BISD LOWERS TAX RATE

The Bastrop ISD Board of Trustees voted to approve the new tax rate during their Regular School Board Meeting on September 16. The new tax rate of $1.441 includes a two cent decrease from the previous tax rate of $1.461.

“For the last five years, we have worked very hard to adequately fund education in Bastrop ISD with varying degrees of budgetary roadblocks or challenges from the state or due to localized concerns like the wildfires, etc. All along, we made rebuilding our reserve funds a priority and area of keen focus. We have also worked to give back when and where possible. We proposed to the Board of Trustees a 2-cent decrease in I and S (Interest and Sinking/Debt) taxation for the second consecutive year. We believe, as does our Board, that we should tax adequately but not overtax our citizens. We hope this proposed decrease, when approved, will serve as a benefit and sign of goodwill to our loyal taxpayers and business community,” said Superintendent Steve Murray.

“We are pleased to reduce the District’s debt service tax rate by two cents. The continued increase in property value and bond refinancing opportunities have made this possible,” said Chief Financial Officer, Sandra Callahan.

“Anytime we have the opportunity to provide tax relief to BISD taxpayers we will strive to make it happen,” added BISD Board President, James Allen.

BISD REPRESENTED AT MISSING SCHOOL MATTERS CAMPAIGN

With the start of the school year, the E3 Alliance organized a rally on September 3rd to promote their Missing School Matters campaign. The MSM campaign is striving to improve student attendance by 3 days per student each year, in order to improve student achievement and return $34 million in annual revenues to districts in our region. Schools receive funding from the state based on how many students attend school each day. When a student misses one day of class, the district loses about $40. According to missingschoolmatters.org, Central Texas students miss 2.4 million class days a year, which costs the average high school $20,000 a week.

The Missing School Matters event was held at the Long Center for Performing Arts and gathered school district representatives from Austin, Bastrop, Del Valle, Elgin, Manor, Pflugerville, San Marcos, and Taylor. Business and industry leaders, community partners, parents and citizens were also in attendance, and were entertained by Bastrop High School students and musicians, Alex and Glenn Peterson, also known as “The Peterson Brothers”.

“Bastrop ISD representatives were proud to be in attendance at this special event. Improving school attendance is critical in our students’ success and community, and parent support on this issue is needed so we can address hurdles that keep children from attending school,” says Bastrop ISD Superintendent, Steve Murray.

E3, which stands for Education Equals Economics, engages dozens of businesses and nonprofits, 13 school districts, eight institutions of higher education and policy leaders across Central Texas to address complex community issues. For more information, visit www.e3alliance.org.

BISD RANKED SUPERIOR IN FIRST FINANCIAL RATING

Bastrop Independent School District has received a rating of “Superior Achievement” under Texas’ Schools FIRST financial accountability rating system. The Superior Achievement rating is the state’s highest, demonstrating the quality of Bastrop ISD’s financial management and reporting system.
ABOUT THE BISD COMMUNICATOR
This newsletter is published to provide the latest news and strengthen communication within our community. The publication is supported by the Bastrop ISD Office of Community Services/Communications. Suggestions for articles and other comments should be addressed to:

Donald Williams
Executive Director of Community Services/Communications
dwilliams@bisdtx.org

BASTROP ISD ENROLLMENT PROJECTED TO EXCEED 11,000 STUDENTS FOR 2019

Bastrop ISD’s enrollment is projected to exceed 11,000 students for the 2019-2020 school year. Based on a demographic study by Templeton Demographics, continued growth is expected over the next ten years.

“We have asked demographers from Templeton Demographics to give us an update regarding student growth trends in Bastrop ISD and housing, as well as potential development trends in Central Texas and in Bastrop ISD for the next 5-10 years and beyond. The District has reached a critical point where it is time to engage in long-range facilities planning and needs analyses. We plan to share our demographic study information with the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce Executive Board, the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation and other city and county leaders to assist in preparing for population growth and housing developments,” said Superintendent Steve Murray. “Our goal for the future of Bastrop ISD is to be well-poised to provide a top-rate learning community.”

According to the 10-year forecast by Templeton Demographics, by the Fall of 2019, enrollment is projected to be 11,127; this would be an additional 1,319 students compared to the Fall 2014 enrollment total. Forecasts predict 13,133 students for the 2024-2025 school year.

