



District Ranked Superior by National Groups

Plano ISD has been cited by two national organizations recently as being among the best school districts in the U.S.

SchoolMatch® 'What Parents Want'

For the 16th consecutive year, Plano ISD has received a "What Parents Want" award from SchoolMatch® of Columbus, Ohio, the nation's largest school selection consulting firm. Only 16 percent of the nation's 15,571 public school districts (2,516) have been recognized for meeting the needs of families choosing schools through the consulting company.

Expansion Management Magazine 'Gold Medal'

A business magazine for companies actively seeking to expand or relocate their facilities, *Expansion Management Magazine* named Plano ISD among 2,800 school districts across the U.S. to earn a "Gold Medal" rating through its 16th Annual Education Quotient™ ratings. The magazine evaluates districts based on graduate outcomes, the community's support of education and adult education/income.

All-Region Band, Orchestra, Choir

Congratulations, Plano ISD students, for an impressive showing at recent all-region performing arts auditions!

All-Region Band

Middle Schools - 1,216 students auditioned, earning 218 of 351 seats
Freshmen - 590 students auditioned, earning 58 of 87 seats

All-Region Orchestra

Middle Schools - 500 students auditioned, earning 146 of 152 seats
High Schools - 300 students auditioned, earning 113 of 124 seats

All-Region Choir

High Schools - 700 students auditioned, earning 120 of 200 seats

Honors & Achievements

Plano ISD Students, Staff & Schools Celebrate Successes



Wells principals attending the ceremony were Nell Pearce ('78-98), Brad Weldon ('98-01), Lisa Long ('01-07) and Stefanie Ramos. Ms. Ramos and her husband Michael and son Alex are also continuing to celebrate the November 16 birth of daughter Samantha.

Pictured (right) are Kyu Hwang and Ryan Rutledge, presenting the National Blue Ribbon flag at the Wells ceremony.

Wells Elementary School Hosts Ceremony for Earning 2007 No Child Left Behind - National Blue Ribbon Award

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto and Wells Elementary School Principal Stefanie Ramos co-emceed a December 4 evening ceremony in celebration of Wells' U.S. Department of Education - 2007 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon School award. Highlights of the program included performances by the Wells fifth grade choir, remarks by School Board President Duncan Webb (former Wells parent) and Roxanne Bureson, central cluster area assistant superintendent, and Lisa Long, recent Wells principal and now director of special education. Plano Mayor Pat Evans presented a City of Plano proclamation, before guests attended a reception.



Plano ISD and Daffron Elementary Earn Awards for Environmental Programs and Recycling Efforts

Plano ISD was recognized by both the City of Plano and the North Texas Corporate Recycling Association (NTCRA) recently. The City honored the district for its ongoing efforts to reduce water consumption by replacing old fixtures with low flow devices, installing a central control system for irrigation needs and rolling out a lighting retrofit program to reduce the district's electricity demand. The NTCRA honored both the City and Plano ISD for its cooperative First Grade Field Trip Curriculum, which includes a visit to the City's Environmental Discovery Center.

Daffron Elementary was honored by the City for its high participation rate in both single-stream and organic recycling. Daffron's Kids for Saving the Earth Club comprises 75 students in grades 3-5 who monitor recycling efforts. The club developed an all-organic Discovery Garden which features native Texas plants. Michele Carey-Davé, PTA environmental chair, has been the catalyst for many of the school's environmentally-friendly efforts. Principal Cindy Guinn and staff fully support environmental efforts.



Pictured (l-r) Heather Merchant, City of Plano environmental education and community outreach supervisor; and Plano ISD elementary curriculum department's Ginger Britain, assistant director; and Phyllis Stoup, social studies coordinator.



John Chen, Plano East



Alexander Huang, PSHS

National Siemens Competition Finalists Earn Titles & Cash Awards

Students John Chen, Plano East Senior High School, and Alexander Huang, Plano Senior High School, were recently honored as "Science STARS" in the prestigious Siemens National Competition in Math, Science and Technology.

John and his partner Camden Miller (Allen ISD) placed third and split a \$40,000 prize, and Alex placed sixth, earning \$10,000.

The students first captured semifinalist standing, after competing against 300 of their peers from across the U.S. From there, they advanced to the regional finals in Austin, they were selected as part of six team projects and six individual projects to attend the national event in New York City. Their presentations to judges may be viewed on a Siemens webcast at this address: <http://mapdigital.com/events/siemens/sc07/> (Select the students' names to view their presentations.)

Board Briefs...

School trustees took the following action on Dec. 11.

Holiday Art Finalists

Karla Oliver, executive director for government and community relations, announced the 2007 Holiday Art Contest Finalists, who were presented certificates and U.S. Savings Bonds by Duncan Webb, board president and contest sponsor.

Becky Taylor Resolution

Trustees read and presented a resolution to Becky Taylor, retiring executive assistant to the superintendent and secretary to the board.

2008-09 Boundary Changes

Trustees changed attendance zone boundaries for Shepard and Jackson Elementary Schools and for Mathews and Skaggs Elementary Schools, effective for the 2008-09 school year.

Public Hearing

Trustees conducted a public hearing and approved a resolution allowing the district to continue to tax tangible property in-transit, as a requirement of new legislation under HB 621.

