

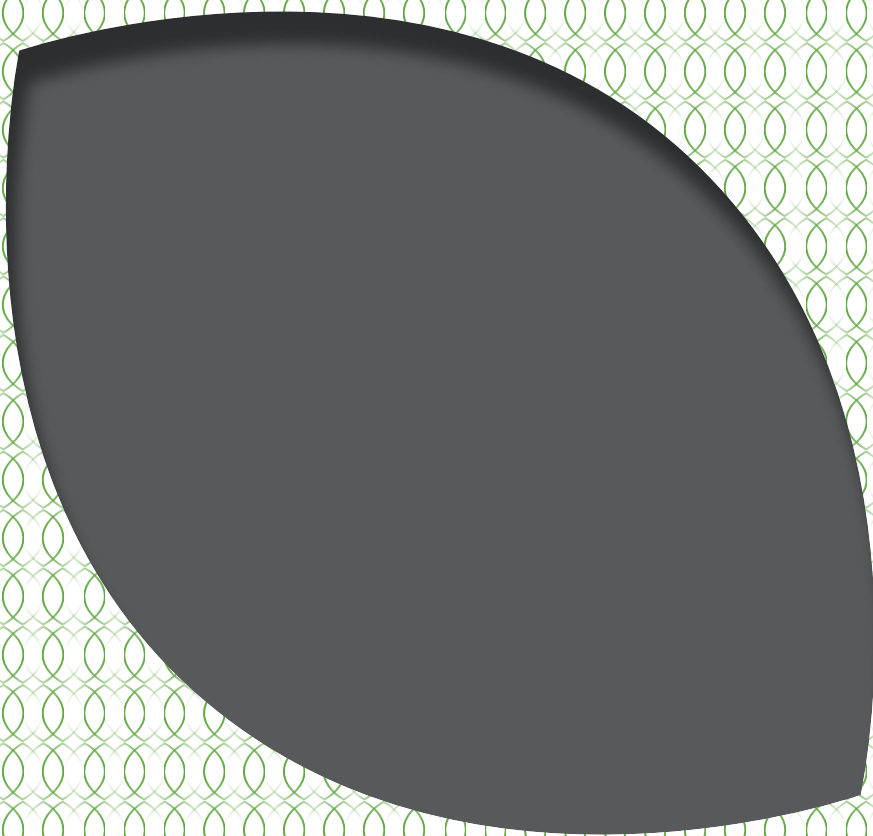
2017-2018 MONTHLY PLANNER



INVEST IN **EVERY CHILD**

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT







*“The question is not whether we can
afford to **invest in every child**;
it is whether we can afford not to.”*

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

PRESIDENT & FOUNDER OF THE CHILDREN’S DEFENSE FUND

**“INVEST IN A CHILD — WITH
YOUR TIME, RESOURCES AND
KNOWLEDGE — AND MAKE
THE FUTURE BRIGHTER FOR
ALL OF US.”**

Richard A. Carranza, HISD Superintendent of Schools

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PREPARING STUDENTS WHO ARE READY FOR THE WORLD.
AN HISD GLOBAL GRADUATE IS...



A LEADER

Works collaboratively and leads by example. Embraces new ideas and technologies and motivates others to be open to change.



ADAPTABLE & PRODUCTIVE

Industrious member of a global society. Demonstrates flexibility and cross-cultural skills when fulfilling personal, professional, and community experiences.



A COLLEGE-READY LEARNER

Proficient in the core disciplines as evidenced by successful performance on state and national assessments. Works hard and persists to achieve academic and career goals.



A CRITICAL THINKER

Identifies and dissects issues, seeks multiple opinions, and critically evaluates various solutions. Understands when additional information is needed and effectively uses technology to research.



A SKILLED COMMUNICATOR

Reads, writes, speaks, and listens effectively — adapts to diverse audiences and settings.



A RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKER

Sets goals, develops action plans, and works hard. When faced with challenges and obstacles is able to persist to achieve goals.



Children are a city's future, and every time I visit a classroom in the Houston Independent School District, I come away feeling more hopeful about what the future holds for all of us. I see generations of future doctors, teachers, artists, engineers, and entrepreneurs, and in their faces, I see the fulfillment of Houston's enormous potential.

I know you share my conviction that all children deserve a high-quality education that prepares them for success. Our city, state, and country need such future leaders, ready and eager to compete in the global workforce. The HISD Foundation believes **equity, literacy, innovation, college access, and great people** are the keys to fulfilling this all-important mission. But we can't do it alone.

We need your support and commitment to ensure all of our students can look forward to a productive, healthy, and prosperous future, where opportunity and achievement remain the foundation of all we value. Invest in a child — with your time, resources, and knowledge — and make the future brighter for all of us.



RICHARD A. CARRANZA
HISD SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



INVEST IN GIVING EVERY CHILD A VOICE AND A CHOICE

The friendship between Alvin Gibson and Deshaun James is based on constant competition. The two teens challenge each other in nearly everything, including basketball, girls, and something a little out of character for middle school boys. Ask them who has read more books, and the two shout out in unison, “I have!”

