

# The Anchor

A newsletter providing resources, upcoming events, and highlights for students being served in HISD's Office of Special Populations.



Office of Special Populations

Spring 2023

VOL 1 ISSUE 2

## FROM THE DESK OF PRINCIPAL MURCHISON



**Jennifer Murchison**  
Key Middle School Principal  
RISE School Office

Jennifer Murchison has been an educator for 18 years and currently serves as the principal of Key Middle School. She is thrilled about the work taking place in the Office of Special Populations (OSP), specifically in the Office of Special Education Services (OSES).

The partnership Key has with OSES transcends the campus's views of implementation and inclusion. Strategic action plans have been developed for each learner with a focus on quality instruction, appropriate intervention, and social emotional learning (using ReThink Ed). Key MS's partnership with OSES has served as a catalyst for transformation for students zoned to Key MS, as well those from Residential Treatment Facilities (RTCs). Equitable opportunities are being provided for all scholars.

## TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE FOR ALL



**Adrian K. Acosta**  
Academic Instructional  
Technology Officer

Adrian K. Acosta was born in Monterrey, Mexico and later moved to the United States, where he attended Pre-K at HISD's Piney Point Elementary School. Throughout his career, Mr. Acosta has been passionate about technology for all students.

He currently serves as the Officer of the Academic Instructional Technology (AIT) department. His goal is to empower students and teachers to discover learning through technology. The focus of the [AIT department](#) is to continually support teachers as they transform their classrooms into student-centered ecosystems. Students in the Office of Special Populations are afforded exciting opportunities by using resources such as *Library Services*, the STEM team, and the Instructional Technology team.

## OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES

"The case for change is clear, and we are ready to work with you to transform HISD into a district we can all be proud of."

-Millard House II, HISD Superintendent

**Parent Support**



**Resources**



**Campus Support**



**Graduation**



Staff members highlighted below were chosen by their peers because they have gone "above and beyond" in their dedication to our operating principles. These individuals possess a sacrificial nature, a relentless determination to exceed goals and a willingness to think creatively and work collaboratively.

## RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING STAFF



**Kelly Barsch**  
Harvard Elementary  
Dyslexia Interventionist



**Krushall Hildredge**  
Intervention Teacher  
Development Specialist



**Cruz Rochez**  
High School Office  
Multilingual Program



**Edith Santiago**  
Carillo Elementary  
G/T Coordinator



**Deitra Ford-Robinson**  
Special Education Services  
Senior Manager



# DYSLEXIA OFFICE

## HIGHLIGHTS

On Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022, the Dyslexia Office hosted a *Parent Coffee Connect* virtual event that provided information on how to prepare scholars for lifelong learning. Superintendent Millard House II was the keynote speaker. University of Houston's Disabilities Services coordinators shared information regarding supporting scholars beyond high school. Sessions included information on how to use HISD digital platforms as well as user friendly instructional strategies. In addition to the virtual events, our office ensures that all HISD dyslexia interventionists are trained to provide structured literacy, which emphasizes explicit and systematic teaching of all components of reading - decoding, spelling, reading comprehension, and written expression. **For more information, email [dyslexiaoffice@houstonisd.org](mailto:dyslexiaoffice@houstonisd.org) or visit our [website](#).**

### UPCOMING

- First grade Dyslexia Screener  
Jan. 17-31, 2023
- [Texas Academic Language Therapy Association \(ALTA\) 2023 Summit-Virtual](#) Saturday, January 14, 2023
- TBA - *HISD Parent Coffee Connect* spring 2023

### RESOURCES

- Access additional information by clicking the links below:
- [Texas Dyslexia Handbook](#)
  - [Texas Dyslexia Handbook - Spanish Actualizacion del Manual](#)
  - [Dyslexia and Related Disorders](#)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Individuals with dyslexia have creative, unique, and logical ways of thinking.
- 35% of entrepreneurs are identified with dyslexia.
- A referral for dyslexia evaluation can be submitted at any time during the school year.

# MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Office offers a variety of ways to meet the needs of all students; the *Level-Up* program is one such way. The mission of the *Level-Up* program is to accelerate learning for overage students and reunite them with their grade level/age-appropriate cohort. The program targets overage students in grades 2-4 by providing accelerated intervention which supports the student in mastering state-mandated learning objectives. The goal is to advance students at least one grade level by the beginning of the following semester. We accomplish this by progress monitoring and utilizing learning management systems that provide differentiated instruction.

**For more information, email [hisdinterventions@houstonisd.org](mailto:hisdinterventions@houstonisd.org) or visit our [website](#).**

### UPCOMING

- See below for state and district assessment information:
- Circle MOY Pre-K ( Jan.9 - Feb.10 )
  - [TX Kindergarten Entry Assessment](#) (KEA) ( Jan. 17 - Feb. 3 )
  - [Renaissance 360](#) MOY ( Jan.17 - Feb. 3 )

### RESOURCES

- Access additional information by clicking the links below:
- [Making Math a Family Thing](#)
  - [ESTAR Math Intervention Modules](#)
  - [MSTAR Math Intervention Modules](#)
  - [Imagine Math 3+](#)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- *The Level-Up* program serves more than 80 elementary campuses.
- Dr. Affton Coleman is the author of [Get Your Tech Together](#).
- Four is the only number, when written in English, whose spelling contains the same number of letters as the number itself.

