

Construction for Memorial began in Feb. 2020 and the modern designed, two-story building took over 172,000 man hours to build and features over 118,000 square footage for students to learn, according to Randy Fite, LISD’s Executive Director of Construction. It took 72,000 tons of concrete and 223 miles of wire to create the advanced technological features a STEM Academy requires.

Memorial’s modern open-concept layout and cutting-edge technology throughout the building gives students a different look and atmosphere when they come to school each day. The walls and ceilings are lined with bright colors and lighting, with floor-to-ceiling glass windows and fashionable furniture throughout the building to make learning fun and comfortable.

“The first day of school was really emotional for me because everything had come to life,” Lawson said. “I was reminded why all the hard work that went into that day was worth it. Seeing the students and families come to the building made me have tears in my eyes. I was excited but also very emotional just to see it happen. It was such a beautiful thing to see the excitement on the students’ faces. LISD provided a first day that our community will never forget.”

“We have so many open spaces for our kids to learn,” Lawson continued. “All of our furniture was designed with the intention of collaboration for learning stations throughout the classrooms. I really think our students will benefit from the flexibility of our building with the space and opportunities to have different types of learning since they aren’t confined to one space or one type of learning.”

“We want them to be excited about being Memorial students and be proud about being Mavericks. The thing I tell the students and staff is you’re the first. They all have such a huge role and responsibility in front of them to set that standard for future students at Memorial.”

The whole experience of opening a new school and leading our future generation of students at LISD is everything Lawson hoped and thought it would be. LISD has created another path for students to be successful with Memorial Elementary and she doesn’t take this opportunity for granted.

“I absolutely love our campus,” Lawson said. “It’s definitely not your typical elementary school by any means. I love that it is open and it gives you the feeling of a 21st century building and 21st century thinking. It makes you get away from that brick-and-mortar image of a school and that traditional mindset because it’s a very nontraditional building.

Memorial Elementary School staff on opening day.
Memorial students are now Mavericks, led by a fierce logo and a mascot to handle anything that comes its way, as Principal Stephanie Lawson described it.

The school colors are blue and yellow, a recognition of unity for its two feeder high schools, Hebron and The Colony. Lawson also liked the idea of using the colors for the students’ future high schools, and the meaning behind the colors solidified the decision as well.

“The color blue means trust, loyalty, and honesty,” Lawson said. “When you look at the color yellow it’s a color of happiness and optimism and inspires creativity. When we looked at the things those colors symbolized, they both symbolized things I want Memorial to be known for and represent.”
The Kindness Wave Continues

Since 2018, students across Lewisville ISD have committed to kindness by taking a week and focusing on the many ways to be kind to those around them. Kindness Week started at the high school level and the campaign’s message has since spread to all LISD middle and elementary schools. A group of Student Ambassadors at each campus, led by a staff-member Kindness Liaison, take the leadership role in making kindness an integral part of daily campus life, especially during Kindness Week.

**START A KINDNESS WAVE**
Wear your #LISDBEKIND shirt (or any shade of blue)
Focus: Kind to our friends

**POWER UP WITH KINDNESS**
Dress like your favorite superhero
Focus: Kind to the heroes all around us

**QUOTABLE**
“A little thought for others makes all the difference.”
– Winnie the Pooh

**QUOTABLE**
“I think a hero is any person really intent on making this a better place for all people.”
– Maya Angelou

lisd.net/bekind  #LISDBEKIND
KINDNESS WEEK

**SHINE BRIGHT WITH KINDNESS**
Wear your brightest neon colors
Focus: Kind to ourselves

**DREAMING OF KINDNESS**
Wear school-appropriate pajamas
Focus: Kind to our loved ones

**TEAM KINDNESS WINS**
Wear school colors/spirit gear
Focus: Kind to our classmates/educators

**QUOTABLE**
“Sometimes it takes only one act of kindness and caring to change a person’s life.”
– Jackie Chan
A Fun First Day

On Aug. 11 Lewisville ISD welcomed back more than 50,000 students for the 2021-22 school year, with red carpets, balloons, drumlines, student greeters, welcoming signs and background music to start the day.
FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR, dedicated district employees and community partners worked tirelessly to plan the Lewisville ISD Back-to-School Fair, an annual event that provides thousands of students with free backpacks, supplies and more.

The district shifted gears from hosting a traditional fair to a hybrid fair that included campus distribution of backpacks and supplies and a small in-person health fair for students to have eye exams, immunizations and sports physicals.