But it wasn’t always that way. Both Alvin and Deshaun struggled to read in elementary school, and both were diagnosed with dyslexia. Both were also held back a grade. “At one point, I wanted to give up. I thought I was stupid,” Alvin said. “But my teachers and my grandfather pushed me.”

“THEY LIKE THE BOOKS SO MUCH THAT SOMETIMES I HAVE TO TELL THEM TO STOP READING AND WORK ON THEIR ASSIGNMENTS. BUT THERE ARE WORSE PROBLEMS TO HAVE WITH A MIDDLE SCHOOL KID THAN TELLING THEM TO STOP READING.”

Benjamin Fullmighter, Reagan K-8 teacher

For Alvin Gibson, right, and Deshaun James, left, Literacy in the Middle is giving them voice and choice — plus a little friendly competition. More than half a million books were distributed to HISD middle schools to stock classroom libraries. “Some of them I have read several times because I like them so much,” Alvin said.

Their love of reading was nurtured through HISD’s Literacy in the Middle program, which stocks all middle school classrooms with a library full of books. And not just English classrooms, but science, social studies, and math as well. The aim is to create independent readers and critical thinkers who can discuss what they read.

“I have seen their desire to read grow with the classroom libraries,” Reagan teacher Benjamin Fullmighter said. “They can choose what interests them. They, and all my students, talk about what they read. They ask more questions.”

Now in the eighth grade at Reagan K-8 Educational Center, they admit they still struggle at times, but they compare reading to sports.

“In order to get better, you have to practice, and that means reading more books,” Deshaun said.

MARCH

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

26

27

28

5

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12

13

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Daylight Saving
Time Begins

Spring Break Begins

19

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21

Spring Equinox

26

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28

FEBRUARY 2017

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APRIL 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1

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Ash Wednesday

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Spring Break Ends
St. Patrick's Day

22

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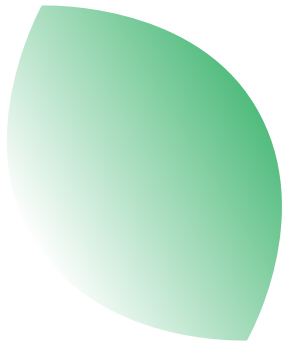
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INVEST IN LETTING EVERY CHILD KNOW THE OPTIONS ARE LIMITLESS



College Success Adviser Victoria Salinas holds court in the middle of a brightly painted classroom at Austin High, fielding inquiries about tax forms and deadlines as students with laptops occupy nearby couches. Others wander in with questions that could propel them to a very different future than the one they imagined for themselves.

One of those students was Nataly Degollado. Two years ago, the 18-year-old had a baby. She struggled to balance school and her daughter, but even on her hardest days, she never gave up.

“My mom would tell me, ‘You’re doing it for her,’” Nataly said.

**“I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT FOR
THEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT
MORE IS POSSIBLE, THAT THEY
CAN REACH INFINITE LEVELS.”**

Victoria Salinas, college success adviser at Austin High

She went to the college center with a FAFSA in hand and plans to get certified in cosmetology — to her, it was the fastest way to a paycheck. But the college success team at Austin pushed her to think bigger. They helped her discover another passion: teaching. Salinas, who has helped to more than double the college application rate at Austin, sat down with Nataly to fill out forms for four-year colleges. She sees stories like Nataly’s every day.

“Some students think, ‘This is what we do, this is what’s traditional, this is what’s expected of me,’” said Salinas, a first-generation college student herself. The biggest challenge is changing how students think about what’s possible. “I’ve focused on them having a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset.”

Nataly’s mother was also an inspiration. She was a single mother, Nataly said, and “now, she has bought her own house, and she’s a teacher for special education.”

Nataly has been accepted to both University of Houston-Downtown and Texas Southern University and plans to become a Spanish teacher.

“My mother is proud of me. She tells me, ‘I know you can do it.’”

Nataly Degollado was able to envision herself at a four-year college with the help of the college success team at Austin High. HISD has 32 college success advisers, who were put in place with matching funds from the Houston Endowment. The program has propelled the district’s college application rate from 59 percent to 79 percent, and the FAFSA application rate has grown by 10 percentage points.

APRIL

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

26

27

28

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Palm Sunday

Passover Begins

16

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Easter

Tax Day

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MARCH 2017

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MAY 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

29

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31

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April Fool's Day

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No School
Good Friday

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Earth Day

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6

INVEST IN EVERY CHILD BECOMING A LEADER FOR TOMORROW

When a popular Milby High welding project, completed each year by the senior class, was in jeopardy of not getting off the ground, the instructor knew he could count on Victor Rodriguez to get things rolling again.

A junior at the time, Victor had the leadership skills to rally his classmates to complete 16 metal roses for Valentine's Day in three days — a record for the class.

"I rounded up all my good friends, and I said, 'OK, you're making this, you're drilling this, you're making the petals, you're making the leaves.' We created an assembly line," Victor said. "I truly felt like a leader. The teacher let me keep one, and I gave it to my mom for Mother's Day."

"MY MOM HAS BEEN A HUGE INSPIRATION TO ME. IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, SHE'S THERE IF YOU NEED SOMETHING."