To view the Demographic report, visit www.bisdtx.org and click on the Demographic button. For more information, contact Henry Gideon, Chief Operations Officer, at 512.772.7107.

BISD RECEIVES TEXAS COMPTROLLER AWARD

Bastrop ISD has joined the Texas Comptroller Leadership Circle Award winners for their success in implementing financial transparency for the fifth year in a row.

Bastrop ISD has earned a Platinum Leadership Circle Award, which is new for 2014 and spotlights entities that go above and beyond providing financial transparency in local government. The Texas Comptroller Leadership Circle program recognizes local governments across Texas that are striving to meet a high standard for financial transparency online by providing citizens with a clear, consistent picture of spending and sharing information in a user-friendly format.

“The Comptroller’s Office of Texas awards districts annually whose transparency in financial and business-related activities and practices are seen as exemplary. Bastrop ISD is proud to have been awarded the Texas Comptroller “Leadership Circle: Platinum Award” for financial accountability and transparency. Our Chief Financial Officer, Sandra Callahan, her staff, our district leadership team and the BISD Board of Trustees believes that financial transparency is vitally important, as we serve the public and our valued taxpayers.

Receiving recognition for financial stewardship and transparency such as this is important, as it validates our transparent approach to financial operations in Bastrop ISD,” said Superintendent Steve Murray.

Bastrop earned points for the District website (www.bisdtx.org), posting the Budget, Annual Financial Report or Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Check Register, and debt service information. Additional points were earned for the ease of access to documents, for a navigation tab leading readers to the requested information and for the use of charts and visual images.

“We are very proud to receive this recognition for the fifth year, as Bastrop ISD strives to always be transparent with the local, state and federal funds we receive. This award is a further recognition of the District’s Communication Department and the dedication of quality communication,” said Sandra Callahan, Chief Financial Officer.

To find out more information, visit http://www.texastransparency.org/local/schools.php.
KINSEY SELECTED AS TASSP MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Bastrop Middle School Principal, Sami Kinsey, was selected as the Region 13 Middle School Principal of the Year by the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals.

Kinsey has served as the BMS principal for four years and has 24 years of experience in education, including 13 years as an administrator.

“We are very proud of Principal Kinsey for being selected as TASSP’s Region 13 Secondary Principal of the Year. Sami has distinguished herself through servant leadership to provide caring and purposeful direction for Bastrop Middle School. Sami leads a very dedicated faculty and staff at BMS and we appreciate all that they do each day for their students and parents. Congratulations Sami, we are very proud of you,” says Bastrop ISD Superintendent, Steve Murray.

“I feel humbled and grateful to be honored with this award. It is truly the combined effort of our entire school community that makes Bastrop Middle School such a remarkable campus. This award recognizes the value of our teachers and faculty who not only teach our children, but encourage and support them, our parents who are active on campus and in their students’ lives, and our students who are striving to find their greatness,” says Kinsey.

For more information, contact Donald Williams at 512.772.7106.

ACT - SAT EXAM DATES . . .

ACT - February 7, April 18
SAT - November 8, December 6, January 24

BISD HOSTS B.E.S.T. COLLEGE NIGHT

College, scholarship and financial aid information were at the fingertips of hundreds of Bastrop ISD students during B.E.S.T. College Night. The event was held on September 24 at Bastrop High School and featured over 110 institutions, including the military and technical career centers. These representatives provided information about different courses they offer, the admission process, financial aid and college life in general.

Financial representatives from Greater TEXAS Federal Credit Union were also present and Texas Guaranteed (TG) hosted financial aid information sessions throughout the evening. During the event, parents and students were provided access to sign up online for their FAFSA pin.

Greater TEXAS Federal Credit Union sponsored the event in partnership with Bastrop ISD, Smithville ISD and Elgin ISD. Thank you to Schlotzsky’s and Chick-fil-A for providing food for all the college representatives.

BHS student, Noe Salazar, visits with Heidie Herman, an Undergraduate Admissions representative for Sam Houston State University.
STUDENTS LOOK TO EARLY ACT FIRST KNIGHT FOR CHARACTER LESSONS

Bastrop ISD students got a taste of gallant knights and chivalry during the Early Act First Knight student orientation ceremony that took place in September. Students in elementary through the intermediate schools will take part in the program for the third year in a row.

