



Our

VOICES

MULTILINGUAL

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Summer 2021

www.houstonisd.com/voices

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MESSAGE TO PARENTS ...

Ghida Hijazi's Journey of Success

Moving to the United States as a middle schooler was quite the journey, as I knew little to no English. I had cousins that attended school with me, which made the transition smoother. However, the language challenges did not disappear.



Ghida Hijazi, Teacher Specialist, Cornelius Elementary

The first class I attended was Texas History. On my first day, the teacher gave us a United States map as a warmup and instructed us to label as many states as we could remember. At the time, I had never seen a map other than a map of Lebanon. I looked around and saw everyone completing the assignment, and at that moment, I knew I was ready to go back home.

I was fortunate enough to be placed in the ESL program and received support in all my classes. I let my teachers know that I could only understand about 10% of what they said. The conversations I had with people at school were 80% in Arabic with some English words that I was familiar with. I used many hand gestures until I was confident enough to start using my English.

Before learning English, I had a solid foundation in Arabic that I believe played a significant role in mastering the two languages. Additionally, the teacher support that I received and the constant exposure to both languages at home and school was essential in becoming fluent.

After graduating high school, I attended the University of Houston-Downtown and received my Bachelor of Arts in Education with a teaching certification. I taught ELA at the third and fifth-grade levels. I was named Rookie Teacher of the Year across the district my first year and Texas English Teacher of the Year my second year. I then

received a master's degree in Administration and Supervision from the University of Houston. I have come full circle. I began as a student struggling to learn English and transitioned into an ELA teacher, and now I am coaching ELA teachers on providing the best support for our students.

I owe my success to my parents and the teachers that believed in me and pushed me to be the best version of myself. My parents left their home and family to bring me to the United States in search of a better future. They worked hard to provide me with all the resources

I needed to succeed.

Even though they were unable to help me academically, they always believed in me and pushed me to excel, and that was enough for me to succeed.

Ms. Hijazi's advice to parents:

You must know your first language well to properly learn a new language. One piece of advice that I would give to parents who do not speak English but want their children to learn, is to continue supporting their home language to build a strong learning foundation. This will help them master a second language. They should also encourage their children to practice English by speaking with native speakers as much as possible.

When Ms. Hijazi was asked: What would your "note to self", as a 27-year-old, be regarding learning? Her reply was: The learning never stops! Do not be afraid to ask questions and step out of your comfort zone. **That is the key to success.**

Her message to HISD teachers:

Believe in ALL your students. English learners have the same potential as all learners. ■

DROP OF WISDOM

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you and your children back to the 2021-2022 school year in HISD! Even though we experienced an unprecedented school year, we learned more about having compassion, expanded our knowledge, discovered that learning can have multiple modalities – from virtual learning to in-person – and most importantly, we realized how amazingly resilient our children can be. Despite being separated from friends and their typical learning framework, our students persevered, and we are extremely proud!



Dr. Campbell

Parents, you too experienced a tumultuous time! You became a teacher overnight – all while continuing the duties of parenting. As a parent, I know that it was no easy feat! We thank you for your support as we navigated the unknown.

We are looking forward to a much brighter year – filled with fun and exciting opportunities for our children! We have added tutors, programs, and coaches to support the work of the Multilingual Programs Department, but most importantly, to support our children. We are eager to work with you as a parent and know, that we see you as the most integral component of your child's education. Never hesitate to reach out for any support that you may need – **we are partners.**

- Dr. Khalilah Campbell, Special Populations Officer

WHEN YOU ARE NEW TO U.S. SCHOOLS...

Refugee Resettlement agencies that accept donations to support newly arrived refugee families.

Interfaith Ministries
713-533-4900

Catholic Charities
713-526-4611

Alliance for Multicultural Community Service
713-776-4700

YMCA International Service
713-339-9015

Refugee Services of Texas
713-644-6224

2020-2021 TESTING CALENDAR

The Texas Education Agency's testing calendars are available for review. Assessment information for STAAR/STAAR Alt and TELPAS/TELPAS Alt may be access by clicking <https://bit.ly/3psRRov> ■

COOP ES SPOTLIGHT



In 1950, Coop Elementary was built and named in honor of Ethel R. Coop, Board Trustee (1928-1942). Ms. Coop began a tradition that continues to live on at one of Houston's leading Dual Language campuses. Today, Coop's mission continues to be committed to promoting academic and personal growth through relationship development. Students are encouraged to create opportunities and are empowered with the tools to become global graduates. Coop is one of the district's successful Dual Language campuses. The program is research-based and follows the three essential pillars: Bilingualism and Biliteracy, Academic Achievement, and Sociocultural Competence.