Victor Rodriguez, Milby High senior


Working to become a leader has been important to Victor since the third grade, when he asked his mother if he could one day attend Stevenson Middle School to participate in the Kickstart Kids karate program there.

Through that program and its instructor, Derek Gutierrez, Victor said he gained confidence and social skills that have helped him to continue his path at Milby, which is renowned for its CTE program in welding.



"He's taught me so much — how to make my own decisions and how to be a leader to other children around me and my friends, and basically pushing me to do better in anything I do," he said. "He's taught me honesty, discipline, respect, inner strength, and everything you need to be a good citizen."

The next step for Victor will be following in his father's footsteps to become a welder. He has been accepted to San Jacinto College in Pasadena, where he will get further certification and his associates degree.



Victor Rodriguez inspired his classmates to create 16 metal roses in just three days — and he gave one of them to his mother, Rosa. CTE programs like welding at Milby, along with eight Futures Academies and 14 CTE workforce level I certificate programs, are helping HISD graduates fill jobs in some of Houston's most high-demand industries.

MAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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Mother's Day

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Memorial Day

APRIL 2017

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JUNE 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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Cinco de Mayo

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Armed Forces Day

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Last Day of School

Ramadan Begins
Teachers' Last Day

31

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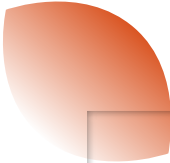
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INVEST IN TEACHING EVERY CHILD TO CRACK THE CODE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Here's a tip for schools hoping to get more female representation in computer programming classes: Make sure your computer science teacher is also the girls soccer coach.

"I started talking to my students on the team about computer programming — and really I talk to everyone — so that definitely helped in recruiting girls to the class," said Jose Guevara, who teaches AP computer science principles at Northside High.



"WHAT BETTER WAY TO ADVANCE THE WORLD THAN TO EDUCATE WOMEN AND HELP THEM HAVE A FOOT IN THE RACE?"

Neida Martinez, Northside High senior

Girls make up more than 50 percent of the enrollment in his class, and Guevara said they bring a high level of participation and help lead the discussions — which are often centered on real-world applications of what used to be very abstract concepts.

"The new tools that are available to our students have been so helpful. From the first class, they can program an app or a game, and they can actually open it on their cellphones," Guevara said. "Now you can code for 20 minutes and see a result."

Junior Karolina Tovar, who dreams of continuing her studies at MIT to become a software engineer, said it was watching her uncle fix computers, radios, and other hardware that got her interested in technology and learning the fundamentals of programming.

"I know companies like Google are really fun and rewarding places to work," she said. "And I know companies will need more and more software engineers, because technology is taking over the world."

So what about the intimidation factor in diving into a traditionally male-dominated area of study? Senior Neida Martinez said it's important that more women consider it.

"What better way to advance the world than to educate women and help them have a foot in the race?" she said. "It's very easy to get more scholarship opportunities in this area, and you're likely to get a full ride. So why not give it a chance?"

Jose Guevara recruited players from his girls soccer team to join his AP computer science principles class at Northside High. HISD will double the number of computer science-certified teachers over the next two academic years and expand advanced computer science courses to all 38 high schools by the end of this year.

JUNE

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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Father's Day

Summer Solstice

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Eid al-Fitr Begins

MAY 2017

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JULY 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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Flag Day

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INVEST IN MAKING EVERY CHILD FEEL AT HOME IN SCHOOL

Hla Aye was 2 when his home in Myanmar, formerly Burma, was destroyed in the country's decades-long civil war and his family was sent to a refugee camp with little food and no running water. His father applied for a visa to the U.S., and the family was greeted at the airport by a translator and a sponsor who gave them enough money to last one month.

"My parents found jobs," Hla said. "My mom encouraged me. She said study as much as you can."

**"THEY SAID I CAN EXCEL AT ANYTHING.
WHY NOT START NOW?"**

Hla Aye, Fondren Middle eighth-grader

When Hla enrolled in first grade, he didn't know anyone, and he didn't know the language. A practice website helped Hla teach himself English, but it was at Fondren Middle that he really found his voice — and a new home.

"The other students are facing the same problems as me, so we can relate," the eighth-grader said. "I get to experience diversity at this school where we can share our stories, where we came from, and can experience what the other person felt."

That encouraging environment prompted Hla to walk into the front office one morning and tell the staff he wanted to do the morning announcements.

"We auditioned him on the spot," said Magnet Coordinator Melodye Montgomery. "He had so much personality and was so confident when speaking."

The staff asked him to emcee their leadership day. He delivered, introducing speakers and moderating the panel. It led to a gig emceeing the school's 50-year celebration. Hla hopes to parlay those people skills into a career in business and marketing. He dreams of attending Harvard.

Not long ago, a student asked Hla why he came to America. "I said life in Burma was not good, and I came to America to have a better life. They asked me how hard that was. I said it was hard, but I still faced my fear and overcame obstacles — and you can face any obstacle you want."



After his family immigrated to the U.S., Hla Aye found his home at Fondren Middle, where many of his peers are the children of immigrants. There are more than 100 languages spoken in HISD, which offers services such as counseling, tutoring, and health services to help newcomers settle in their new country.