The Early Act First Knight program is sponsored by the Cedar Creek and Bastrop County Rotary Clubs and a special grant through the Bastrop Education Foundation.

What is Early Act First Knight?

Early Act First Knight (EAFK) is a revolutionary character and ethics education program for schoolchildren in grades K-8. EAFK is a comprehensive course of study that encompasses the entire student population. Unprecedented in the field of character education, Early Act First Knight teaches ethics, service and Rotary tradition along with core academic subjects through a unique combination of classroom curriculum, Rotarian-led service components, dramatic live-action visual elements, and parent education.

EAFK brings the values of noble character, and service above self, alive for children through the timeless theme of gallant knights and chivalry. The word, “knight” means “servant”. Students in EAFK schools regularly get to see real armored knights and colorfully costumed warhorses; walk campus hallways decked out like castles; learn ethical wisdom and skill from “The Code” curriculum; win awards for knightly service; earn rankings toward knighthood in elaborate school-wide ceremonies; and work together on local and global service projects as modern-day knights using their power for good.

To learn more visit www.eafk.org.

PREPARING FOR FLU SEASON

In preparation for the upcoming flu season, Bastrop ISD encourages students and employees to practice the following guidelines:

• Hand-washing before meals, after using the restroom, after blowing your nose/touching your face, etc. .
• Coughing/sneezing into a tissue or your elbow.
• Staying home if you become sick with flu-like symptoms.
• Seeing your doctor or health care provider within 48 hours of flu-like symptoms.
• Receiving the seasonal flu vaccine and H1N1 vaccine.
• Routine cleaning of commonly touched areas (door knobs, desks, etc.).
• Students and staff who appear ill with flu-like symptoms should stay home. They can return to school or work after 24 hours of no fever without fever reducing medication.

The BISD Health Services Immunization Program will be providing seasonal flu shots along with regular immunizations to students in our Nurses clinics. The seasonal flu vaccine will also be available through community health centers, private physicians, and other vaccine providers.

BISD Flu clinics through Blue Cross Blue Shield Care Van

• October 23, 8-9:30 a.m. at Lost Pines Elementary
• October 23, 10-11:30 a.m. at Red Rock Elementary
• November 10, 4-6 p.m. at Cedar Creek Middle School

For more information, please contact Nurse Rios at 512.772.7486.
BISD REFUNDS BONDS SAVES OVER $1 MILLION

Bastrop ISD refunded bonds for a savings of over $1.2 million.

“The District is very excited to take advantage of another bond refunding opportunity. With interest rates at an all time low, the potential savings to the District are estimated at over $1.2 million,” said Chief Financial Officer, Sandra Callahan.

The bonds to be refunded are the following:
- Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds, Series 2005A
- Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds Series 2006-A

Interest rates remain historically attractive which makes it a favorable time to refund bonds.

“Along with a proposed decrease of 2 cents in taxation for our patrons (the second consecutive two cent yearly decrease) Bastrop ISD has been able to consistently refinance some of our bonds. We have done so in a strategic manner and have (to date) saved the district and taxpayers a total of $7.2 million in debt payments over the last 3 years. In like fashion, we have yet another bond refunding to potentially save the district and our loyal taxpayers another $1.2 million in debt. Through sound financial management and a lengthy period of historically low prime interest rates, BISD has been able to save in excess of $8.4 million in debt. While we believe that interest rates will start to rise sometime in the foreseeable future, we have taken advantage of the lower rates and will continue to do so as appropriate and available. We hope this savings to our patrons and the district’s debt-related taxation is viewed as positive and appreciated,” said Steve Murray, BISD Superintendent.

