



## Plano ISD United Way Campaign Sept. 15-26

Plano ISD employees will participate in the school district's annual United Way campaign September 15-26.



"The United Way campaign brings together donors, partner agencies, community organizations and others to address critical issues in North Texas and our Plano ISD school community," noted Karla Oliver, executive director for government and community relations and Plano ISD campaign chair.

United Way campaign representatives at each school and district department will provide literature and contribution forms to employees. For additional information, employees can view a video online at: [www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu) and/or contact the communications office at (469) 752-8150.

### Dateline

#### September 12

New date for Plano East vs. Collyville football game;  
Location: Clark Stadium

#### September 15 & 16

College Nights

#### September 15-26

United Way Campaign

#### September 16

School Board Work Session

#### September 17-23

Constitution Week  
Citizenship Day (17th)

#### September 24

Elementary Early Release  
at Noon (No ECS a.m. classes)

Educator Grants Due to  
Supervisors: [grants.pisd.edu](http://grants.pisd.edu)

#### September 25

New date for Plano East vs. Plano football game;  
Location: Clark Stadium

#### October 2

End of First Six Weeks

View more details online:  
[www.pisd.edu/calendar](http://www.pisd.edu/calendar)

## 128 Seniors Named National Merit Semifinalists

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto is proud to recognize Plano ISD seniors who have earned Semifinalist standing in the 2009 National Merit Scholarship Program. These academically gifted students join approximately 16,000 of their peers from across the United States as Semifinalists in the 54th annual scholarship program. They now have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 8,200 scholarships worth \$35 million. Read more about this prestigious achievement online: [www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu).

### 2009 National Merit Semifinalists

**Plano East** – Uzair Alaidroos, Reem Ali, Joshua Beeman, Garrett Blackwood, John Chen, Jaclyn Chou, Kevin Do, Genkai Huang, Srinivasa Kadamati, Tarang Kapoor, Erin Mastenbrook, Jananie Ramesh, Rahul Sangal, Rebecca Scaduto, Neha Sharma, Alexander Spitzer, Catherine Tieu, Christina Vo, Logan Wright, Jae Eun Yoon

**Plano** – Zeenat Abdulali, Robert Britton, Elizabeth Brogdon, Joshua Buffington, Stephanie Carlsen, Hannan Chapman, Jeana Chen, Zephon Chen, John Clark, Sarah Conard, Linnea Coveney, Rupak Dhoot, Stephen Feronti, Neil Goeckner-Wald, Tiara Hlaing, Xinyue Hu, Rex Huang, Nick Hughes, Juanyao Jiang, Hrishikesh Joshi, Jordan Krieger, Gary Lee, Megan Liao, Eugene Lim, Jennifer Liou, Lainya Liu, Melinda Liu, Shijia Liu, Taylor Morrow, Jordan Naumann, Krista Oleson, Aneesh Rai, Monica Remmers, Justin Sheu, Jean Shiao, Jonathon Shipman, Usama Siddiquee, Gursimran Singh, Anusha

Sivakumar, Srivastava Sonti, Swarna Sunkara, Jennifer Tang, Kathy Tian, Taylor Tope, Howard Tsai, Timothy Tsang, Michael Tu, Belal Wang, Yifan Wang, Wenfei Wei, Sinclair Wu, Vivian Wu, Yang Wu, Crystal Xia, Kevin Yan, Albert Yang, Jamie Yang, Qiongqiong Yang, Jeff Yao, Jeremy Ying, Richard Young, Arnold Zhang, Linhao Zhang, Julia Zhu, Maria Zhu

**Plano West** – Matthew Andrus, Sue Hyon Bae, Matthew Burnham, Joseph Chien, Stephen Choi, Michelle Chu, Justin Chung, Stephanie Goldstein, Yixin Gu, Henry Han, Nicole Ho, Charlotte Hockens, Ashley Hsu, Michelle Kukielski, Ching-Yin Kwan, Marissa Lamoure, Ni Lang, Jiesu Lee, Karen Lin, Amanda Lu, Jennifer Ma, Jared Meek, Scott Miesse, Victor Pham, Neeraja Prabhakaran, Alyssa Quan, Austin Rogers, David Roohy, Evan Rosenfield, Daniel Seol, Nikita Singh, Amreen Sitabkhan, Daniel Stack, Jason Stevens, Michael Teng, Laura Terrell, Stephanie Tsang, Nicholas Tycom, Shiv Venkatesetty, Allen Wang, Kevin Wang, Dawn Zhao, James Zhu

## Shepard Elementary Named NCLB–Blue Ribbon School



U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings notified Shepard Elementary School Principal Mary Spickler this week that the school is among 26 Texas public schools and 320 United States schools that have been named "2008 No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools" by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE).

