



# insider

THE LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS FROM SAN ANTONIO ISD

Volume 25 | Number 9 | December 12, 2024

## NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



### Students showcase skill in Spanish Spelling Bee

The SAISD Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment team collaborated with the Dual Language, ESL & Migrant team to hold the District's Annual Spanish Spelling Bee Competition last month. Eighty-eight students from 44 campuses from across the district met at Mark Twain Dual Language Academy to compete for a chance at moving on to the regional competition. The first-place winner from each grade level competition will represent SAISD at the Region 20 Spanish Spelling Bee on Feb. 11, 2025, where they will compete with students from across the area.

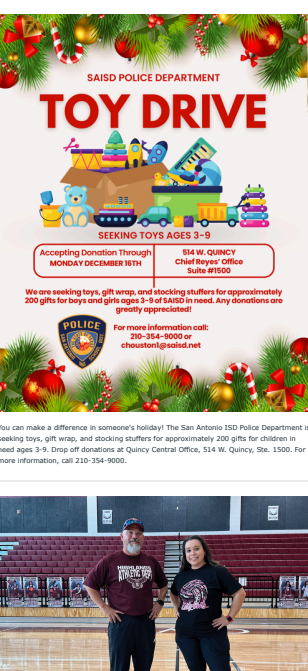
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### Fourth graders learn about farm life at Burbank

The week before Thanksgiving, nearly 1,600 fourth grade students from across the district got a greater understanding of the origins of their food. Agriculture science students at Burbank High School hosted their peers at the school for Ag in the City. The elementary students visited over three days (Nov. 19-21), touring the farm facilities, engaging with the animals, planting their own seeds, making simple recipes, and learning about careers and educational opportunities in agriculture. "My experience of going to Burbank was good because I saw a chicken's egg and also because we got to have a plant to grow," Ruhama, a Baskin fourth grader, said. "The different stations were cool and fun. My favorite one was making butter and eating it with a piece of tortilla."

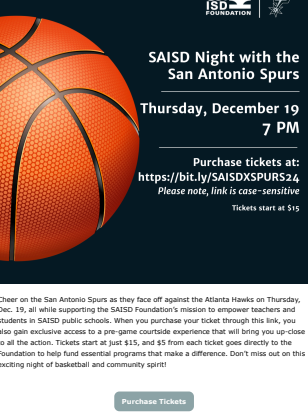
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### Substitutes honored for outstanding service

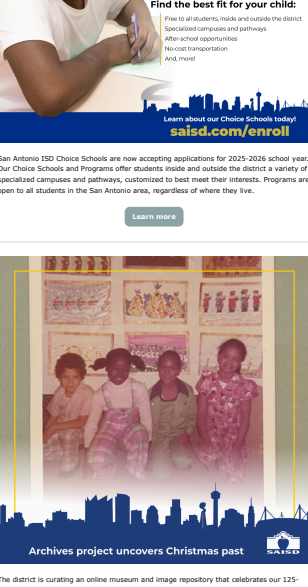
To recognize the critical role substitute educators play in supporting our students and schools, the district celebrated recipients of its inaugural SAISD Substitute Educator Excellence Awards on Substitute Educator Day, Nov. 22. The awards highlight the invaluable contributions substitutes make by ensuring continuity of instruction, fostering positive learning environments, and stepping in with flexibility and dedication. "Our winners embody excellence," said Dr. James Harrell, Chief of Human Capital Management. "They consistently work to make sure that our young people have a seamless instructional experience. We are incredibly grateful for their service." Inaugural winners include Norma Aguilar at Edison High School, Romeo Gomez at Japhet Elementary, and Sarah Panzarella at Advanced Learning Academy - Euclid. They were all nominated by campus principals for their excellent service.

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### Maverick earns spirit mum for PD participation

The Organizational Learning department surprised the staff from Maverick Elementary School with the PD (Professional Development) Spirit Mum for having the highest attendance for a single campus at "PD in Pajamas" Nov. 7. During PD in PJs, teachers and staff have the opportunity to attend enriching professional development that will help in their classrooms and will ensure classroom engagement and achievement. "The journey to positive student outcomes starts with a strong professional development path," Graciela Bell, director of Organizational Learning said. "By offering a Campus Spirit Mum, we are encouraging participation, motivation, and friendly competition. We all play a role in ensuring professional development is high quality and engaging, so our students succeed." The next PD Spirit Mum will be awarded at Western EPIC Saturday at Brackenridge High School on Feb. 1.