The success of Coop's Dual Language program is recognized by our district and noted by program experts. During their visit in January 2020, Dr. Thomas and Dr. Collier acknowledged the consistency of systems and procedures from prekindergarten to the 3rd grade. Dually noted by the leaders was the level of rigorous instruction and evidence of writing observed in all grade levels in both languages across content areas.



Former principal, Tudon Martinez, now an SSO for the Middle School Office says about Coop ES:

I am incredibly proud of everything that is being accomplished at Ethel R. Coop Elementary. Our Dual Language program is recognized as an HISD Model Dual Language Program as a result of the hard work, planning, implementation of best practices, and commitment of our fantastic Dual Language team. Our teachers work diligently to ensure they provide a Dual Language environment that encompasses all model components to guarantee student success. The challenge is always finding the time, but it is a charge that our teachers handle gracefully by

always prioritizing maximizing instructional time. As a result, our students are kept engaged and are en route to biliteracy daily.

This hard work is monitored and supported by the efforts of our Dual Language coordinator, Ms. Nora Rubalcava, who has been the cornerstone of our program from its inception. She transitioned from a Dual Language teacher to the coordinator role, ensuring that the same quality instruction she provided as a teacher is consistent across the campus.



This year the Coop Community welcomes Principal Luis Sabillon. He is committed to continuing the great work that the teachers, staff, and administrators have done to make the campus great, and to offer an open-door policy for the staff and parents. Mr. Sabillon brings a wealth of experience and knowledge, as he has served HISD's children and parents for 18 years. Past roles include working as Dean of Instruction for Marshall Academy, where he supported ESL instruction, coached teachers, and fostered a safe learning environment for all students. Earlier in his career he taught fourth and fifth grade at Brookline Elementary.



Principal Sabillon's goal for Coop's scholars is to work collaboratively with teachers and parents to provide students with the best education possible. He is dedicated to providing students with opportunities to grow and excel in the classroom. Principal Sabillon believes that the commitment it takes to develop well-rounded, life-long learners calls for the community to work together.

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 Email: CoopES@houstonisd.org
<https://www.houstonisd.org/coopes> ■

RAISING A BILINGUAL CHILD

With schools re-opening, parents have again the opportunity to meet their children's teacher, but, before you go to a parent-teacher conference, jot down a list of questions and answers. Take this list with you. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- What will be covered in your class this year?
- How much homework do you assign?
- How does my child need to prepare every day for the day's work?
- What are your classroom rules and consequences?
- Are there any big projects coming up? How will you let parents know about them?
- What opportunities for student-to-student interaction would my child have in your class?
- How would you know my child's English proficiency, and what supports are you putting in place to ensure they are successful in your class?
- What are you doing to help my child improve their English proficiency?
- What can I do at home to help my child do better in school?

Here are some topics you may want to have ready for the teacher:

- Your child's favorite (and least favorite) subjects.
- How your child learns best.
- Your child's interests outside of school.
- Situations at home that may affect your child's behavior in school. ■



SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS IN TX

Houston ISD Supports

Parent Course: <https://bit.ly/3thXK9M>
 Information about learning at home with HISD

List of Linguistic Accommodations:
<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/184314>

Parent Resources

Texas Education Agency Supports: <http://bit.ly/3t69k8k>

Helpful Websites for At-Home Learning

These websites will help in strengthening the English Language Proficiency Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

English: <https://bit.ly/3sO9t0A>

Spanish: <https://bit.ly/38bMmmO>

Internet Providers: Keeping Families Connected

English: <https://bit.ly/2OteIN2>

Spanish: <https://bit.ly/3mkFtG>

Adult Education and Literacy Programs

<https://bit.ly/3wqVOxI>

Health and Safety – HISD Back to School Plan

<https://www.houstonisd.org/ReadySetGo>

Parent University

SAVE THE DATES

2021-2022 SESSIONS:

- Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021 - Wheatley HS
- Tuesday, Oct. 19, 2021 - Scarborough HS
- Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021 - Milby HS
- Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022 - Madison HS
- Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022 - Bellaire HS
- Tuesday, Apr. 19, 2022 - Houston MSTC

<https://www.houstonisd.org/ParentUniversity> ■