BISD HOPE STRONG CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

With nearly 10,000 students at Bastrop ISD, the District wanted to kick off its first ever BISD HopeStrong For a Cure Campaign during the month of September. The #BISDGOGOLD campaign was created to raise awareness for childhood cancer. On September 26, BISD HopeStrong hosted their official “Go Gold” day, which included hundreds of staff and students wearing gold HopeStrong shirts that they purchased. That evening, the HopeStrong Committee presented a check to St. Jude Children’s Research at the Cedar Creek High School “Gold Out” football game. Bastrop High School hosted their “Gold Out” football game on September 25. Thanks to the entire District rallying together, BISD HopeStrong raised nearly $20,000 and donated all funds to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

HOPESTRONG ...continue on pg 7

BISD RATING ...continue from COVER

“We are proud to receive the highest rating given and are committed to doing whatever we can to continue sound and forward-thinking financial practices. As an entity serving the public and taxpayers, we take financial accountability and transparency very seriously,” said Superintendent Steve Murray.

This is the twelfth year of Schools FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas), a financial accountability system for Texas school districts developed by the Texas Education Agency in response to Senate Bill 875 of the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999. The primary goal of Schools FIRST is to achieve quality performance in the management of school districts’ financial resources, a goal made more significant due to the complexity of accounting associated with Texas’ school finance system. School district financial practices are rated with twenty different indicators including the transparency of financial information to the public, audit reports, tax collections, administrative cost ratios, student-teacher ratios, fund balances and investment practices.

The Schools FIRST accountability rating system assigns one of four financial accountability ratings to Texas school districts, with the highest being “Superior Achievement,” followed by “Above-Standard Achievement,” “Standard Achievement” and “Substandard Achievement.” Districts with serious data quality problems may receive the additional rating of “Suspended – Data Quality.” Districts that receive the “Substandard Achievement” or “Suspended – Data Quality” ratings under Schools FIRST must file a corrective action plan with the TEA.

For more information about the Schools FIRST financial accountability rating, contact Chief Financial Officer, Sandra Callahan, at 512.772.7105.

www.bisdtx.org Bastrop Independent School District 5
BISD has named Patricia Melgar-Cook as the Bilingual/ESL Director. Ms. Cook brings 19 years of experience in bilingual education to the District. Prior to her arrival at BISD, she served as Assistant Principal at the Del Valle Opportunity Center. Ms. Cook’s experience also includes serving as the Bilingual/ESL Literacy Consultant at TS Consulting for seven years. She holds two Master’s of Education degrees from the University of Texas and Texas Wesleyan University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from UT.

“We are excited to have Ms. Melgar-Cook fill this crucial role in our District. She will make a significant impact on improving the academic success of our students,” says BISD Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Jane Pollard.

“I’m so excited about the opportunity to impact the lives of our Bastrop students. I know that working together as a team, we will achieve our goals. ¡Juntos, más se puede (Together, we can do more)!”

For more information, contact Donald Williams at 512.772.7106
“I’d like to thank our HopeStrong sponsors and everyone who generously donated to this campaign. I’d also like to thank our HopeStrong Committee members for their hard work. This is the first year of our HopeStrong campaign and it was a success. I’m excited to see how much more we can raise for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital next year,” says BISD Superintendent, Steve Murray.

“The was completely inspiring to see so many people wearing the HopeStrong shirt and supporting this campaign,” says Dawn Vinklarek, who served as the HopeStrong chairperson, “It took a team effort from a lot of great teachers, staff, and volunteers across the entire district to make this campaign happen. Our goal was to bring awareness to childhood cancer and raise a little money too. I think we did just that.”

Deciding who to donate the HopeStrong funds to was a clear decision. St. Jude has led the way the world understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and other deadly diseases. According to stjude.org, treatments invented at St. Jude have helped push the overall childhood cancer survival rate from 20 percent to more than 80 percent since it opened in 1962. Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing and food.

A number of BISD students have been affected by childhood cancer including Bastrop ISD student, Nicole Rivera. On August 8, 2011, doctors diagnosed four-year-old Nicole, with ATRT or Atypical Teratoid Rhabdoid Tumor. That news was an overwhelming shock to Nikki’s parents, Christy and Rick Rivera.

After Nikki started suffering from severe headaches, dizziness and loss of balance, it didn’t take long for Christy’s motherly instinct to kick in.

“When she kept falling and losing her balance that morning, we took her to the pediatrician and her pediatrician knew her so well that she knew something was wrong,” says Christy.