“Although the health fair did not resemble the spirit of the traditional fair, our providers, vendors, families, nurses, and volunteers created a positive atmosphere to jump start the joy of going back to school,” LISD Director of Health Services Melanie Vincelette said. “Students and parents were able to access health and wellness resources, and I am grateful to everyone for their participation in making our hybrid fair a success.”

It took 35 members across nine committees, close to 700 volunteers, and more than 100 hours of volunteering to administer 350 immunizations, 90 vision screenings and 15 sports physicals; and to organize 253,000 items of supplies to be stuffed in 4,000 backpacks and deliver them to every LISD school.

“We are fortunate to be surrounded by a community of organizations and individuals who provide support to our students and families,” LISD Elementary Social Worker Beth Ann Beckman said.

“The Back-to-School Fair is a great example of the strong community support we have in our district,” LISD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin Rogers said. “Thanks to hundreds of staff, volunteers, many exceptional community partners, and the work of the LISD Counseling and Social Work Services and Health Services Departments, this event would not be possible. Despite the continued challenging circumstances, I am proud to say we were able to serve more than 4,000 students this year.”

OUR SPONSORS, OUR HEROES

In addition to volunteers stuffing backpacks and delivering them across the district’s 127-square miles, the supplies, backpacks and health fair services wouldn’t be possible without sponsors. Special thanks to The Village Church and Valley Creek Church (Platinum Sponsors); Costco Wholesale and the Greater Lewisville Association of Realtors (Diamond Sponsors); Granite Construction, Morningstar Storage and Trietsch Memorial United Methodist Church (Gold Sponsors); and CareVan, Lions Club, PediPlace and Walmart (Service Sponsors).
FRONTLINES

CLOSER LOOK

LEWISVILLE ISD hosted leaders from Denton County school districts, municipalities, mental health facilities and hospitals on July 28-29 for a first-of-its-kind event by coordinating a mental health summit at LISD’s Technology, Exploration and Career Center West (TECC-W) campus, with the goal of coordinating mental health support for school-aged children across the county.

Nearly 50 leaders in Denton County, including LISD Superintendent Dr. Kevin Rogers and Monya Crow, LISD Executive Director of Counseling and Social Work Services, attended the two-day summit. Speakers and presenters also included Hon. David W. Jahn from Denton County Court; Kristy Taylor, Executive Director of Judicial Commission on Mental Health; and Kristen Howell, CEO of the Denton County Advocacy Center.

“Denton County is widely recognized for its strong commitment to providing mental health resources, whether it be a school district, county facility or a private facility,” Crow said. “This was a tremendous opportunity to get all the major stakeholders in the room to collaborate in developing stronger partnerships across the county to ensure everyone we serve and who needs our help is able to receive services that speak to their individual needs.”

“This event highlighted what we are doing well and what we want to emulate while highlighting what the gaps are where we need to focus some collaborative attention,” said Taylor.

By assessing the needs across systems and communities, the group worked to identify those gaps and opportunities for improvement, then developed a set of priorities that will guide the work moving forward.

“We know for our children to develop into healthy, well-rounded individuals, we have to do much more than serve them from an academic perspective,” Crow said. “Our schools are often the first mental health resource for our students and

During the summer Mental Health summit, LISD Executive Director of Counseling and Social Work Services Monya Crow explains to television news interviewers the need for coordinated mental health support for school-age children in Denton County.

The Mental Health Focus

By Ryan Cox

District hosts Denton County leaders at mental health summit
LISD schools are successful because of the supportive communities we serve.

To show our appreciation, we invite local senior citizens (60+) to be a part of an exciting new group, the Senior Ambassador Program.
their families, and it is vitally important for us to be strongly connected with all the other resources out there."

Lewisville ISD has more than 160 counselors with a portion of them specialized in mental health focus to provide numerous outlets and resources for students in preparation for the first day of school on August 11 and throughout the 2021-22 school year. In addition, LISD has a rich relationship with mental health providers throughout the community to ensure families have the resources they need.

Crow and her staff want the students to feel rooted and a sense of belonging within the LISD school system. Having a strong mental health framework and safety net in place when the students need it is a core belief for Lewisville ISD.

“In the long run it would be nice if mental health is treated the same way as our physical health is treated by our regular doctors,” said Judge Jahn. “If you think about it, when you're born you start having a wellness checkup with a pediatrician and you maintain your medical treatment all the way through your adult life with your primary care doctors. The sooner we learn to address mental health along those same lines of our physical health we'll have a more stable society.”

