

Humming Right Along: Special Programs and Services

Growing enrollment among children who speak languages other than English has expanded Katy ISD's bilingual program to include **Mandarin Chinese, Urdu, Arabic** and **Vietnamese** at kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades, as well as **Spanish** in pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. This was the 5th year for Mandarin and the 3rd year for Urdu, Arabic and Vietnamese. 8 elementary campuses were home to Spanish bilingual programs in 2006-07.

Cinco Ranch Theatre Company senior Gonzalo Lombard topped the annual **International Thespian Society's national competition** in 2006 with his original scenic design for Cinco Ranch's 2005 production *The Man Who Came to Dinner*.

Best Buddies from Katy High School garnered an **Outstanding Chapter Award** at Best Buddies' 2006 International Student Leadership Conference. Katy High was the first school in Texas to pilot the program in 2000.

46 students, representing each of the district's 6 high schools, earned a spot in one of **Texas' All-State music groups** this year. It was the largest number ever from Katy ISD.

5 Katy ISD dancers — one each from Cinco Ranch, Katy, Mayde Creek, Morton Ranch, and Taylor High Schools — earned a position on the **All-State Dance Team**.

Life support

For 120 school counselors, psychologists and support specialists, a day of suicide prevention training in September addressed topics such as trauma and depression, and procedures to follow if a child exhibits suicidal symptoms. During the spring semester, district counselors and psychologists conducted training in the Question-Persuade-Refer (also known as QBR) method for faculty and staff at the Education Support Complex and at Cinco Ranch High School. In addition, the district sponsored a community-wide suicide prevention session for parents at Seven Lakes High School. For the second consecutive year, video resource kits from the national Jason Foundation were available to every middle school and high school to help students know how to help a friend. Katy ISD also works closely with the Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition to prevent teen suicides.

Social interaction

Approximately 30 junior high and high school students with Asperger's syndrome took part in a six-week pilot program where they learned important social skills. Children with Asperger's, a neurobiological disability related to autism, have average or better intelligence, but have difficulty interacting with others. During the pilot, students gained new insights into social skills like greeting others, honoring their personal space and how to say things that aren't offensive. Voluntary participants met once week at Cinco Ranch Junior High. Based on the positive feedback from students and parents, Katy ISD plans to repeat the federally funded program and possibly expand it in 2007-08.

Life after high school

An Education and Career Planning Workshop attended by more than 300 students and their parents highlighted the importance of making smart education choices beginning in junior high. After interpreting the results of their ACT Career Planning Survey, eighth graders received guidance in mapping out the courses that would enable them to explore areas of interest and prepare for careers in specific fields. Through "Achieve Texas," a new initiative, older high school students were encouraged to explore career options and discover the practical applications of learning through internships, mentor programs and volunteer experiences. Representatives from area colleges provided insights on financial aid and specific majors like international business, engineering and education. Students with disabilities and limited English skills received targeted career planning strategies as well.

Jump start

More than 900 Limited English-Proficient students entering kindergarten and first grade got a jump on their English skills during an intensive five-week summer school program in 2006. Sixty-three teachers guided the students in immersion activities such as shared reading and writing, vocabulary, and phonics awareness and understanding. Cooperative and learning activities were based on students' language proficiency as measured by assessments given during the prior spring. Activities in the summer program focus on language development through listening, speaking, reading and writing English.



Elementary students in the Challenge program studied archaeology for 12-13 weeks, culminating in an archaeological dig at the Outdoor Learning Center. Teachers used authentic, local "artifacts" found in the Katy area for the young scientists to discover.

Dream come true

Katy ISD officially entered into a sports medicine partnership with Memorial Hermann Healthcare System in April. The two-year grant calls for Memorial Hermann to donate \$95,500 each year, enabling the district to realize plans already on the drawing board. One result of the win-win arrangement was the creation of a position for a districtwide sports medicine coordinator. Other partnership benefits include additional funding for contract athletic trainers, continuing education opportunities for staff athletic trainers, and \$3000 earmarked as scholarship funds for graduating seniors.