The day after Nikki’s diagnosis, the doctors performed a nine-hour surgery to remove her plum-size tumor. After the surgery, doctors prescribed Nikki with 32 rounds of proton beam radiation at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and four rounds of high dose Chemotherapy followed by a Stem Cell Transplant. Now a first grade student, Nikki is active and healthy again.

“It got so bad that I couldn’t sleep at night. I’d have to sit up and sleep sitting up. Eventually, my father got me to go to the clinic,” says Billy. The news was a blow to his father. Billy’s mother passed away when he was 11 years old.

“It was so shocking that I didn’t have a thought to think of,” he adds. Billy received chemo and radiation, causing him to lose 50 pounds. But, unlike some cancer patients, Billy lived to walk the graduation stage.

“Yeah, love can help but it’s not gonna save a life. We need to have all the knowledge that we possibly can on this,” says Billy.

“Thank you for helping support HopeStrong so kids like me can be healed and not go in the hospital anymore,” says Nikki.

To learn more about the BISD HopeStrong Childhood Cancer Awareness Campaign, visit bit.ly/hopestrong. To learn more about St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, visit www.stjude.org.
The Bastrop ISD Administrative Team accepted the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge from BISD Superintendent, Steve Murray. Pictured from left to right: Donald Williams, Executive Director of Community Services/Communications; Sandra Callahan, Chief Financial Officer; Jane Pollard, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Barry Edwards, Deputy Superintendent; Henry Gideon, Chief Operations Officer.

Bastrop High School Theater students perform their show “The Diviners” in October at the J.F.W. Performing Arts Center.

Celia Mercer explains the new Foundation Graduation Plan with Endorsements to BMS parents and students during Meet the Teacher night on September 11.

Bastrop ISD Bus Drivers wear their “Bully Free” shirts for October’s Anti-Bullying Awareness Month.

Red Rock Elementary held their PTA Noodle Night fundraiser on September 9 and duct taped Principal, LaShun Gaines. Teachers and parents served spaghetti and meatballs, salad and desserts to raise money for the school. Red Rock PTA will host their annual Fall Festival on October 25.

CCHS Varsity Football players visited and read books to Red Rock Elementary students on game day, August 29.

The BHS Lady Bears Volleyball team earned the Silver Bracket Championship on August 30. LeLe Carter and Jordan Crabb earned the All Tournament Team title.
Mrs. Munoz explains the new Career Portals class to Sixto and Monica Vera’s mother, Noemi Vera, during Cedar Creek Middle School’s Meet The Teacher night on September 11.

Emile Elementary students in Mrs. Vann’s class showed a “Flat Stanley” student from Buffalo, Wyoming around campus and took the Flat Stanley student to art class, music class, and the cafeteria. Mrs. Vann and her class will be sending the student to Nantucket Island. The Flat Stanley student will be traveling until January 15 before returning to Cloud Peak Elementary in Buffalo, WY. Pictured are Emile Elementary Assistant Principal, Heather Tucker, and student, Emily James.

BISD Superintendent, Steve Murray, accepted the ALS Ice Bucket challenge from the CCHS Football team on August 21st. Murray, along with CCHS Principal, Adelaida Olivares; Associate Principal, Tammy Underwood; Assistant Principals, Robert Washington, Ken Parker, and Sue Nozick; BISD Board of Trustee, Ashley Mutschink; and BISD District Coordinator of Athletics, Mark Willoughby, were drenched with water and ice to support the awareness campaign for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis or “Lou Gehrig’s disease.”

Bastrop ISD campuses celebrated National Grandparents Day on September 5. Hundreds of BISD grandparents visited their student during lunch period.

The CCHS Ballet Folklorico performed at the J.F.W. Performing Arts Center in honor of Diez y Seis de Septiembre.

Austin Police Department and a local Private Investigator visit with CCMS students to discuss various careers in law enforcement.

Mina Elementary held their Early Acy First Knight ceremony on October 8th.
Know of an educator in Bastrop ISD who has gone above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of their students and their community? Submit the name of a BISD teacher, Bastrop Independent School District, early childhood facility or the BISD school board today for a 2015 H-E-B Excellence in Education Award, placing them on the path toward winning cash prizes ranging from $5,000 to $100,000. Nominations for the awards are being accepted online at www.heb.com/education through December 7, 2014.

