



# insider

THE LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS FROM SAN ANTONIO ISD

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## NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



### Carvajal lizards to illustrate election lessons



Carvajal Elementary wants students to know that voting is an essential part of being a responsible citizen. A pair of Carvajal teachers are bringing social studies lessons to life with a campus-wide election for the office of "Master Carvajal Pet"! The two candidates are bearded dragons Charzard and Eevee. Charzard represents Danielle Salgado's fifth grade class, while Eevee is the candidate from Cynthia Bever's second grade class. All voter registration cards are being distributed to students over the next few weeks. Students need to register to vote. Carvajal students will then cast their ballots on Election Day on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Stay tuned as we cover this important election throughout the semester.



### Herff students started year with home visits



One of the joys in blending campuses this year is creating new traditions. Dr. Stephanie Ratliff wasted no time. The veteran principal moved, with many of the staff and students, from Douglass to Herff elementary this year, and she was ready to move a much-loved tradition with her: the home visits.

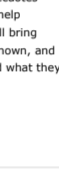
"I started the home visits as a way for families, students included, to see and know I am there for them. I am going to always be there, judgement-free, for them and our kids," Ratliff said. "I really just wanted the families to get to know me, and I wanted to get to know them where they are the most comfortable. I didn't want families to feel like the only place they would see me was at school."

Ratliff and four other staff visited more than 450 students in July, dropping off goodie bags with a family calendar, books, candy, and a squishy.

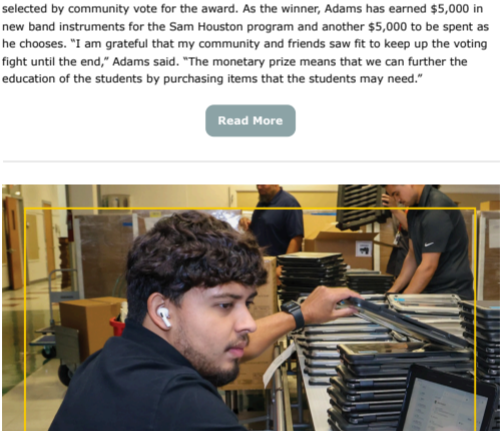
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### Students visit colleges in West Mass, Connecticut



Thirty-two juniors and seniors across the district have a better idea of their college plans after a joint venture between the department of Postsecondary Initiatives and the SAISD Foundation took them on a summer trip to colleges and universities in Massachusetts and Connecticut. They visited Trinity College, The University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst College, Smith College, College of the Holy Cross, Tufts University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Hampshire College. "We picked schools that had high graduation and retention rates," Dustin Nieto, director of postsecondary initiatives said. "And schools that had programs that could meet full financial need. We selected institutions that we knew that our students would be successful and supported at if they choose to enroll." Students also participated in valuable workshops including interview skills, essay writing, return on investment and postsecondary planning.



### Counselor's puppets bring SEL lessons to life

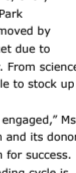


Back to school time at Maverick Elementary means that students are once again meeting counselor Jeanette Zuniga's puppets. The five puppets, several of whom have been around 19 years, include Roberto the Rooster (pictured). Their antics and anecdotes allow Zuniga to teach important social-emotional learning (SEL) lessons and help illustrate the pillars of character in the district's guidance curriculum. "They all bring something special to my guidance lessons," she added. "They are very well known, and the kids absolutely love them." Zuniga took the time to introduce the five and what they each bring to her lessons.

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### Band director honored by Manilow Music Project

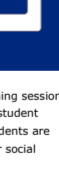


Sam Houston High School band director Bruce Adams had the opportunity of a lifetime when he met famous singer Barry Manilow last week. Adams is San Antonio's winner of the Manilow Music Teacher Award. The Manilow Music Project announced in the spring that in each city of Manilow's summer tour, one high school music teacher would be selected by community vote for the award. As the winner, Adams has earned \$5,000 in new band instruments for the Sam Houston program and another \$5,000 to be spent as he chooses. "I am grateful that my community and friends saw fit to keep up the voting fight until the end," Adams said. "The monetary prize means that we can further the education of the students by purchasing items that the students may need."

