



# PRESS RELEASE

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HISD Media Relations Department

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## HISD Names Teachers of the Year for 2011

May 25, 2011 – HISD’s Elementary and Secondary Teacher of the Year were named tonight in a ceremony at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center. **Heather Gaines of Lovett Elementary School was named Elementary Teacher of the Year** and **Michael Clark of Bellaire High School was named Secondary Teacher of the Year.**

Heather Gaines has been teaching for 15 years and is currently the literacy coach at Lovett, where she has taught since 2006. She works with struggling third, fourth and fifth grade students in reading. She believes her students can learn at high levels and achieve at least a year’s growth in reading, if not more.

Gaines said, “The best teachers continue to learn and grow. They seek out new information and ideas by either consulting with knowledgeable colleagues or attending workshops. They try out what they have learned and share both successes and challenges with colleagues.”

Michael Clark is currently teaching Advanced Placement (AP) courses in government and economics at Bellaire High School. He has been a teacher for 20 years, 11 years at Bellaire. Clark said, “I think my success as a teacher comes from my constant self-evaluation. Every day, I ask myself a series of questions: are the students excited about learning, do they feel like a valued participant in the lesson, are a variety of strategies and evaluations being used in the instruction? I then adapt my style to the changing dynamics of the classroom to achieve my goals.”

HISD Superintendent Terry Grier said, “These two teachers exemplify what I mean when I talk about having an effective teacher in every classroom. They are dedicated, hardworking and they get results. Michael and Heather are the type of teachers all children in HISD schools deserve, and the district is working hard to achieve that goal.”

Earlier this month on a 7-2 vote, the HISD Board of Education took an important step in that direction by approving a new teacher evaluation and development system. The system was designed over a six-month period, during which HISD gathered input from thousands of educators, parents, and community members.

The new teacher development and evaluation system makes several major changes to the district’s current, 20-year-old appraisal system that was created by the state and that many HISD teachers and principals have said is not providing them with meaningful feedback to improve student learning. It ensures that all teachers receive regular feedback, as well as individualized support that helps them serve their students more effectively. It rates teachers based on multiple measures in three major categories rather than relying on the results of a single, brief, classroom observation, as the current system does. Those three categories are student performance, instructional practice and professional expectations. For more information on the new teacher appraisal and development system go to [www.HISDEffectiveteachers.org](http://www.HISDEffectiveteachers.org)

Thanks to generous sponsors, HISD's 2011 Teachers of the Year received \$5000; a \$2500 gift card from I.W. Marks Jewelers; a Palais Royal Gift Basket; a Custom 10K Gold Signet Ring; and the Crystal Teacher of the Year Award.

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The **Houston Independent School District** is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States with 298 schools and more than 200,000 students. The 301-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with nearly 30,000 employees.

**For more information, visit the HISD Web site at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org).**

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