Nominees will be sent an invitation to complete an online application to be used for judging purposes. The application asks each nominee to provide written responses about education philosophy, learning experiences, and insights on key issues facing educators in Texas today. The deadline for applications is January 11, 2015.

Last year, the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards gave out more than $800,000 in cash prizes, gift cards and grants. Since its inception in 2002, the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards program has awarded nearly $7.5 million to Texas educators, schools and districts.

Nominations are not required for participation. Educators, school districts, early childhood facilities and school boards can go to www.heb.com/education and complete an application. For additional updates, follow the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards program on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HEBExcellenceinEducationAwards.

On September 12, Higher Impact Entertainment from San Antonio visited Bluebonnet Elementary and presented two Anti-Bullying Assembly Programs. Students and staff learned the different types of bullying, what to do if they are bullied or witness bullying, as well as partook in a pledge to have “No More Bullies” in their school and in the community. Bluebonnet Elementary is an official Bully Free Zone.

“Bullying can threaten students’ physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn. School is supposed to be a safe place where students want to come; I’d hate to think that any of my students feel any differently,” says Bluebonnet Principal, Bridgette Cornelius. “The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. Students should always speak up and know that we are here to protect them while getting down to the root cause of the situation. At the end of the day, I want my students at Bluebonnet to know that we are going to keep them safe and protected while providing a fun and challenging learning environment.”

For more information on Higher Impact Entertainment’s Anti-Bullying education, visit www.higherimpactent.com
Bastrop ISD students will now have the chance to walk the graduation stage with two degrees in their hands. On August 25, the Colorado River Collegiate Academy (CRCA), located at 1602 Hill Street in Bastrop, welcomed 60 students for their inaugural freshman class. As part of the Early College High School (ECHS) program, those students will have the opportunity to graduate with their high school diploma and an associate degree from Austin Community College at no expense to the student.

“This is an exciting time for our staff, faculty, and students,” says CRCA Principal, Martin Conrardy, “CRCA will combine high school and college in a rigorous, supportive environment that will prepare students for postsecondary success.”

Students will begin taking their college courses during their freshman and sophomore year at CRCA. Those courses are instructed by Bastrop ISD teachers who are accepted as adjunct professors. When students reach their Junior and Senior year at CRCA, they will attend college courses at the ACC Elgin campus. Bastrop ISD will provide transportation to the Elgin campus. ACC will also provide free resources to CRCA students such as learning labs, tutoring, libraries, and advising.

Bastrop ISD will employ an application process which provides all students in the eighth grade with the opportunity to apply. After students submit a written application, a pool of applicants will be selected for an interview and a final group of prospective CRCA freshmen will be chosen. Students in tenth grade or above will not be able to enter the CRCA program.

As a CRCA student, the core requirements for graduation from high school will not differ from those students at Bastrop High School or Cedar Creek High School. Inclusion of college coursework may begin for many students in the spring of their freshman year, which isn’t the norm at traditional high schools. CRCA will mandate tutorial sessions, which will be incorporated into the student’s daily schedule. While CRCA students will not have the opportunity to be in music, athletic, or theater programs, they will be able to participate in ACC student organizations and clubs.

ECHS programs are funded through public-private partnerships, grants, and shared-cost agreements, enabling school districts to offer the programs at no charge to students.

CRCA will begin recruitment for 2015-16 ninth graders this Fall. Interested parents and students can visit the Colorado River Collegiate Academy website by going to www.bisdtx.org/crca or download the application at bit.ly/crcaapplication.

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Thanksgiving break on horizon for Students and Staff

The Bastrop ISD Service Center and all campuses will be closed for Thanksgiving break from Monday, November 24 through Friday, November 28. All classes will resume at their normal times on Monday, December 1.
BISD TO CELEBRATE RED RIBBON WEEK

Red Ribbon Week will be celebrated October 27-31 at Bastrop ISD. The drug prevention campaign focuses on a commitment to living drug free. It also commemorates the ultimate sacrifice made by DEA Special Agent, Enrique “KiKi” Camarena, who died in 1985 at the hands of drug cartel members while working undercover in Mexico. While some believe that drug trafficking and drug usage is an issue found in large cities or a country like Mexico, Carolyn Moore-Green says it’s a big concern among 12-18 year old Bastrop ISD students. Green, a Drug and Alcohol Counselor and Social Worker at Gateway D.A.E.P, says her drug and alcohol referrals from BISD intermediate and secondary campuses have increased from previous school years. “The BISD Drug Program has proven to be a viable and necessary service for our students in Bastrop ISD. Since Bastrop is a rural community, we have limited resources available for teen substance/alcohol abuse issues.” During Red Ribbon Week, Green will deliver presentations on many of the BISD campuses.