In response to the great news, Ms. Spickler said many beliefs shape her school community. "At Shepard, we believe high expectations are essential. We believe we learn best when we are shown our success." Ms. Spickler will represent Shepard at a national awards ceremony to be held in late October in Washington, D.C.

The NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes outstanding campuses that are either academically superior in their states or that demonstrate dramatic and consistent gains in student achievement.

Shepard Elementary School met award criteria based on its rank among the top 10 percent of schools in Texas on tests in reading or English language arts and mathematics. The school also met AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) in reading or English language arts and math and met compliance with other USDE requirements. Read more about Shepard Elementary School and the blue ribbon award online: [www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu).

## Teachers Inducted into TI Foundation STEM Academy

Plano ISD's Becky Jackson, Bowman Middle School eighth grade mathematics teacher, and Deborah Johnston, Schimelpfenig Middle School science teacher, were inducted into the Texas Instruments



Becky Jackson and Deborah Johnston (center, l-r) were joined at an August 21 academy luncheon by (l-r) Plano ISD's Dr. Jim Wohlgehausen, secondary math coordinator; Jim Hirsch, associate superintendent for academic and technology services; Missy Bender, school board secretary; Olga Sanchez-Grosscup, Schimelpfenig Middle School principal; Lloyd "Skip" Jenkins, school board president; and Linda Flack, secondary science coordinator.

Foundation's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Academy as fellows during an August 21 awards ceremony at which each honoree received a \$10,000 award: \$5,000 for the teacher and \$5,000 for professional development or instructional technology.

Teachers were nominated by their school principals based on criteria such as demonstrating and documenting teaching effectiveness, establishing classroom innovation, participating in education activities outside of the classroom, encouraging curiosity and generating excitement in STEM subjects among students.

Read about these outstanding educators and four additional Plano ISD STEM award finalists online: [www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu).



## Honor Roll Schools

Four Plano campuses have been named 2008 Honor Roll Schools by the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC). The award recognizes schools for academic performance and honors those students, teachers, principals and superintendents who have won their championships in the classroom. Congratulations to these schools:

**Skaggs Elementary  
Mathews Elementary  
Rice Middle School  
Jasper High School**

Each of these outstanding campuses has made the honor roll for three consecutive years. TBEC identifies honor roll schools by analyzing three years of performance data for every public school in Texas. Honor roll schools have a high percentage of students meeting state standards on every TAKS test for three consecutive years. They also have the highest percentage of students performing at the state's most rigorous standard - commended - in every subject. The selection criteria also considers the school's demographics, number of subjects tested and grade levels. TBEC will recognize 298 of Texas' most outstanding schools at its Ninth Annual Honor Roll Schools Celebration awards dinner on November 10 in San Antonio, following a half-day seminar for school attendees.

### *You are Invited*

Please join the Plano ISD Board of Trustees at the "rededication ceremony" for A.H. Meadows Elementary School and Head Start 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 21  
Meadows Elementary School  
2800 18th Street, Plano

### **District Digest**

E-mail: [digest@pisd.edu](mailto:digest@pisd.edu)

Phone: (469) 752-8030

Website:

[www.pisd.edu/news](http://www.pisd.edu/news)

eNews listserv:

[www.pisd.edu/eNews.htm](http://www.pisd.edu/eNews.htm)

## Plano ISD Shares Concerns with Higher Education Board About Proposed New Rules for 'Uniform GPA Guidelines'

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto has authorized members of his administrative team to present a list of concerns regarding changes to the "Uniform GPA (Grade Point Average) Guidelines" that have been proposed by an ad-hoc committee of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

Plano ISD Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction Susan Modisette and Director of Counseling and Guidance Paul Weaver wrote to the ad-hoc committee this week, stating the following concerns with provisions set forth in the Texas Register affecting Texas Education Code §51.807:

- ♦ (2)(5) A four-point scale used in computing the uniform grade point average with the exception of AP, IB, and Dual Credit Courses.  
Current structure provides students the opportunity to earn higher grade points for completion of more challenging courses, such as Pre-AP, Honors, and International Honors. The removal of this provision will likely result in students choosing to not participate in the most appropriately challenging learning environment. These honors courses are the necessary bridges that connect our students with the opportunities found in AP, IB, and Dual Credit.
- ♦ (5) Equal weighting of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and academic Dual Credit courses.  
Both AP and IB courses have national and international standards respectively, and AP courses follow a national curriculum. Additionally all students in these programs must pass national exams to receive credit. Conversely, the rigor of course content in Dual Credit courses may vary greatly as there are no national standards, curriculum, or required exams. This provision may encourage students to not enroll and take advantage of our AP and IB programs.
- ♦ (Introduction) Application of these provisions beginning with first-time freshman for admission in the 2009 fall semester.  
Students have made course selections based on the standards set forth by their local school districts; academic planning for students often begins in the spring semester of their eighth grade year. Setting a new, uniform standard at the end of a student's high school career disadvantages the student who thoughtfully selected courses based on information that would now be invalidated.

### Stay Informed on the WWW

Breaking news regarding this topic will be posted on Plano ISD's Web site home page:

[www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu)

The proposed new rules for the "Uniform GPA Guidelines" are posted on this Texas Register site:

[www.sos.state.tx.us/textreg/sos/](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/textreg/sos/)

## New Online Resources



'**myPISD.net Parent Portal**' – A newly-designed Plano ISD "Parent Portal," located online at [parent.mypisd.net](http://parent.mypisd.net), is connecting students and families by providing direct access to the school district's "Parent Viewer" application for student grades and attendance, links to classroom information and access to other often-used online services, such as PayPAMS and eNews. "The Parent Portal is being developed to eventually serve as the primary resource for all online services for parents," noted Mary Hewett, executive director for instructional technology. The Parent Portal can also be accessed from the district home page: [www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu).

'**Community Resources Directory**' – The Plano ISD Diversity Steering Committee has compiled a comprehensive A-Z listing of community resources which is posted online: [www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu). The directory provides parents, staff, students and community members with names and contact information for hundreds of community assistance organizations. Members of the Diversity Steering Committee chairing the effort were Karla Oliver, executive director for government and community relations, and Dr. Cathy Galloway, executive director for student and family services.

'**Grantworks' Online Application System** – The Plano ISD Education Foundation and Instructional Technology Department have collaborated to provide a new "Grantworks" all-electronic grant application system for educators. Located online at [grants.pisd.edu](http://grants.pisd.edu), the step-by-step application streamlines the process for grant applications, which are due to supervisors by September 24. Applicants may attend training, if needed, on use of the online tool at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, at the Plano ISD Administration Building, Room 311. Surprise grant deliveries will be made in mid-November by the Foundation Grant Patrol to award-winning educators. More than \$70,000 will be distributed.

## Notable Notes...

### Best wishes to these newlywed employees:

☐ **Christie Johnston**, Beaty Early Childhood School speech-language pathologist, became the bride of **Troy Gallaher** on June 14, and **Elena Farmer**, Beaty prek teacher, married **Jason Helms** on June 28.

### Congratulations to these proud parents, grandparents and family members:

☐ **Jennifer Hillier**, Jackson Elementary School second grade teacher, and her husband **Brian** became the proud parents of **Jackson Robert** (9 lbs. 13 ozs.) on June 10; **Heather Braun**, FANS division supervisor, welcomed nephew **Kyle Daniel Crafton** (7 lbs. 10 ozs.) on August 4; and **Cindi Weinke**, Beaty technology assistant, and **Krista Haven**, Beaty speech-language pathologist, announce the birth of **Reed Haven**, grandson and nephew, respectively. Reed was born on August 26 and weighed 10 lbs. 10 ozs.



☐ **Karen Brundrett**, Shiloh Center instructional support specialist, welcomed granddaughter **Caroline Paige** (6 lbs. 14 ozs.) on August 28. Proud parents are **Paige and Jon Erickson**; and **Kelly Durrett**, Barksdale Elementary School fourth grade team leader, and her husband **Richard** welcomed son **Owen Jackson** (8 lbs. 5 ozs.) on September 2.

### Sympathy is extended to the following employees:

☐ **Tracy Sievers**, Brinker Elementary School PACE specialist, whose five-month-old son **Nash** died on July 1; and to **Lana Afseth**, special education assistive technology speech-language pathologist, and her husband **Dan** whose father-in-law and father, respectively, **Gordon Afseth** died on August 29.

### Thought for the Week:

*"It's kind of fun to do the impossible."*

~Walt Disney