To watch NBC 5's coverage of the event, visit lisd.net/loop23. To read Community Impact’s story, visit lisd.net/loop24. For more information on mental health and counseling in the district, visit LISD.net/counseling.
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A Focus on Social-Emotional Learning

By Tristen Wilson

**Educators Choose** their profession not for money or notoriety, but because of a deep love of learning and an unwavering compassion for students. They have a strong desire to impact the future generation for good. Teachers are teachers because they care.

This has never been more apparent than last year, as educators navigated caring for and teaching their students through the pandemic. Lewisville ISD educators worked tirelessly to design new learning pathways, adapt procedures and provide multiple avenues for student engagement.

LISD Superintendent Dr. Kevin Rogers takes pride in the work and resilience teachers and administrators have shown these last 18 months.

“No one could have fully imagined the challenges we have had to face,” Rogers said. “I am proud and thankful for the way the LISD team has responded to many difficulties. The heart of the educators in LISD is tremendous. Overcoming these obstacles came at a financial cost to school districts across the nation.

As part of the American Rescue Plan Act, signed into law on March 11, 2021, school districts in Texas received additional funds through the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER III) grant to help with learning loss and challenges schools face due to the pandemic.

LISD Deputy Superintendent Lori Rapp said the funds have come when districts are working hard to narrow achievement gaps and help students break through new barriers that surface due to COVID-19.

“More than just needing a step up in math or reading, the last 18 months have created new groups of students who have experienced food insecurity, housing loss and family illness,” Rapp said. “We understand an individual’s capability to learn can be
greatly affected by situational variables such as these. Sometimes a new book or extra pencils are not enough. We need to provide daily, impactful social-emotional learning, additional touch-points with school counselors and deepen our instructional offerings. We want to help our teachers make the most of every minute they have with their students.”

The district, and society as a whole, has seen an increase in stress and anxiety stemming from the pandemic.

“In an attempt to cope with a lot of uncertainty, we have seen the exacerbation of emotional dysregulation,” Lewisville ISD Executive Director of Counseling and Social Work Services Monya Crow said. “ESSER is allowing us to better support the needs of our students and families. We have added additional staff dedicated to assisting in social-emotional learning on our campuses.”

Crow said the district knows it is imperative to dedicate resources to their emotional wellness so students can achieve academically.

“Our hope is that focusing on social-emotional skills will have a positive impact on the lives of our students,” Crow said. “We desire to help them as they process stress and change and in turn build a greater capacity for resilience and hope.”

The ESSER III grant, distributed to Texas schools through the Texas Education Agency (TEA), uses the existing Title 1 formula to determine the amount schools should receive. With this allotment formula already in place, TEA was able to dispense the funds in a timely manner and allow schools to utilize them to meet the immediate needs. School districts are receiving these funds as one-time installments from the federal legislature and will not be included in school district budgets for the future.

LISD Director of Compliance Courtney Hart said the district has been extremely mindful of this when planning and appropriating the funds.

“The district has been very thoughtful and deliberate in how these funds should be used,” Hart said. “With the knowledge this is not a recurring grant, the district has taken extensive steps to look at how we can invest in students and families right now and ultimately better prepare them for future success. It is about giving them a strong curricular foundation to be successful.”

Hart said while Lewisville ISD administrators and staff have put a lot of time and consideration into how the money should be used, the voice of the community is also a driving force in identifying needs and services.

“From the beginning, we knew we wanted the community’s input on the ESSER III funds. When they released the ESSER III guidelines and stakeholder input was part of the criteria, that was something we already had planned,” Hart said. “It is not just our schools; it is our families, students and communities’ schools. Gathering community input was vital for us to have a collective commitment to ensure our students and families are taken care of.”

Lewisville ISD used multiple methods for parent and community feedback. The district hosted several public meetings both virtual and in-person. In addition to the meetings, the district emailed surveys to more than 56,000 community stakeholders.

“We wanted to make it easy for people to give their input, so we chose different locations and gave the option of in-person or online,” Hart said. “Our in-person meetings coincided with summer school, and that allowed parents to attend when picking up their students. The overall feedback we received was overwhelming.”

As a longtime community member, Dr. Rogers said he was encouraged by the participation but not surprised.