### Drum major returns to Macy's Day Parade

Two years in a row! Highlands High School drum major and trombone player Ben Mendez returned to New York City to march in the Macy's Day Parade as part of the Macy's Day Great American Marching Band. This was his second consecutive appearance in the event. About 180 high school band students are selected nationwide for the Macy's Day Great American Band. Nine trombone players are appointed. Ben was one of those selections for the second straight year in a row. "It is a prideful moment," Mendez said. "I auditioned and have made it twice to go to the Macy's Day Parade, and it is a big stepping stone for other band students in SAISD. All the amazing people I met and bonded with last year, they are basically like a second family. Marching in a band and playing music in the Macy's parade, it is really a thrilling experience." The SAISD Foundation assisted Mendez with his journey to New York City.



### College Board recognizes nearly 200 students

San Antonio ISD had a record number of College Board recognized students this year! Nearly 200 high school students from 13 high schools (including Jefferson High School, above) earned Academic honors from the College Board National Recognition Programs for excelling on College Board assessments and in their classrooms. These recognitions can be included on college and scholarship applications, helping students connect to colleges and stand out during the admission process.

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### Students receive laptops for perfect attendance

Attendance really pays off! That's what more than 100 students at Lanier High School learned last month when they received free laptops, internet service equipment, and two years of free internet courtesy of Compustore for having perfect attendance during the first nine weeks. "Attendance is one of the most important things," Jose Gonzales, father to three in the Lanier feeder pattern, said. "If you're not in school you don't learn. Besides grades, attendance is the most important thing." His oldest daughter, who plays basketball and participates in law enforcement at Lanier, was one of the laptop recipients. "One of the things I love about Lanier is all the great opportunities and programs they have," he added.

**SAISD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

# TOY DRIVE

SEEKING TOYS AGES 3-9

Accepting TOYS, gift wrap, and stocking stuffers for approximately 200 gifts for boys and girls ages 3-9 of SAISD in need. Any donations are greatly appreciated!

814 W. QUINCY  
Chief Reyes' Office  
Suite #1500

For more information call:  
210-354-9000 or  
chouston@saisd.net

You can make a difference in someone's holiday! The San Antonio ISD Police Department is seeking toys, gift wrap, and stocking stuffers for approximately 200 gifts for children in need ages 3-9. Drop off donations at Quincy Central Office, 514 W. Quincy, Ste. 1500. For more information, call 210-354-9000.



### School community celebrates Bond 2020 milestone

This evening, students and staff at Highlands High School will join the community to celebrate completion of the school's new athletic addition. This Bond 2020 milestone includes a new competition gym, which replaces Highlands' original 1958 gymnasium. Other improvements include a new secondary gym, girls' and boys' locker rooms, two new weight rooms, a training room, a mat room, saunas, and coaches' offices. With a pep rally, ribbon ceremony, open house and "tailgate," this high-energy event is sure to be fun and memorable for the whole community! Above, Highlands High School athletic coordinators Roger Landeros and Tracy Guadarrama are ready to unveil their school's new competition gym and athletic support spaces to the community during tonight's celebration to mark Bond 2020 improvements at the campus.

[Learn more about Bond 2020](#)

## NEWS FROM THE SAISD FOUNDATION



### Schools recycle more than 846,000 pounds of material

To celebrate Texas Recycles Day Nov. 15, the SAISD Foundation invited representatives from 24 district schools to Sarah King Elementary to learn who had created the biggest recycling impact over the previous five weeks. The results were astounding. Over 846,000 pounds of recyclable material were collected across the 24 elementary schools and academics. To celebrate, Unilever and H-E-B teamed up with the SAISD Foundation to award prize money to the participating schools.