JULY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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Independence Day

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JUNE 2017

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AUGUST 2017

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WEDNESDAY

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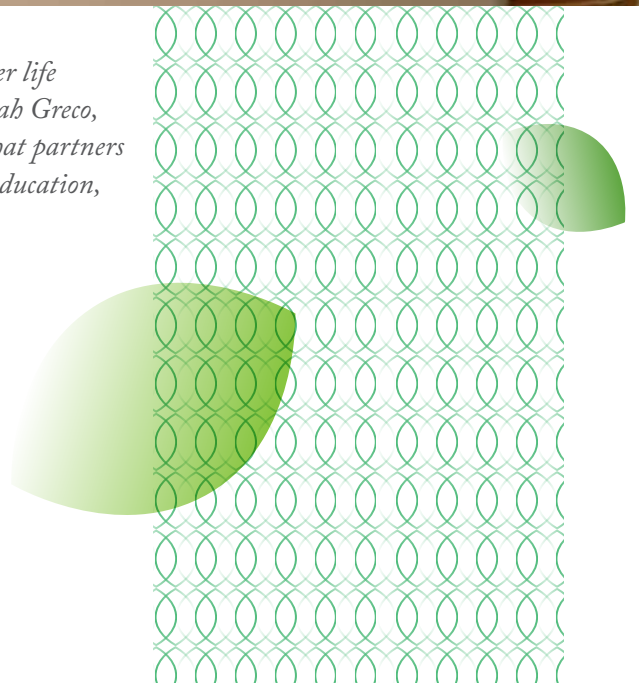
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Destini Williams, right, navigated the most difficult time in her life without leaving her studies behind, thanks to help from Deborah Greco, left, with Communities in Schools. The group is one of many that partners with HISD to provide behavior and medical services, parent education, and other social services that address the whole child.



INVEST IN A SOLID SUPPORT SYSTEM THAT KEEPS EVERY CHILD ON TRACK

Destini Williams remembers many times in the past four years when she could have dropped out of school. Like when her mother died of breast cancer a month before the start of her freshman year. Or a year later when her father suffered a stroke that put him in the hospital and rehab for nine months. Or after his second stroke last fall.

“MY MOM ALWAYS TOLD ME, ‘DON’T PASS UP ON SCHOOL BECAUSE YOU’RE JUST GOING TO KEEP ON THIS CYCLE OF BEING POOR AND HAVING A DEAD-END JOB. YOU HAVE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF.’”

Destini Williams, North Houston Early College High senior

“She has the determination to keep going even when a lot of people would have given up,” said Deborah Greco, a licensed social worker for Communities in Schools of Houston and part-time counselor at North Houston Early College High, where Destini is a senior. “Her story is not common, but it’s not extraordinary either. The issues are so huge for students, it’s difficult for them to focus on school.”

Destini credits the counselor for providing support, encouragement, advice — and keeping her in school. She remembers meeting Greco in the fall of 2013, shortly after her mother’s death. “I didn’t want anybody to know about my situation,” she said. “But it’s been the best thing that ever happened to me — to have somebody to talk to when I was going through those tough times.”

This spring, Destini will graduate and is looking forward to college. She dreams of the University of Texas at Austin or the University of California at Berkeley and hopes to become an oncologist. But she worries about her dad’s health: “I want to go to college, but I’m not sure what he’s going to do,” she said. “I have to help him take care of himself.”

But Destini has also learned to take care of herself, thanks to Greco.

“The biggest change I’ve seen is Destini’s ability to advocate for herself,” Greco said. “I absolutely see her going to college and fulfilling her dream of becoming a doctor.”

AUGUST

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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Teachers Report
to Work

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First Day of School

JULY 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

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INVEST IN TEACHING EVERY CHILD SKILLS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Grace keeps looking at her watch. It's quite impressive — a large wristwatch she got for Christmas. It's the perfect gift for this 19-year-old developmentally disabled HISD student, because her life is busy, and she can't be late to her internship at the Houston Food Bank.

"I get up at 5:20 a.m., shower, dress, and fix my lunch," Grace said. "I have to catch the bus at 6:20 a.m., but sometimes it comes early, so I go to the bus stop at 6:10 a.m."

**"I GET UP AT 5:20 A.M.,
SHOWER, DRESS,
AND FIX MY LUNCH. I
HAVE TO CATCH THE
BUS AT 6:20 A.M., BUT
SOMETIMES IT COMES
EARLY, SO I GO TO THE
BUS STOP AT 6:10 A.M."**

Grace, H.E.A.R.T student

After school, she helps care for her aunt's baby before going home for dinner. Then Grace and her mother often go to church for Bible study or dance class. They usually attend church on Sundays, too, but on a recent weekend, a cousin surprised her with a ticket to the Houston Texans playoff game against the Detroit Lions. "We won!" she said.

Grace works at the food bank through an HISD partnership with H.E.A.R.T., or Housing, Entrepreneurship, and Readiness Training. She is learning product recognition, food labeling, and money handling; she is enthusiastic about everything but especially enjoys working in the Texans Café, where she makes coffee, cleans tables, and assists customers.