Green says some of the most common warning signs that a student is getting involved in drugs include:

- loss of interest in family activities and learning •
- disrespect for family rules • withdrawal from responsibilities •
  - verbally or physically abusive •
- sudden increase or decrease in appetite/ drastic weight loss or gain •
  - disappearance of valuable items or money •
- not coming home on time • not telling you where they are going •
- reduced memory and attention span • unhappy and depressed •
  - always needs money, or has excessive amounts of money •

So what should a parent do if they see these warnings signs? Green says to always keep the lines of communication open with their teen.

“The parent needs to try to remain calm, asserting that they are there for them but they will need to take steps to becoming drug-free. If the first conversation doesn't seem productive, take a little time and try again. If the problem is too big for them to handle alone, seek help from a drug counselor or drug program for families of drug users.”

For more information on Drug & Alcohol education at Bastrop ISD, contact Carolyn Moore-Green at cgreen@bisdtx.org.

BISD GOES PINK FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Bastrop ISD is teaming up to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is an annual campaign to increase awareness of the disease, during October. While most people are aware of breast cancer, many forget to take the steps to have a plan to detect the disease in its early stages and encourage others to do the same.

Bastrop ISD will show its support for the annual campaign by helping to raise awareness with the Pink Out football game between Bastrop High School and Cedar Creek High School on October 24 starting at 7:30 p.m. at BISD Memorial Stadium. The District is asking everyone to come out and wear pink!
Thanks to the generosity of Google, learning has become even more exciting for some Mina Elementary students. Mina Third Grade teacher, Sara Franco, submitted a $2,000 project on DonorsChoose.org and six weeks later, Franco received an email saying her project for four classroom iPads was funded by Google. On DonorsChoose.org, teachers post projects requesting materials they need for their classrooms, and donors support the projects that inspire them. Google donated an additional $85,803 to assist 116 Austin area teachers with their DonorsChoose.org projects. Over the past few months, Google announced similar “flash funding” campaigns in San Francisco, Atlanta, Chicago, and Washington D.C.

“If I could say anything to Google, I would give them a huge hug and thank them from the bottom of my heart for supporting education and my classroom,” says Franco, “On an iPad, students don’t just watch, listen, or read...they create. There are book and apps geared toward all levels and subjects for differentiation. The students can create all kinds of presentations from powerpoints to books to movies.”

“We are so humbled and grateful to Google for their devotion to our teachers and students,” said Charles Best, founder and CEO of DonorsChoose.org in a CNBC article. “This is a great day for Austin area classrooms.”

Prior to her iPad funding, Franco had previously been funded for three iPad Minis through GoFundMe.org. Amanda Moffit, a second grade teacher at Emile Elementary, also used GoFundMe to raise over $2,000 for four classroom iPads and Otterbox cases. Moffitt encourages teachers to take advantage of these online fundraising resources and to utilize social media to promote fundraising.

“In four days I raised enough money to purchase four iPads and four protective cases! Facebook was a huge help with promoting my fundraiser. Everyone was so supportive and helped me by sharing the information with their friends and family as well,” says Moffit. “I would like to give a huge thank you to Colovista Country Club and Redeem Fitness for donating raffle items for my fundraiser. Also, a huge thank you to Best Buy in Bastrop for making it possible to purchase the protective cases. They helped me in any way that they could and worked with the budget I had.”

GoldStar Transit is looking for friendly and outgoing people to drive school buses in the Bastrop and Cedar Creek area.

You must be able to pass criminal background check, drug screen, DOT physical & obtain CDL with P&S endorsement.

Training is provided and there is a Sign on Bonus.

