**[](http://www.houstonisd.org/HISDmedia) HISD Scholars Banquet to recognize 90-plus high school seniors at top of their class**

*April 6, 2015* – The Houston Independent School District will pay tribute this week to the top students from each high school’s graduating class during the annual Scholars Banquet.

In addition to their outstanding academic achievements, these 96 valedictorians and salutatorians have garnered more than $2 million year-to-date in scholarship and financial aid offers.

The students will be recognized for their dedication and hard work during the banquet, which will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 7 at The Westin Oaks Houston at the Galleria, 5011 Westheimer Road.

“We are extremely proud of our class of 2015 scholars who have put in countless hours writing research papers, calculating math problems, and studying for exams in order to reach their goals,” said HISD Superintendent Dr. Grier, who also will speak at the event. “Their hard word has paid off, and we are excited about what their future will bring.”

Among the students being honored at the event is Kevin Villalta, valedictorian at Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy for Young Men and an EMERGE scholar. EMERGE was designed to help low-income and high potential students gain admission to and graduate from Tier 1 and Ivy League colleges and universities. Villalta was accepted into not just one, but five prestigious institutions of higher education: Cornell, Northwestern, Case Western Reserve, and Stanford universities, and MIT.

At the beginning of his high school career, Villalta struggled a bit, but he is now making top marks in his five Advanced Placement classes, and he received a perfect score on the math portion of the SAT. Villalta credits his success to discovering a passion for math as a sophomore and finding a mentor in his math teacher, Saul Cantu.

“I am extremely proud of Kevin,” Cantu said. “He embraced his experience here, and soaked up everything like a sponge. His involvement with the math was critical. It really gave him a structure in which to excel.”

Leland is one of four HISD campuses to be celebrating its first graduating class this year. Others include Middle College High School at HCC-Fraga, the Middle College High School at HCC-Gulfton, and the Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy.

**HISD Class of 2015 Valedictorians and Salutatorians**

**Austin High School**

Valedictorian: Yadira Banuelos

Salutatorian: Dayne Yulber Beronque

**Bellaire High School**

Valedictorian: Sophia Deqi Cen

Salutatorian: Aditya Srinivas Prasad

**Carnegie Vanguard High School**

Valedictorians: Brett J Gu & Seth Kennedy Taylor

**Challenge Early College High School**

Valedictorian: Gabriella Chehab Wannall

Salutatorian: Moises Tacam

**Chávez High School**

Valedictorian: Leticia Ortega

Salutatorians: Mireya Estrada & Thanh Hang Thi Tran

**Davis High School**

Valedictorian: Ashley Espinosa

Salutatorian: Maricela Villegas

**DeBakey High School for Health Professions**

Valedictorian: Teresa Angela Lee

Salutatorians: Rachel Marie Shenoi & Poornima Lakshmi Tamma

**East Early College High School**

Valedictorian: Jenniffer Arce

Salutatorian: Dariana A. Resendez

**Eastwood Academy**

Valedictorian: Joshua Nugent

Salutatorian: Jennifer Cruz

**Energized for E-STEM Central High School**

Valedictorian: Elijah Malik Harris

Salutatorian: Briana Denae Myles

**Energized for E-STEM West High School**

Valedictorian: Jonathan Aiseosa Oviawe

Salutatorian: Jaquelin Banesa Aroujo

**Furr High School**

Valedictorians: Tohana Lorett Espitia-Avendano

Salutatorian: Estefani Berrios-Turcios

**High School for Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice**

Valedictorian: Miyanna Jante Kirksey

Salutatorian: Luis Erik Zuniga

**High School for the Performing & Visual Arts**

Valedictorian: Claudia Isabel Heymach

Salutatorian: Steffanie Renee Alter

**Hope Academy**

Valedictorian: Courtney Jones

Salutatorian: Marina Duran

**Houston Academy for International Studies**

Valedictorian: Paul Flores

Salutatorian: Cristian Alexander Vences

**Jones Futures Academy**

Valedictorian: Devonnya Latrice Polk

Salutatorian: Kyle Dashone Christmas

**Jordan High School**

Valedictorian: Rogelio Servin Espitia

Salutatorian: SheElla Maleah Mott-Guillory

**Kashmere High School**

Valedictorian: Giovanni De'Andre Johnson

Salutatorian: Arron Dwayne Reese

**Lamar High School**

Valedictorian: Christiana Parrish Sullivan

Salutatorian: Hannah Rose Anderson

**Lee High School**

Valedictorians: Dashuang Liang & Xiao-Shuang Liang

**Liberty High School**

Valedictorian: Liangzheng Huang

Salutatorian: Verenice Elizabeth Reyes Ramirez

**Madison High School**

Valedictorian: Luis Gerardo Pineda

Salutatorian: Idalia Castro

**Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy for Young Men**

Valedictorian: Kevin A. Villalta

Salutatorian: Jonathan Bond

**Middle College High School – HCC Fraga**

Valedictorian: Elizabeth Concepcion Manjarrez

**Middle College High School – HCC Gulfton**

Valedictorian: Cindy Raquel Flores

Salutatorian: Wendy Elenia Quijada Figueroa

**Milby High School**

Valedictorian: Julissa Angelica Enriquez

Salutatorian: Salma Leticia Chavira

**Mount Carmel Academy**

Valedictorian: Joseph Malveaux

Salutatorian: Bianca Garcia

**North Forest High School**

Valedictorian: Sandrine Ntanyosha

Salutatorian: Deron Wiley

**North Houston Early College High School**

Valedictorian: Rolando Osorio

Salutatorian: Sara Dalila Arguelles

**REACH Charter High School**

Valedictorian: Ilsel Estefania Cuevas

Salutatorian: Angel Miranda Scott

**Reagan High School**

Valedictorian: Denia Lisette Martinez

Salutatorian: Brian Lara

**Sam Houston Math, Science & Technology Center**

Valedictorian: Pablo Calderon Galaviz

Salutatorian: Jeniffer Ramirez

**Scarborough High School**

Valedictorian: Guadalupe Janet Perez

Salutatorian: Precious Cheray Robinson

**Sharpstown High School**

Valedictorian: Pedro Portillo

Salutatorian: Michael Keith Julian

**Sharpstown International School**

Valedictorian: Emir Oliverio Zamudio

Salutatorian: Maduabuchi Akoma

**South Early College High School**

Valedictorian: Mirla Fabiana Estrada

Salutatorian: Wendy Carolina Argueta

**Sterling High School**

Valedictorian: Robert S. Childress

Salutatorian: Ronald Mejia

**Texas Connections Academy Houston**

Valedictorian: Ty Mason Trusty

Salutatorian: Shannon Delaney McNatt

**Waltrip High School**

Valedictorian: Joey A. Hernandez

Salutatorian: Theresa J. Perez

**Washington High School**

Valedictorian: Nakiyah Myasia Scott

Salutatorian: Michael Anthony Ortiz

**Westbury High School**

Valedictorian: Melissa Loredo

Salutatorian: Stacey Febe Peralta

**Westside High School**

Valedictorian: Laura Chang

Salutatorians: Genki Titus Oji & Emily Wang

**Wheatley High School**

Valedictorian: Krystal Jernea Turner

Salutatorian: Eliazar Banda

**Worthing High School**

Valedictorian: Rachel Allene Weatherspoon

Salutatorian: Heaven Lee Murphy

**Yates High School**

Valedictorian: Jason Covarrubias

Salutatorian: Dajah Cade

**Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy**

Valedictorian: Deronisha Lashae Arceneaux

Salutatorian: Ariana Aurora Vasquez

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