2008-09 Budget Report

Richard Matkin, associate superintendent for business services, presented an overview of the 2008-09 budget process.

Further agenda items and details of the meeting can be found on the district Web site: www.pisd.edu.



Football Playoff Game Broadcasts

Hear a live broadcast of the PSHS Wildcats Division I, Region II Champions playoff game against Euless Trinity to be held at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 15, at Texas Stadium. The pregame show begins at 6:30 p.m. on both Radio KVCE-AM 1160 and the Internet: <http://k-12.pisd.edu/schools/pshs/Radio/WCAT/football.htm>

District Digest

E-mail: digest@pisd.edu

Phone: (469) 752-8030

Website:

www.pisd.edu/news

eNews listserv:

www.pisd.edu/eNews.htm

More Achievements & Recognitions



Saigling Elementary School's Danielle O'Brien won first place at the history fair with her project, "The Compromise of Irena Sendler."

1,800 Students Participate in Elementary History Fair

"Conflict and Compromise in History" was the theme for this year's Plano ISD Elementary History Fair, in which 1,800 students participated at their building levels, with 205 campus first place winners advancing to the district fair.

First place winners included Danielle O'Brien, Saigling Elementary (individual display presentation) for "The Compromise of Irena Sendler; Ariana Lane-Miller, Dooley Elementary (individual media presentation) for "Women's Suffrage and the 19th Amendment; and Andrew Vazhavilla and Kausthub Poondi, Barksdale Elementary School (group display presentation) for "One Nation Becomes Two."

Plano Students Win 6 of 16 State Geography Awards

With more than 30,000 entries from across the state in the annual geography awareness poster contest, Plano ISD students faced stiff competition to earn six of 16 awards, including two first place titles. "Celebrating Asia: A Continent of Contrasts" was the contest theme. While in Austin at the State Capitol recognition ceremony, first place winners Ritu Trivedi, Barksdale Elementary School (grades K-2 category), and Jay Purohit, Skaggs Elementary School (grades 3-5

category), and their teachers Christy Smith and Kathy Mirabito, respectively, had the opportunity to visit with elected representatives Florence Shapiro, Jerry Madden and Brian McCall. Additional Plano ISD student winners in the K-2 category were Liam Huywan, Saigling (2nd place); Vivek Raghuram, Stinson (3rd); and Savannah Rogan, Skaggs (4th). Sumedha Nag, Andrews, placed 3rd in the grades 3-5 category.



State Geography Awareness Poster Contest first place winners from Plano ISD and their teachers at the awards ceremony are (l-r) Ritu Trivedi (Christy Smith) and Jay Purohit (Kathy Mirabito). Also pictured is the first place winner in the grades 6-8 category.



Principal Wendy DeSpain Named NCLB Coordinator, Maricela Helm to Succeed Her at Memorial Elementary

Memorial Elementary School Principal Wendy DeSpain and Assistant Principal Maricela Helm (pictured with Wendy's daughter Madison) were recognized by the school board and Superintendent Dr. Doug Otto at their December 11 meeting. Effective January 22, 2008, Ms. DeSpain will serve as the district's NCLB (No Child Left Behind) coordinator, and Ms. Helm will succeed Ms. DeSpain as Memorial principal. In her new position in the district's assessment and accountability department, Ms. DeSpain will work with school principals and central office staff to develop action plans to ensure the district's compliance with the NCLB Act, contribute to policies and practices related to NCLB compliance and coordinate staff training related to NCLB.



Calling All PWSH Choir Alumni ~ Plano West Senior High School Choir Alumni are invited to participate in the school's "Winter Reflections" concert to be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 18, at the school. A meet and greet rehearsal will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 16, and a combined rehearsal with the PWSH Choir will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, December 17. To RSVP, e-mail: Kathy.Hackett@pisd.edu or Cathy.Koziatek@pisd.edu in the PWSH Choir Department.

Notable Notes...

Congratulations to these parents and grandparents:

□ **Derek Eldridge**, Renner Middle School traffic officer, and his wife **Tracy** welcomed son **Kent Brian** on November 6; **Stefanie Ramos**, Wells Elementary School principal, and her husband **Michael** announced the birth of daughter **Samantha** on November 16; **Gabe Fain**, gifted education coordinator, and his wife **Angie** are the proud parents of son **Cannon Matthew** who was born on November 16.

□ **Dawn McMillan**, Huffman Elementary School fifth grade teacher, and her husband **James** announced the birth of son **Ethan** on November 21; and **Shelli Stutzman**, Weatherford Elementary School kindergarten teacher, and her husband **Ben** welcomed daughter **Harper** on November 21. Proud grandmother **Donna Ray** works in purchasing services.

Sympathy is extended to the following employees:

□ **Kelli Tisdale**, Schimelpfenig Middle School counselor, whose grandmother **Rose** died in November; **Ann Walker**, instructional support assistant, whose mother **Enid Cook** passed away on November 21; **Andi Goldsticker**, Bethany Elementary counselor, whose mother **Shirley Singer** died on December 4; and the **Holifield Science Learning Center Staff and Volunteers**, who lost beloved friend **Katy** the Burmese Python. Katy died on December 7, after serving students and staff for 32 years.

Thought for the Week:

"Life's like a boom-a-rang. The more good you throw out, the more you receive in return."



~ Josh Hinds