Grace will graduate once she completes her internship, and counselors will help her find a fulfilling job or enroll her in a more advanced training program. And her aunt may have a job for her in her Salvadoran restaurant.

"That's okay," Grace said, "as long as it's not in the kitchen." She loves people and would prefer to be out front helping the customers.



Grace is one of 17 HISD students with developmental disabilities working at the Houston Food Bank through a partnership with H.E.A.R.T. (Housing, Entrepreneurship, and Readiness Training). HISD has several programs to help young adults like Grace transition successfully from high school to a productive adult life.



SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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No School
Labor Day

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Grandparents Day

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AUGUST 2017

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OCTOBER 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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Eid al-Adha Begins

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Rosh Hashanah
BeginsNo School
Fall Equinox

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Yom Kippur Begins

09
2017

INVEST IN MAKING EVERY CHILD'S SKY-HIGH DREAMS COME TRUE

Ronald Canales was 5 when he first spotted the large commercial airliner gliding through the sky. He was mesmerized and full of questions: How does that work? How does it fly?

He dreamed of becoming a pilot, but the idea seemed elusive. Though he lived just minutes from Sterling Aviation High, he didn't give much thought to its aviation magnet and the doors it could open. At least not until his sophomore year, when he met aviation history teacher Marvin Smith.

"IT WAS LIKE I WAS IN A DREAM. I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GET TO THAT POINT. JUST TO TOUCH THE YOKE AND PULL UP ON IT AND FEEL THE AIRPLANE COMING UP. I WAS FREE. MY DREAM WAS COMING TRUE."

*Ronald Canales, Sterling High senior,
on the first time he took the controls of a plane*

"Mr. Smith told me I had potential," said Ronald, now a senior working toward his private pilot's license. "He told me I could really do it. I was excited. I was like, 'Why not? It's free. I should take advantage of it.'"

The aviation magnet program at Sterling prepares students for a career in the aviation industry by giving them hands-on experience flying in simulators and airplanes. There are 72 students enrolled in the program, which launched in 1975, but that number is expected to grow with the debut of Sterling's new aviation-centric campus, built under the 2012 bond program.

Ronald is studying for the Federal Aviation Administration private pilot oral exam after having passed the written test. With 13 flight hours under his belt, he needs at least 27 more before he can take the final test — the FFA practical exam in the air.

As he prepares for graduation, Ronald has a plan. This summer, he'll join the U.S. Navy, which will

help him complete his private pilot's license and earn his bachelor's degree in aviation science. He'll then decide if he wants to re-enlist and become a fighter pilot or set his sights on the commercial airline industry. These are options he wouldn't have had without the aviation magnet program.

"It gives me a sense of accomplishment," Ronald said. "I'm living the dream."



Ronald Canales is pursuing his flying dreams at Sterling Aviation High, which in 2017 debuted a new \$72 million campus, rebuilt as part of the voter-approved 2012 bond program. It includes a 7,100-square-foot airplane hangar surrounded by career and technology education classrooms.

OCTOBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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Columbus Day