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### Bond 2020 funds Chromebook, iPad refresh



While Bond 2020 is improving SAISD's school facilities through major renovations at more than two dozen campuses, it is also helping to ensure that all the district's school facilities are equipped with the latest technology. That includes the recent refresh of some 16,000 Chromebooks and 6,000 iPads throughout the district. The bond program is funding \$90 million in technology improvements across the district, including interactive panels, computers, laptops, upgraded and expanded wi-fi access, and training that teaches educators how to integrate technology into their lessons. Visit the Bond 2020 website to learn more about the district's Lighthouse Technology initiative and bond-funded technology.

[Read More](#)

## NEWS FROM THE SAISD FOUNDATION



### Foundation donor funds additional teacher shopping

Thanks to the SAISD Foundation, a generous donor, and the Texas Cavaliers, every teacher at Margil Elementary, M.L. King Academy, and Green at Riverside Park Elementary received a \$250 grant for classroom supplies. The donor was moved by recent articles that illustrated how much Texas teachers spend out of pocket due to school budget challenges, as Texas lags behind most states in teacher pay. From science materials to everyday essentials like markers and paper, teachers were able to stock up on what they needed to engage their students and make learning fun.

"This is an awesome opportunity to help our students learn and get them engaged," Ms. De Leon from M.L. King Academy said. "We're so grateful to the Foundation and its donors who support our teachers and recognize the importance of equipping them for success. Teachers, do you have an idea for a mini-grant in your classroom? The funding cycle is now open for this school year. Learn more about how the SAISD Foundation can help you fund a classroom or school-wide project."

[Apply for a Mini-Grant](#)

## REMINDERS

### SAISD EDUCATORS ENGAGE TO ACHIEVE

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
**Dr. Karen Mapp**  
 HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
 GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Don't miss this inspiring keynote with Dr. Karen Mapp as she shares innovative strategies to reframe and enhance home-school partnerships. Learn how to create impactful family engagement practices that drive student academic success.

**SEPTEMBER 20**  
**EDUCATOR KEYNOTE**  
**DR. KAREN MAPP**  
 8:35 AM - 9:45 AM @ Alamo Convocation Center  
[REGISTER](#)

**PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS**  
 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM @ Alamo Convocation Center  
[REGISTER](#)

**CONTACT US**  
 (210) 554-2205  
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Are you ready to transform your approach to family engagement? Our upcoming session offers practical strategies to turn family engagement into a powerful tool for student success. When families are actively involved in their children's education, students are more likely to earn higher grades, attend school regularly, and develop better social skills.

To help you make the most of family engagement, we're excited to offer an inspiring session led by Dr. Karen Mapp, a leading expert in family and community engagement Sept. 20 at Alamo Convocation Center. Dr. Mapp has dedicated her career to helping schools develop effective partnerships with families that drive student achievement. In this session, she will share practical strategies to turn family engagement into a powerful instructional practice. You'll learn how to communicate with intention, leverage proven resources, and create a culture of excellence, one family connection at a time.

[Register for Keynote](#)

[Register for Breakout Session](#)

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Watch the superintendent's latest *Quick Takes* with Jaimee video.

## CLOSING SHOTS



We're almost through four full weeks of school, and we love seeing all the smiles, laughter and learning taking place. For more than 2,000 students around the district, it is the start of their last school year in San Antonio ISD, before they walk the stage at graduation next spring. Schools have been celebrating their 12th grade students and encouraging them for the rigorous year ahead with special senior privileges including senior sunrises. Pictured are events from St. Philip's Early College High School, Brackenridge High School, Burbank High School, and Young Women's Leadership Academy. We have seen amazing potential in this class of 2025 and can't wait to celebrate all they do this year.

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