“Lewisville ISD is an exceptional district with exceptional students and community. I know how hard our campuses have worked to serve students,” Rogers said. “LISD hopes to stretch the ESSER III funds to reach as many kids as we can. The district has a long history of fiscal responsibility and I know it will be no different with this grant. Ultimately, our hope is to see students in LISD thrive and be successful in the present and in the future.”

“Sometimes a new book or extra pencils are not enough. We need to provide daily, impactful social-emotional learning.”

- LISD Deputy Superintendent Dr. Lori Rapp
TCHS Senior Grayson Ryan and his dad, Head Coach Cleve Ryan are enjoying their final season of high school basketball together.

“I try to cherish the little things with him, whether it’s a practice or offseason workout,” says Dad.
MANY PARENT-CHILD DUOS get to share the experience of a youth sports team as coach and player. Not many also get to share the experience on a court or field beyond that – especially at the high school varsity level.

That is the case for The Colony High School boys basketball team. The head coach is Cleve Ryan and his son, Grayson Ryan, is on the squad. This is not breaking news, as Grayson was on the varsity roster last season. However, the 2021-22 school year is different. Grayson is a senior.

What started with Grayson running around Tommy Thomas Gymnasium as a five-year old when his dad was announced as the head coach before the 2004-05 season and serving numerous seasons as a ball boy has come to this.

“[I need time to slow down],” said Coach Ryan, who has worked in Lewisville ISD for 25 years (three seasons as TCHS assistant coach and four years at Arbor Creek Middle School). “I try to cherish the little things with him, whether it’s a practice or offseason workout. I know once the season starts in November, the remaining months will go fast.”

Added Grayson, who attended LISD’s Hicks Elementary, Morningside Elementary and Griffin Middle School: “I try to take everything even more seriously this year. This is our last year at The Colony High School together. I want to make the most of it.”

As far as their coach-player relationship, it is a healthy one. “Grayson allows me to coach him,” Coach Ryan said. “There are times when I have to get on him a little bit more or differently, but it works. He has to earn his playing time.”

Added Grayson, who is a 6-4 starting guard with aspirations of playing at the college level: “Our relationship on the court is not much different than anyone else on the team. We try to keep it as normal as possible. I treat him like a coach and he treats me like a player.”

The Ryans credit conversations about how the parent-child relationship works best in high school sports with others around the state who have been in the same boat.
Coincidentally, two of those duos are from TCHS: baseball head coach Martin Dean and son Matthew (Class of 2011) and softball head coach Deana Coleman and daughter Jayda (Class of 2021).

TCHS Principal Dr. Tim Baxter sees how the Ryans are excelling, just as the Deans and Coleman did.

“It has been a joy to see Coach Ryan and Grayson together over these last few years,” Baxter said. “They have a wonderful father-son bond and exhibit tremendous TCHS spirit. It is even more special now that Grayson is a senior on Coach Ryan’s team. It’s a special opportunity and time for them.”

The Ryans – with wife/mother Stephanie (LISD employee for 20 years) and daughter/sister Kennedy (TCHS Class of 2019) cheering them on – are hoping all of this culminates into a successful year on the court, especially coming off a fourth straight playoff season.

“This season will be special and fun because of Grayson being a senior, but we both have a common goal and that is the success of the entire team,” Coach Ryan said. “We need to keep the playoff streak going.”

Added Grayson: “I have personal goals, but the most important thing is shooting to win the district title and make the playoffs.”

Whatever results are in store for this season, it will for sure be a memorable one as the last name “Ryan” will be announced twice during the introductions.

“We have a job to do on the court together,” Coach Ryan said. “It will be fun to look back when we are older and talk about these four years at The Colony High School, especially the good memories from his senior basketball season.”

Added Grayson: “This is definitely a special time for both of us. We can’t waste any of it. This is our last opportunity together, but it is the best opportunity.”

To keep up with the Ryans and TCHS boys basketball, follow @TheColonyHoops on Twitter.
OVER $5 MILLION AWARDED TO LISD SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

Since 1990, corporate partners and local donors have trusted the Lewisville ISD Education Foundation to bridge the gap between the school district and an invested community of families and residents. LEF achieves this through scholarships, teacher grants, fellowships, employee awards, and special projects, helping the district and community grow into the next phase of innovative learning and limitless opportunities.
Lewisville ISD is committed to providing a challenging and inclusive learning environment where ALL students can enjoy thriving, productive lives in a future they create.

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