

Katy ISD made its 5th consecutive appearance on the list of the **Best 100 Communities for Music Education in America** for 2007.

Taylor High School emerged as the 5A overall **State Academic Champion** for 2007. Taylor's Computer Science and Social Studies teams placed first in their respective categories.

Students from Cinco Ranch, Seven Lakes and Taylor High Schools took **home individual and team championships** from this year's UIL Academic State Competition.

The Cinco Ranch High School Destination Imagination team earned a spot in the **2007 Destination Imagination Global Finals** by placing second in the state tournament. The 6-member team received the distinguished DaVinci Award for excellence in creativity and design at the state meet.

Eight students representing two schools — Katy High and West Memorial Jr. High — brought home gold medals from the **2007 State Science Olympiad**.



Paper and pencils went out the window and pumpkins hit the air when students took to the fields for "Punkin' Chunkin' at Morton Ranch Jr. High. The activity, which integrates math and science in hands-on-the-catapult instruction, is a fall favorite for many junior high students.

On the Trail to Success: Instruction and Staff Development

Joining forces

Katy ISD entered a partnership with the Region IV Educational Service Center that will utilize KMAC (Katy Management of Automated Curriculum) as a component of Region IV's Comprehensive Curriculum Assessment and Professional Development (CCAP) system. The agreement provides Region IV with a perpetual license to utilize KMAC as part of a comprehensive package of assessment, curriculum management and professional development tools. Katy ISD retains complete ownership of KMAC and all teacher lesson plans and curriculum resources stored in the system. The district will receive six percent of the net revenue from CCAP, plus no-cost access to all of CCAP's modules. Projections indicate that beyond the revenue from the partnership, the district will save more than \$350,000 in subscription fees for access to the assessment module in the coming year.

Assessing assessments

The new Katy ISD Assessment Council standardized the weight given to tests and homework in all Advanced Placement courses. The 21-member council, composed of campus and administrative personnel, also streamlined assessments to remove unneeded tests and optimize testing windows, since many test dates are set at the national and state levels. In addition, the council updated the district's career inventory assessment with the Kuder Career Inventory and prepared for the launch of the Parent Information Center and an online grade book. Another new advisory group – the Katy ISD Library Advisory Council, composed of 14 parents, teachers and librarians – helped revise reconsideration processes for school libraries and developed policies for selecting books for student reading lists.

Working together

Expanding on a program started in 2005-06, Katy ISD teachers and staff members collaborated with each other in professional learning communities (PLCs). These small groups, which share common subject areas and/or grade levels, analyze student assessments to determine if gaps exist, and develop strategies to achieve continued achievement for all students. One way PLCs shared best practices in 2006-07 was videotapes of veteran educators demonstrating how they effectively teach important concepts. Videos were made available in lesson banks in the district's automated curriculum system. Another PLC included elementary science teachers who took advantage of distance learning technology to share best practices using new portable science labs. Another PLC collaborated on lessons for the district's SMART Board pilot program.

Members of Katy PLCs also developed common ways to measure student learning by working with core objective tests developed by the district's curriculum department. These tests identify key concepts students must learn every six weeks in specific courses. The PLCs also explored ways to engage stakeholders in preparing students for college and the workforce.

Get SMART

A 44-member Math and Science Task Force convened to improve delivery of math and science instruction and improve student performance in these key subjects. The group was charged with identifying proven instructional strategies and interventions, including specific materials. One of the group's recommendations resulted in piloting the use of SMART Boards – interactive whiteboards that enable teachers to incorporate digital resources into their lessons and keep students engaged.

SMART Boards got a test run at eight schools: Katy, McDonald, Morton Ranch, Mayde Creek and West Memorial Junior Highs, as well as Katy, Mayde Creek and Morton Ranch High Schools. Each pilot campus received three SMART

Boards. Three teachers, plus the instructional technology facilitator at each school, were trained in the 21st century technology, which was incorporated into sixth and seventh grade math classes in the junior highs and Algebra I classes in the high schools. Students enjoyed test-taking through an interactive response system that uses wireless technology. With a simple click, teachers knew if students had mastered the concept they were teaching. SMART Boards were also purchased by the special education department for use in resource math classrooms. Due to the success of this math intervention, individual campuses began examining how to expand the use of SMART Boards, which includes lesson development by KISD teachers in professional learning communities.

Science on the fly

Another recommendation of the Katy ISD Math and Science Task Force included adding portable science labs in elementary and junior high schools to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities. Katy ISD incorporates science instruction daily at the elementary level, while the state mandates that 40 percent of science instruction occur in lab settings at the secondary level. Given the number of limited science laboratories constructed in 20th century schools, portable science stations creatively provide students with small-scale laboratory experiences. As a result of these new labs and teacher training in their use, fifth graders experienced gains in TAKS science scores. Other school districts have contacted Katy to learn more about this innovative solution to teaching science.

No need to migrate

Teachers can now train for certification as educational diagnosticians without ever leaving the district. A new partnership initiated this year between Katy ISD and the University of St. Thomas brings the needed coursework to the district's Education Support Complex. Sixteen general education and special education teachers who joined the first cohort are scheduled to complete their certification requirements in the summer of 2008.

These employees will become part of the educational diagnostician applicant pool for the 2008-09 school year, helping the district alleviate a growing shortage of the hard-to-find specialists. Although educational diagnosticians serve in many roles, their primary one is evaluating students for disabilities to help determine eligibility for special education services.



Physical education students traded in bats and balls for rods and reels to participate in a fishing unit based on curriculum from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The program was implemented at 5 elementary schools, Memorial Parkway Jr. High and Katy High School. The 110 girls from MPJH tested their knot-tying, casting and fishing etiquette during an outing to the Outdoor Learning Center.

Two Katy ISD students received top honors in the **2007 National Scholastic Writing Competition**. They were among the 21 Katy ISD writers who took top honors in the 2007 regional Scholastic Writing Contest sponsored by the Harris County Department of Education.

Margaret Christen, Katy High student support administrator, was reappointed by the governor to a new four-year term on the **Texas Continuing Advisory Committee for Special Education**.

Pattison Elementary music teacher Michele Hobizal was elected to serve as the **Elementary Vice President of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA)**.

Katy's Psychological Services Department earned the 2006 **Outstanding Delivery of School Psychological Services** award from the Texas Association of School Psychologists.

Crech Elementary music teacher Joan Lisman was honored by the Houston Symphony as its **Outstanding K-12 Music Educator** for 2007 in recognition of her dedication to the advancement of youth music programs.

Andi Malisheski, a ninth grader at Katy High School, was runner-up among 1,700 entries in the 2007 **"Take Me Away" national fantasy writing competition**, sponsored by *Writing Magazine*.

Artwork by Hayes 3rd grader Alexas Cabanaw was among the top ten pieces displayed during the **2007 Youth Art Month Exhibit at the state capitol**. Her work will hang in the Governor's business office during the 2007-08 school year.

Luke Hsu, a junior at Cinco Ranch High School, performed as a **solo violinist with the Houston Symphony** during the 2007 Salute to Educators Concert in February.