Please submit applications in person at 1081 Lovers Lane, Bastrop, Texas or online at http://www.ridegst.com.
BISD INSTALLS VoIP INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Over the past several months, the Bastrop Independent School District’s Technology Department has been in the process of implementing a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system over 13 campuses. The new VoIP system replaces the current analog systems which were showing signs of age. These 13 campuses will integrate with 4 district sites already utilizing VoIP infrastructure, combining all 17 sites under one system.

The change also gives the district more flexibility in configuration of how calls are handled and received. With the new system, every teacher will receive a personal voice mailbox, allowing parents another avenue to contact teachers in an effort to improve communications.

There will also be a change in the phone number scheme for BISD; however, old numbers will continue to work as the district works to get the new information publicized. Below you can find a listing of the new campus numbers for sites that have undergone the update.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bastrop ISD Service Center</td>
<td>(512) 772-7100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Services</td>
<td>(512) 772-7835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluebonnet Elementary</td>
<td>(512) 772-7680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cedar Creek Elementary School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emile Elementary School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mina Elementary School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Pines Elementary School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Rock Elementary School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bastrop Intermediate School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Creek Intermediate School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7475</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bastrop Middle School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Creek Middle School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway D.A.E.P. School</td>
<td>(512) 772-7820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The districts VoIP infrastructure will provide cost savings across the district, standardizing equipment, minimizing labor and support costs, and ensuring connectivity between campuses and with the greater community,” said District Technology Director, John Korb. “These district wide systems are the next step toward modernizing our infrastructure and keeping the staff and students connected with the community.”

REGISTRATION BEGINS FOR HOOPSTARS SPRING SEASON

The Spring Hoopstars season is just around the corner and this season promises to be exciting. BISD has teamed up with the Austin Toros to offer all participants a player/coaches clinic and the opportunity to attend a Toros game at the Cedar Park Center.

Hoopstars is the Bastrop ISD basketball league for Pre-K through sixth grade students. The season starts January 24 and will conclude on March 7 with a tournament for 3rd-6th grade players.

You can download and print the registration form by visiting www.bisdtx.org. The registration form and payment may be mailed or dropped off to Bastrop ISD Community Education, 906 Farm Street, Bastrop, TX 78602 or faxed to 512.308.1607. Payment must be received with the registration form in order to be processed. The deadline to register is December 17 at 5 p.m.. No late registrations will be accepted. The registration fee is $65.

Coaches are always needed. If you are interested in coaching, please indicate that on the registration form. You must have a volunteer application on file before you can coach. Please note, to complete your application, a copy of a valid government issued photo identification card must be attached with the volunteer application. You may download a copy of the volunteer application at bit.ly/bisdvips.

For question or more information, call 512.308.1601 or email lanzaldua@bisdtx.org.
To learn more about these and other exciting Beyond the Bell programs, visit our website at www.bisdtx.org OR call 512.308.1601.

ACE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Available at Genesis High School (serving Bastrop HS, CRCA, and Genesis) and Cedar Creek High School
Monday-Friday, 7:30-8:30 AM and 4:10-6:15 PM
Bus transportation available
ACE is our FREE grant-funded after school program for 9th-12th graders. ACE provides an engaging environment where students can receive homework help, college and career readiness programs, enrichment activities, and academic assistance.

BEYOND THE BELL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Available at Bastrop Intermediate, Cedar Creek Intermediate, Bastrop Middle, and Cedar Creek Intermediate
Monday-Thursday, 3:50-6:00 PM
Bus transportation available
BTB is our FREE district-funded after school program for 5th-8th graders. BTB provides a fun, safe place to hang out with friends while working on homework, getting academic assistance, and delving into enrichment opportunities.

STARS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Available at all elementary campuses (serving intermediate schools as well)
Monday-Friday, 2:50-6:30 PM
Programming available on select school holidays as well
STARS is our fee-based after school program for students ages 4-13.
STARS provides a nurturing environment for students to receive homework help, participate in exciting enrichment activities, and make new friends.

BEYOND THE BELL COMMUNITY
Beyond the Bell has launched a variety of classes and events for the fall. Days, locations, and times vary and classes are being added all the time. Explore the wild world of science, come work out, learn English, and more…

Got a great class idea? Want to share your talent? Contact Sarah Belcher at sbelcher@bisdtx.org.
Providing Pathways... with PRIDE & PURPOSE