



Our

VOICES

MULTILINGUAL

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DROP OF WISDOM

All parents can contribute to their children's education in valuable ways, particularly in the current times. Parental engagement and support are extremely valuable as students work on developing second language and literacy skills. Parents can help their children academically by supporting a student's development of the English language and academic literacy at home. Use the following strategies to help your child become academically successful in not only one language, but multiple:



Geovanny J. Ponce

- Continue to build your child's literacy skills in their primary language at home while building and practicing English and academic content.
- Encourage your child to tell and write stories at home in both English or their native language. Make opportunities to ask your child questions about various situations to help them make meaning and create meaningful practice of the new language.
- Develop a study routine that both you and your child can adhere to. This will have a significant impact on the time spent practicing the language and content.
- Read with your child often. Allow opportunities for them to engage with various types of reading material including online and audio books.
- Stay connected to your child's school. Communicate with your child's teacher on a consistent basis. If your child or family encounter roadblocks to your child's education, the campus can connect you or your child to the appropriate resources to ensure the child's academic success.

Together, parents, teachers, and schools can help students realize their fullest potential.

Geovanny J. Ponce
Area Superintendent for
East Area Schools

MESSAGE TO PARENTS ...

Benjamin's Drive for Success

Benjamin Estefano Diaz Villa was only 7 years old when his parents, both degree-awarded engineers, began their new life in the United States in pursuit of a richer faith-based life. The family's journey began when they left their native land of Medellin, Colombia in 2006. Diaz recalls the difficulties he faced in school as a native-Spanish speaker:

The hardest thing for me was to understand anything that was not science or math related. In my literature and history classes, I would continually struggle to perform because of my limited English. Everything else was great for me.

What would your "note to self", as a 9-year-old, be regarding learning?

I would tell myself to focus on discipline and self-determination, these traits will support your performance and better develop those areas of need – these attributes will help you excel! I would remind myself to use my technical mentality to master more subjective academic fields such as literature, reading, and writing. Afterall, that was how I succeeded in doing extremely well in my non-engineering courses.

Benjamin's message to HISD teachers is this:

Immigrant students, like me, are in your classrooms, students who excel in the universal languages of math, logic, and science. When teaching them reading and writing, compare the similarities of the rules of writing to those of Math or Science, "formulas" that cannot be broken. They also work best when they are assigned to memorize scripts and excerpts and to recite them by memory. By giving them parameters to learn, over time these students would then start to ask the question of why this is the case. That is when their analytical skills can then be trained and writing analytical essays can be taught.

Tell us about your success at the University of Houston and to what do you owe that success?

My success can be attributed to God, family, church community, good teachers, good schools, and a great academic program at UH. God has allowed me to have parents that instilled the importance of education and to do my best. Through God's guidance I have been academically successful and through His Blessings I have been awarded academic scholarships. Finally, being active in ministry and service at my church has allowed me to perform exceptionally well as a college student. This may not make sense, but it is a reality. One would assume that to be a good student one has to study and be focused only on the work being done. That is only 25% true. The rest is also based on how human the person



Benjamin Estefano Diaz Villa chosen as University of Houston's 2020-2021 Outstanding Senior for The Year.

can be. Being a more holistic person with regards to spirituality, emotional intellect, and physical well-being plays an important role on the success of that person.

How would you say your parents have contributed to your success?

I would sum up my parent's contribution to my success, by saying:

They are both engineers who later decided to go to seminary and obtain their masters and doctorate degrees in ministry in order to carry out evangelism and spread God's good news. Both their engineering and ministerial sides of life have taught me the importance of education and a professional career as well as the importance of always being open to God's path for me and for those around me. My parents could have chosen to continue in their engineering careers and build a financially lucrative life, but they decided instead to follow the path that God had for them. And that is the faith that I would like to have in life's turning points.

Benjamin attended Jean Hines Caldwell Elementary and Brookline Elementary before attending Rice School Middle School. Eventually graduating from DeBakey High School for Health Professions.

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MESSAGE TO PARENTS ...

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Benjamin's academic achievements include the following:

- **2018 Honors College Outstanding First Year Student Award**
- **2020-21 Outstanding Senior - University of Houston, Cullen College of Engineering,**
- **2019-20 Outstanding Senior - University of Houston, Cullen College of Engineering,**

Among these several academic awards, Diaz Villa has also earned an important achievement – succeeding in becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States. The stars are the limit for this young man, his hopes include obtaining a doctorate in Aerospace Engineering.