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Halloween

SEPTEMBER 2017

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NOVEMBER 2017

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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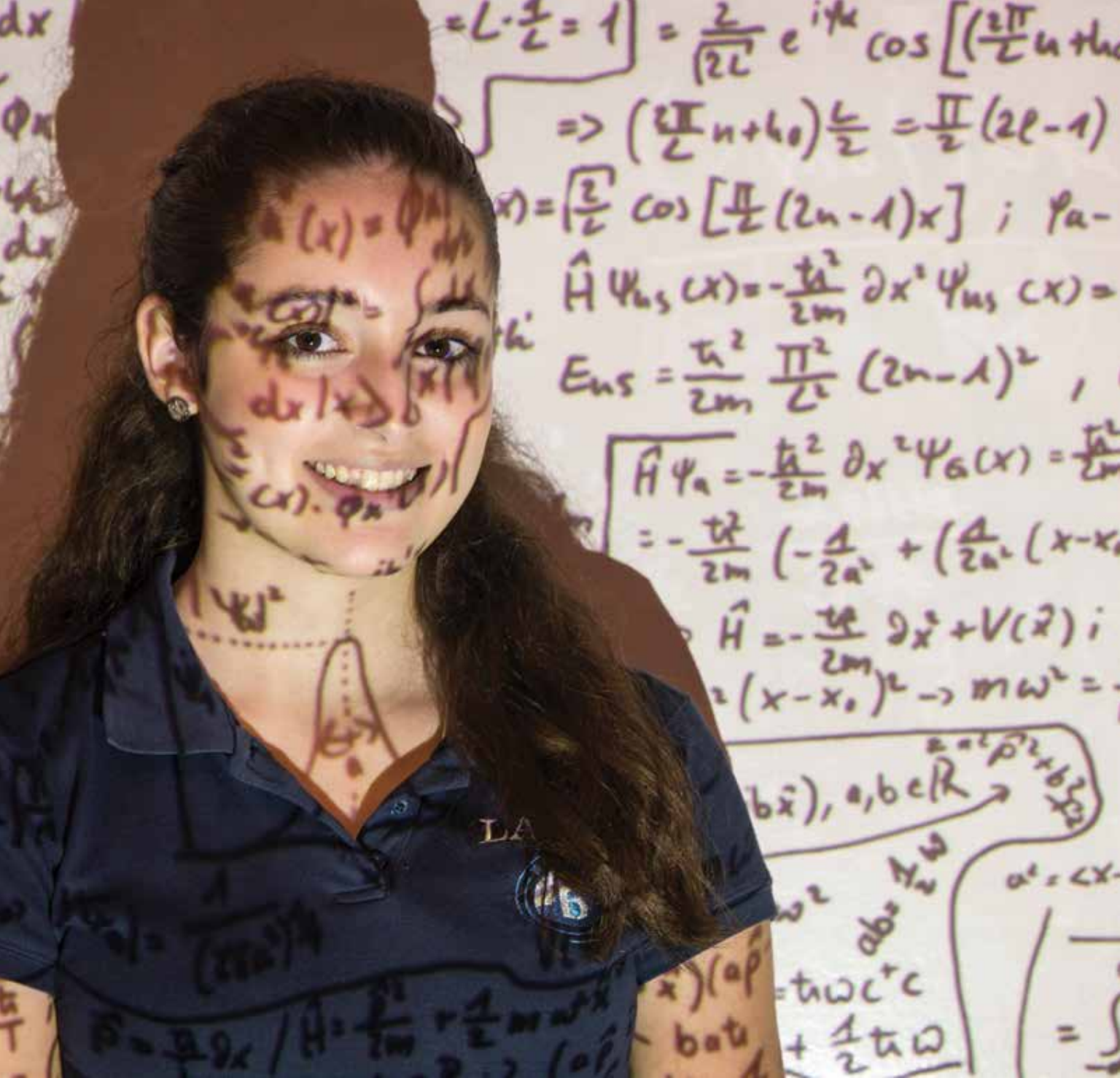
28

1

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Nicole Mut turned quantum physics into something anyone can understand, making her one of 15 finalists in a global contest. HISD is exposing students to STEM at all levels and offering STEM-focused programs at magnet schools and public charters, pathway schools, and through 23 TIF 4 grant schools.

INVEST IN BRINGING SCIENCE TO LIFE FOR EVERY CHILD

**“IF IT’S SOMETHING
YOU’RE INTERESTED
IN, THEN YOU CAN
USUALLY APPROACH
IT IN A WAY THAT IS
INTERESTING AND
FUN TO LEARN —
CONNECT IT TO
THE REAL WORLD.”**

Nicole Mut, Lamar High sophomore

As far back as she can remember, Nicole Mut has been interested in science. Her parents, both engineers, wove science and engineering topics into everyday activities. Family vacations were often spent in national parks, where Nicole’s dad would explain about animals or the environment, and discussions often dealt with the reasons behind why things are the way they are.

Nicole’s passion for all things STEM was further nurtured by enthusiastic teachers with whom she felt a personal connection. She remembers her seventh-grade science teacher explaining course material in ways that made the lesson seem like an adventure. Her fifth-grade teacher made a strong impact when she encouraged Nicole to participate in a STEM contest where she explored turning algae into biofuel.

“It inspired me at a young age to think that anyone could participate in adult-level topics, regardless of age, gender, race, or anything,” Nicole said. “I learned that an interest in learning can enrich your life.”

Now a sophomore at Lamar High, Nicole’s passion for science led her to create and submit a video in the 2016 Breakthrough Junior Challenge competition. The annual global contest inspires students to think creatively about complex math and science topics and communicate them in an engaging and imaginative way.

Nicole chose the topic of quantum physics.

“Quantum physics sounds intimidating and scary, but actually it’s a very interesting theoretical topic that explains a lot of things around us,” Nicole said. “I watched a lot of videos and read a ton so that I learned it at a higher level. Then I cut it down to what was really important and taught it the way I would want to learn it.”

Nicole’s video was chosen as one of 15 finalists worldwide, from more than 6,000 entries submitted from 140 countries. She plans to enter the contest again next year and eventually become an engineer like her parents.

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

29

30

31

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7

Daylight Saving
Time Ends

Election Day

12

13

14

19

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21

Thanksgiving
Break Begins

26

27

28

OCTOBER 2017

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DECEMBER 2017

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31						

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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11

Veterans Day

15

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22

23

24

25

Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving
Break Ends

29

30


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INVEST IN A LEADER WHO BELIEVES IN EVERY CHILD

Furr High Principal Bertie Simmons grabs a turquoise soccer ball from a bag in her storage closet, tosses it to the tall boy standing in her office, and instructs him to kick it around.

The boy — a junior in a neighboring district hoping to re-enroll at Furr — looks dubious but follows instructions. After a few minutes, the 82-year-old principal takes the ball back and holds it up as she connects a cord attached to a bulb, which immediately begins to glow.