# MULTILINGUAL OFFICE

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Multilingual Office hosted their annual parent informational meeting: *Igniting a Successful Mindset for Emergent Bilingual (EB) Students* on Saturday, Nov. 5, 2022. The conference offered HISD families and community members an opportunity to learn from educational experts on topics related to academic success and ways to equip diverse students with tools needed to be successful. Families learned how active engagement contributes to strengthening communication and academic achievement. The informational meeting included a session about EBs with special needs, how to protect student's rights, and how to support students both at home and at school.

For more information, email [multilingual@houstonisd.org](mailto:multilingual@houstonisd.org) or visit our [website](#).

### UPCOMING

- District parent, family, and community event, *Launch Your Dream: A World of Opportunities for Diverse Learners* - January 26, 2023 [Register here](#)
- Dual language parent meeting - January 19, 2023, 6 p.m. at Burbank MS

### RESOURCES

Access additional information by clicking the links below:

- [English Learner Portal - Home Page \(txel.org\)](#)
- [TELPAS Resources | Texas Education Agency](#)
- [Content-Based Language Instruction \(CBLI\) Quick Guide](#)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- EB students are eligible to apply to [HISD School of Choice](#).
- The highest student EB population is from Afghanistan.
- Nearly 10% or 5 million students in US public schools are identified as EB.

# GIFTED & TALENTED OFFICE

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Gifted and Talented (G/T) Office is excited about the innovative learning taking place across HISD. We are excited about partnering with families to provide pertinent information regarding the G/T program. On September 15 and 17, 2022, we hosted the second annual family symposium: *Leveling the Playing Field*. Drs. Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis presented on parenting strengths and developing talents in twice-exceptional students. Other topics included the vanguard/magnet process, understanding executive functioning and linguistic accommodations for emergent bilinguals and the Gifted Education Plan (GEP). Events of this nature support improving our gifted learner's overall learning experience.

For more information, email [giftedandtalented@houstonisd.org](mailto:giftedandtalented@houstonisd.org) or visit our [website](#).

### UPCOMING

- Gifted and Talented Education Supporters (G.A.T.E.S.) meetings, Jan. 17, 2023 and March 28, 2023
- Deadline to request G/T Testing, Feb. 3, 2023. Please contact your campus G/T coordinator for additional information.

### RESOURCES

Click [here](#) for G/T resources or scan the QR code below.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Gifted learners from diverse backgrounds often need experiences that honor the hidden rules of culture.
- Dr. Nicole Anderson, G/T Specialist, was a member of the world-famous Grambling State Marching Band and appeared in the movie *Drumline*.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFICE

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Office of Special Education Services (OSES) hosted a virtual fall Parent Summit: *Reimagining Special Education Services* on Saturday, Nov. 12, 2022. The Summit offered HISD families and members of the community an opportunity to learn from educational experts. Topics included equipping students with tools to be successful, how to develop advocacy skills and understanding Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Representatives from the Texas Work Force Commission and Region 4 shared information about behavior, accommodations, and useful tools for their scholars post-secondary journey.

For more information, email [specialeducation@houstonisd.org](mailto:specialeducation@houstonisd.org) or visit our [website](#).

### UPCOMING

#### Region 4 Parent Trainings:

- 01/12/23 Contents of the IEP
- 02/09/23 Child Find and the Referral Process
- 03/09/23 Services for Students who are Visually impaired and/or Deaf or Hard of Hearing

### RESOURCES

Access additional information by clicking the links below:

- [Accommodation Central](#)
- [SPED Family Resources](#)
- [Workforce Solutions](#)
- [Webinar Series: Restorative Practices for Community Resources Coordination Groups \(CRCGS\)](#)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Public school students receiving special education services increased from 6.5 million (13%) in 2009-2010 to 7.2 million (15%) in 2020- 2021.
- OSES Transition Programs has a newsletter entitled [The HISD Transition Times](#).

## Office of Special Populations

4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, TX 77092  
713-556-6932

The primary responsibility of the Office of Special Populations is to provide quality programs and services to students that promote equity and success and contribute to preparing students for college and/or careers. We ensure district and campus leaders are provided with the appropriate resources, services, and programs to assist students who are identified as Emergent Bilinguals (EBs), Immigrant, Refugee, Migrant, Gifted & Talented (G/T), and students referred to the Offices of Special Education (SPED), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Dyslexia.

**Dyslexia Office**  
812 West 28th Street  
Houston, TX 77008  
713-556-1908

**Multi-Tiered Systems  
of Support Office**  
4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, TX 77092  
713-556-7122

**Multilingual Office**  
4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, TX 77092  
713-556-6961

**Gifted & Talented  
Office**  
4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, TX 77092  
713-556-6954

**Special  
Education Office**  
4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, TX 77092  
713-556-7025