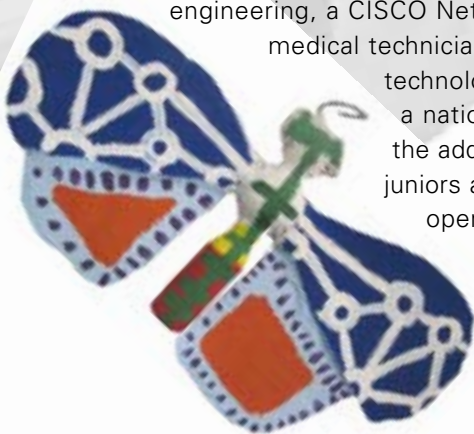


New name, new faces

The School of Choice was renamed in honor of Martha Raines, a highly respected long-time teacher and math department chair at Mayde Creek High School. She was known for going the extra mile to help students with schoolwork or personal issues, and inspiring many to become math teachers. Since its inception in 2002, the goals of the School of Choice/Raines High School have been to increase the district's completion rate, lower the drop-out rate, and increase academic achievement for at-risk students by providing access to alternative programs that meet their needs better than a comprehensive high school. The school is characterized by individual student intake, personal graduation plans, a single teacher for each student, closely monitored attendance and a low pupil-teacher ratio. In January 2007, RHS welcomed a full-time assistant principal and its first group of 30 sophomores, and initiated its first night program.

Best for success

To align district programs with projected workforce needs, a 127-member Career and Technical Education Concept Committee recommended the expansion and addition of programs at Miller Career and Technology Center: The committee, composed of local business and industry representatives, parents, teachers, guidance counselors and instructional specialists, made the recommendation following a study of Texas Workforce Commission data and key businesses in the Interstate 10 corridor. Student interest surveys and recommendations from the eight MCTC Advisory Councils that guide career programming paralleled the committee's findings. Recommendations for new programs included automotive collision and refinishing technology, audio engineering, a CISCO Networking Academy, culinary arts, emergency medical technician, facialist specialist, manicure specialist, media technology, pharmacy tech, and Project Lead the Way, a national engineering program. Also recommended was the addition of core academic courses so high school juniors and seniors could attend MCTC full-time, plus the operation of an on-site bistro for students in the hospitality and tourism academy.



A partnership between La Centerra and Cinco Ranch High School brought entry-level engineering students to the La Centerra construction site to meet with engineers, the construction manager and an architect. Students gained insight into the various responsibilities of construction team members and saw first-hand how working together accomplishes great things. The effort was part of Project Lead the Way, a national program created to promote interest in the field of engineering among high school students. The Principles of Engineering course was introduced this year at Cinco Ranch High.

25 pieces of Katy ISD artwork — the most ever — advanced to the **State Visual Art Scholastic Event** after competing among more than 1,500 entries at the regional level.

Katy ISD art students brought home 16 top honors at this year's regional **Scholastic Art Contest**, sponsored by the Harris County Department of Education. Art students from Beck Jr. High, Memorial Parkway Jr. High, Taylor and Cinco Ranch High Schools earned 8 Gold Keys, 6 Silver Keys and 2 Silver Key Portfolio Awards.

Katy ISD artwork sold for a grand total of \$283,000 at the **2007 Houston Livestock Show Art Auction**. Katy students earned the **Reserve Grand Champion** spots for both high school and junior high, and the district received the 2007 Super Show Award.

The Katy High School Jazz Band walked away with a 2nd-place finish at the **2006 National Music and Arts Jazz Band Competition**.

Musical productions from Katy schools brought home three 2007 **Tommy Tune Awards**. Morton Ranch High's production of *Fiddler on the Roof* garnered awards for Best Featured Performer and Best Lighting Design, while Katy High's *Snoopy* won Best Scenic Design.

Mary Claire Huntington of Cinco Ranch High School, was the winner in this year's **Houston Rodeo Cook-Off Art Contest**.