**“NO. 1 – YOU HAVE TO
SINCERELY CARE. IT’S
HARD. IT’S NOT JUST
CARING, BUT PUTTING
THAT CARING INTO
ACTION BY SHOWING
RESPECT REGARDLESS.”**

Bertie Simmons, Furr High principal

“I want you to be innovative and creative and come up with something that will make the world better,” Simmons says. “You could do something like that, because you’re bright.”

The scene is not unique. Students trickle in and out of Simmons’ office throughout the day. Some enroll. Others ask questions about grades, classes, and accommodating work schedules. A few pop by just to say hello or ask for a snack.

It’s a stark contrast from the school Simmons assumed control of 16 years ago. Suspensions were high, graduation rates were low, and there was constant strife on the campus.

Now, the reverse is true. Suspensions have been replaced by a restorative justice program, and 90 percent of seniors graduate. Students have gone to Cambodia to deliver clean water to elementary schools and to Washington, D.C., to work with lawmakers on immigration, standardized testing, and police brutality.

The turnaround was solidified last fall when Furr beat out thousands of schools across the nation to win a \$10 million Super School Project grant awarded by the XQ Institute.

“It’s relationships. It’s showing respect. It’s valuing each individual for his or her own personal worth,” Simmons said. “I just believe in these students. I love the parents and the students, and they know it.”



Principal Bertie Simmons has transformed Furr High by believing in every student who walks onto her campus. "We're trying to teach them they can make a contribution to the world in a very positive way. They usually don't get outside their own neighborhoods. It makes a big difference to open their eyes to new ways of doing things."

DECEMBER

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

26

27

28

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11

12

Hanukkah Begins

17

18

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24

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26

Christmas Eve

Winter Break Begins
Christmas Day

31

1

2

New Year's Eve

NOVEMBER 2017

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JANUARY 2018

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

29

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16

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23

Semester Ends
Winter Solstice

No School

27

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INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS FOR EVERY CHILD

Ty-Rinetta Sanders-Washington knew she wanted to enter a profession where she could help people.

"I looked at going into physical therapy, being a motivational speaker ... I just wanted to impact lives," Ty-Rinetta said.

"I FELT ALL MY LIFE I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SOME KIND OF TEACHER. I WAS ALWAYS HELPING PEOPLE IN SOME WAY."

*Ty-Rinetta Sanders-Washington,
Booker T. Washington High graduate*

Then a counselor at Booker T. Washington High told her about Teach Forward Houston, an innovative fellowship program that is training the next generation of HISD teachers.

Now Ty-Rinetta is enrolled at the University of Houston, working toward an education degree and teaching certification. HISD is subsidizing her tuition, and she has agreed to return to the district to teach in a high-needs school.

Ty-Rinetta knows firsthand the value of an effective teacher. She recalls two astute educators who took her under their wing when she was having difficulties at home.

"They weren't just my teachers, they were a second set of parents. They didn't baby me. They would tell me when I was slacking, but they were still nurturing. They were giving me the support I was not getting at home," Ty-Rinetta said. "It was such a big thing for me. It allowed me to move forward not just with academics but as a young woman."

The impact of those teachers stuck with Ty-Rinetta, and she wants to positively influence students' lives the way hers has been.

"I personally feel like HISD is one of the districts where you want to be," Ty-Rinetta said. "There are close-knit communities within the schools. I feel like I can be an asset to HISD. I know I can't do it alone, but I want to be there to help. I want to give back to HISD the way that they helped me."

Ty-Rinetta Sanders-Washington is one of 58 seniors from 27 HISD high schools who pledged to return to the district to teach as part of Teach Forward Houston. The grow-your-own program is training a new generation of HISD teachers who have a personal connection to the district that gave them the foundation they needed.



JANUARY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

31

1

2

New Year's Day

7

8

9

Second Semester
Begins

14

15

16

No School
Martin Luther King
Jr. Day

21

22

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DECEMBER 2017

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FEBRUARY 2018

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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Winter Break Ends

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INVEST IN BUILDING A HOME LIBRARY FOR EVERY CHILD



Amanda Cruz wants what's best for her kids, but often that comes with a price tag she can't afford. Providing books for her three children had been a challenge, until one day in the third grade, her son, Alexander, brought home a packet of six books from Scroggins Elementary and proclaimed that they were his to keep.

"I didn't believe him. I thought he took them from the school library," said Cruz. "But they came with a note telling me that they were a gift so we could start a library for him in our home and keep him reading over the summer."

Having books in the home and being read to as a child are two of the most important indicators of academic and lifetime success. Yet nearly two-thirds of low-income families do not own a single children's book.

That's why the nonprofit group Books Between Kids partners with HISD to collect gently used books and get them into the hands of at-risk students and economically challenged families so they can build home libraries. They and other community partners, like the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation and First Book Houston, are investing in the district's Literacy by 3 initiative, which works to ensure every student is reading at or above grade level by the third grade.

"I AM SO THANKFUL FOR THESE BOOKS. I CAN'T AFFORD THEM ON MY OWN, AND IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE TO ME AND MY KIDS. THEY ARE BETTER READERS BECAUSE OF THESE BOOKS, AND THEY LOVE READING TO EACH OTHER."