To read more about Benjamin's successful, academic journey click on the following link: <https://www.egr.uh.edu/news/202101/diaz-villa-honored-year%E2%80%99s-outstanding-senior>

Words of Encouragement from Benjamin's Parent

What would be the most valuable advice that you could share with parents of English Learners?

Love your children and help them to dream about their future. Reinforce in them that they will never be alone, for God will be with them, wherever they will be, whether at school, at college, at church, at the grocery store, or at their workplace. Support and encourage your children's success and be their biggest advocate.

How did you encourage Benjamin when he struggled with learning English?

Benjamin's parents would read a story in English and then retell the story in Spanish. This allowed him to recall the story and gave him more time to focus on academic vocabulary.

What advice would you give to parents who do not speak English, but would like to encourage their children to learn as much as possible?

We would advise parents to take the time to teach your children your home language. Set an example, taking time to read, write, and draw as well as when to watch formative T.V. programs, so that together you learn to understand them. Overall, remind your children continually that you love them and that there are plans of life awaiting them.

Retrieved April 15, 2021, from <https://www.egr.uh.edu/news/202101/diaz-villa-honored-year%E2%80%99s-outstanding-senior> ■

SUMMER PROGRAM

The 2021 Summer Program is for students in grades PK-12 who are enrolled as of the last day of school in an HISD school and need to meet the promotion standards. These summer programs are coordinated at the district level, planned at the campus level, and customized to meet the individual needs of students. The extended time offered by summer programs provides students with additional opportunities filled with rigorous and relevant accelerated instruction and reinforcement to achieve the school year's final expected outcomes. It is the goal of HISD that through effective summer programs, all students who need this extended time will meet the required promotion standards, be prepared for success at the next grade level, and be on-track to graduate with their peers. Click on the following link for details on how to enroll:



<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/187497>.

If you have questions about your child's service location for Extended School Year (ESY) Services, please contact your Area Senior Manager or Special Education Services. ■

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> ■

BURNET ES SPOTLIGHT

David G. Burnet Elementary is located on the East Side and is the only campus offering a Dual Language Vanguard program to the students of the East End in a 50/50 Two-Way Immersion setting. Since its inception in 1926, Burnet Elementary has continuously strived to provide the best education possible to all of its students. Today, Burnet Elementary has over 500 students in their Dual Language Program and has a mission of providing a rigorous education program through relevant problem-solving skills all the while creating positive and nurturing relationships.



Family enjoying Science Night at Burnet Elementary School.

Through the leadership of the Burnet Elementary School Principal, Ms. Ana Cantu, a strong parent/community bond between home and school has been established.

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's education by being partners rather than distant participants. Parents are one of the keys to their child's success and can often be seen at school participating in various student events, coffee with the principal or in parent professional development classes to support student learning at home. The principal strongly believes that parents are partners and that their participation will enhance the learning for their students.

Students love attending Burnet Elementary and the 97% attendance rate shows their enthusiasm for learning. Students are always encouraged to be in attendance and to be active participants in the learning. Walking through the halls of Burnet Elementary, you can hear the students reciting high frequency words, counting numbers, having discussions on various topics, reading aloud and completing projects in various content areas.

If you would like to know more about Burnet Elementary or their academic programs please visit their website, twitter, or Facebook account at the addresses below.

<https://twitter.com/BurnetES> | <https://www.facebook.com/davidg.burnet.37/>

<https://www.houstonisd.org/burnetes> | Email: BurnetES@houstonisd.org

Principal: **Ana Cantu**, Email: ACANTU5@houstonisd.org ■

THE ARP ACT ESSER III FUNDS

Share your Feedback on How to Best Utilize Funds

HISD is gathering additional information from parents of students who are English language learners, homeless, and/or students with disabilities about how to spend ESSER III funds. The survey is divided into two sections. Section (1) ESSER III - Allowable Use of Funds/Activities, which ask for parent input on how best to utilize funds; and Section (2) Safe Return for In-Person Learning, which ask for parent input on the timing of targeted activities for student safe return to in-person learning. If you have already completed this survey please disregard. <https://bit.ly/3oZ8fO6> ■

2021 REFUGEE SCHOLARSHIP

The YMCA International Services awards financial assistance to full-time higher education students who are:

refugees | confirmed asylees
holders of Special Immigrant Visas
victims of human trafficking.

All interested students are required to complete an application detailing their academic and personal background. Students are also asked to submit two essays for scholarship consideration. Winners are determined by their need and accomplishment.

Applications Accepted April 1 – June 18

Download Application: [Shorturl.at/alyPS](https://shorturl.at/alyPS) | Link to flyer: <https://bit.ly/2R3Jl2F> ■