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**SAISD FOUNDATION**

## SAISD Night with the San Antonio Spurs

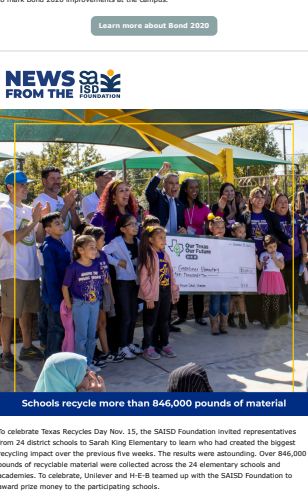
Thursday, December 19  
7 PM

Purchase tickets at:  
<https://bit.ly/SAISDXSPURS24>  
Please note, link is case-sensitive

Tickets start at \$15

Cheer on the San Antonio Spurs as they face off against the Atlanta Hawks on Thursday, Dec. 19, all while supporting the SAISD Foundation's mission to empower teachers and students in SAISD public schools. When you purchase your ticket through this link, you also gain exclusive access to a pre-game courtside experience that will bring you up-close to all the action. Tickets start at just \$15, and \$5 from each ticket goes directly to the Foundation to help fund essential programs that make a difference. Don't miss out on this exciting night of basketball and community spirit!

[Purchase Tickets](#)



### Foundation receives Business Journal Impact Award

The San Antonio Business Journal hosted an inspiring event to celebrate its inaugural class of Impact Award winners in November. The SAISD Foundation was recognized as one of 11 nonprofit honorees, reflecting the dedication the organization brings to its mission every day. "The San Antonio Business Journal's inaugural class of Impact Award winners have shown what it means to serve, volunteer and help others succeed," the Business Journal wrote in the award announcement. The publication also honored six for-profit companies and eight individuals. Our heartfelt thanks to the SAISD Foundation team for their hard work in to help every student and teacher in San Antonio ISD thrive. Congratulations to all the 2024 Impact Award winners.

## REMINDERS

### SAISD Choice Schools are now accepting applications for 2025-2026!

**SAISD CHOICE SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS**

Find the best fit for your child:

- Free to all students, inside and outside the district
- Specialized campuses and pathways
- After-school opportunities
- No cost transportation
- And, more!

Learn about our Choice Schools today!  
[saisd.com/enroll](https://saisd.com/enroll)

San Antonio ISD Choice Schools are now accepting applications for 2025-2026 school year. Our Choice Schools and Programs offer students inside and outside the district a variety of specialized campuses and pathways, customized to best meet their interests. Programs are open to all students in the San Antonio area, regardless of where they live.

[Learn more](#)



### Archives project uncovers Christmas past

The district is curating an online museum and image repository that celebrates our 125-year history and historical treasures! We're starting with stories and memories behind the schools that were closed as part of the 2023 rightsizing decision. From the vault, we found Ms. Allert's class from Tynan Elementary in 1975, studying the counting song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Are you going home for the holidays? Take this time to help us build our SAISD Archives! Did you do or a family member attend or work at a now-closed SAISD school? We want to hear your stories and see your treasured artifacts. Help us preserve these memories!

[Share your memories](#)

**Share Your Voice!**

**REIMAGINE OUR SAISD SPACES**

Together, we can reimagine how our former school buildings can bring new life to our communities. Help create positive change by taking our survey.

[SAISD.NET/FRPSURVEY](https://saisd.net/frpsurvey)

Reimagine our SAISD Spaces! All members of the community are invited to participate in a survey about repurposing SAISD's former school buildings. Together, we can reimagine how these buildings can bring new life to our communities. Help create positive change by taking our survey. Share your voice!

[Take the Survey](#)

**SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE**

Watch the superintendent's latest Quick Talks with Jaime video.



Highland Hills Elementary hosted a Candy Land Night Tuesday that allowed parents and students to join in elementally aligned activities with candy. The activities connected to multiple core areas: math, science, and reading. Stations were centered around the sections of the 1948 Milton Bradley classic board game — including Lollipop Woods, Gumdrop Mountain, Peppermint Forest, and Candy Castle. A true community event, representatives from Community First, H-E-B, Dutch Bros and the Doseum were present, along with a special guest: Santa.