Amanda Cruz, HISD parent

Each May, Cruz's children receive another six books. Last year, her kindergartner, Jazlyn, received her first batch. "She loves to read aloud to me, to her older brother and sister, and even to the dog. The older kids also love to read their books to her. It's really become a family activity."



Last May, Amanda Cruz's children, including kindergartner Jazlyn, were among 36,000 students at 59 HISD elementary schools and early childhood centers who went home with six books from Books Between Kids. The group hopes to reach even more children and families in 2017.

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

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Presidents' Day

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JANUARY 2018

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MARCH 2018

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

31

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Valentine's Day
Ash Wednesday

21

22

23

24

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Mother Rhonda Mayes, right, feels at ease putting her special-needs fifth-grader, LaDainian, on the bus with HISD driver Cynthia "C.C." Cormier, left. HISD bus drivers safely transport more than 36,000 students to and from school every day, traveling more than 15,000,000 miles annually.

INVEST IN PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN EVERY CHILD'S LIFE

Rhonda Mayes worries about her son LaDainian and the daily challenges facing the special-needs fifth-grader, who suffers from a disorder that often requires him to use a wheelchair and other medical, social, and emotional supports.

But when she puts LaDainian on the bus for the hourlong trip to Reynolds Elementary, Mayes can relax, knowing her son is under the watchful eye of HISD bus driver Cynthia “C.C.” Cormier and her team.

“She’s been there since Day One,” said Mayes. “She’s got the mothering instinct, and she is just so protective of him.”

“IT TAKES A SPECIAL DRIVER TO DRIVE SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN. CYNTHIA IS NOT ONLY CARING, BUT SHE’S VERY SAFE AND EFFICIENT. IF YOU WANT A MODEL DRIVER, SHE’S THE ONE.”

Tesha Foster, HISD terminal manager

Cormier, with three kids and four grandchildren of her own, is one of HISD’s most experienced drivers, with 17 years behind the wheel. Her day starts at 5:15 a.m. when she arrives at Barnett Motor Pool to do her bus safety check, heading out by 6 a.m. to pick up the first of six special-needs students. Her route takes her to Reynolds and Foster Elementary schools. She makes the same trip in reverse each afternoon, sometimes pulling back into Barnett as late as 6 p.m.

“That’s my heart,” she said of her work. “I love it. You can’t get me out of special needs. We love our babies, and this is what we do.”

Before winter break, Cormier’s team decorated the bus for the holidays. Come spring, they’ll put up new decorations. What won’t change is the driver and her team.

“The children do better if they see the same people every day,” said Pamela Morton, a licensed vocational nurse who cares for a student with a tracheotomy. “They don’t seem to mind if the bus changes, but they do if the faces change.”

LaDainian will start middle school next year, and his mother already is wondering how they will adjust.

“He’s used to C.C. He knows her voice,” she said. “It makes all the difference if you have a good rapport with your driver.”

MARCH

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

INVEST IN A CHILD AT HISD
HoustonISD.org/GetInvolved

25

26

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13

Daylight Saving
Time Begins

Spring Break Begins

18

19

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Spring Equinox

25

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27

Palm Sunday

FEBRUARY 2018

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APRIL 2018

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WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

28

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Spring Break Ends

St. Patrick's Day

21

22

23

24

28

29

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31

No School
Passover Begins
Good Friday

03
2018

ABOUT HISD

LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TEXAS

**EDUCATING
215,000 STUDENTS**

28,267 EMPLOYEES
MAKE IT ONE OF THE
LARGEST EMPLOYERS
IN HOUSTON

287 SCHOOLS
SERVE OUR STUDENTS

ABOUT 100 LANGUAGES
ARE SPOKEN ACROSS
THE DISTRICT

\$314.5 MILLION
TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP
DOLLARS AWARDED TO
THE CLASS OF 2016

GRADUATION RATE IS
AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH
OF **79.3%**

\$1.89 BILLION BOND
IS BUILDING MODERN
SCHOOLS ACROSS
HOUSTON

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

DONATE TO THE HISD FOUNDATION

- The **HISD Foundation** welcomes your support of district programs and well-educated students who are prepared to serve as tomorrow's leaders. **HoustonISDFoundation.org**

- Join the **Friends of HISD** to show your support for public education and to make a direct impact on a child's life. **HoustonISDFoundation.org/Friends**

BECOME A READ HOUSTON READ VOLUNTEER

- Donate an hour of your time to read to first- and second-graders in person or online to help them develop a love of reading. **HoustonISD.org/ReadHoustonRead**

JOIN VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (VIPS)

- Register now to make a difference in a student's life by volunteering your time to be a mentor, tutor, or fundraiser. **HoustonISD.org/VIPS**

PARTNER IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

- HISD's Family and Community Engagement (FACE) department facilitates partnerships among parents, caregivers, campuses, and the community to advance student learning and family empowerment. **HoustonISD.org/FACE**

DO BUSINESS WITH HISD

- Become an approved vendor and learn about HISD's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise certification program. **HoustonISD.org/DoingBusiness**

SERVE ON AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Be a part of the decision-making process by serving on one or more of the district's advisory committees. **HoustonISD.org/AdvisoryCommittees**



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