



THE POLARIS

THE NORTHSIDE CLUSTER NEWSLETTER

The Cluster network was formed to improve communication and aid community efforts to work together to support the needs of AISD students. The POLARIS will share news and information among the feeder schools in the Northside Cluster: Lamar High School, Nichols Junior High, Shackelford Junior High, and the elementary schools — Butler, Ellis, Kookan, Larson, Pope, Roquemore, Sherrod, Speer, Webb, and Wimbish.

Northside Cluster PTA Presidents 2011-2012

Lamar High School	Dawn Serman
Nichols Junior High	Teresa Hancock
Shackelford Junior High	Michelle Clark

Elementary Schools

Butler	Angela McKay
Larson	Leanne Rand
Pope	Julie Malone
Wimbish	Leila Shalhout
Sherrod	Jayne Smith

Northside Cluster Families,

I want to thank you all for your support of the students, programs, and schools in the North Star Cluster. Your dedication to the children of this community is vital to have a successful 2011-1012 school year.

As I visit campuses around the district, I am excited to see the high-level instruction and hands-on activities taking place at all grade levels. We celebrate the successes and accomplishments of our students and schools while continuing our work to improve the educational experience for students.

You are an important part of the educational process, and I appreciate everything you do for the students in the North Star Cluster. Please remember, *It Starts With Me!* It takes the support of everyone who has a stake in the education of our children to provide our students with the quality education they deserve.

I am proud to be superintendent of the AISD!

Sincerely,

Jerry McCullough
Superintendent

Have you driven by Lamar recently or been inside? It looks like a completely new school. The first phase of construction is finished. We have a new English wing, choir, and dance rooms. Our new cafeteria will be finished by January; the counseling center will be complete in March. Check out the construction drawings at

http://www.aisd.net/lamar/images/const.lamarVP6_256K.swf

While we've always been proud of Lamar, the building improvements certainly bring a new look to our building.



LAMAR VIKINGS

The Vikings have had a good year so far in academics and athletics. We have 4 National Merit Semifinalists, 5 National Merit Commended students, 4 Achievement Scholars, and 2 National Hispanic Scholars. This is great news for

our 2012 graduating class as the honors are just beginning for them.

The Pride of Lamar received a 1st Division Rating in the UIL Marching Band competition. The Lamar Varsity Tennis team was District Champion. Both Boys and Girls Cross-Country were 2nd in the District. The Vikings Football team will be back in the playoffs on November 11th at Cowboy Stadium. The Vikings will be facing an Abilene team. Our very first Viking Nation Pep Rally was held on September 19th. We appreciate everyone in the community who came out to support the Vikings. I like to remind parents that it doesn't matter whether you start school as a Lion, Shark, Bronco, Panther, star, Wallaby, Eagle or Ram, then grow to be a Mustang or Patriot....the ultimate goal is to graduate as a Viking.

The Lamar Show Choirs will be visiting all of the elementary and junior high schools in December. There will also be a

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number of choir, band, and orchestra concerts as we go into the holidays. Please come out and hear some wonderful music from some very talented students. The Lamar website is a wealth of information. Dates for all activities are on the calendar at <http://www.aisd.net/lamar>.

On October 27th, one group of Lamar students had the opportunity to see one of two living Congressional Medal of Honor recipients since Vietnam: Staff Sergeant Salvatore L. Guinta (other medals have been awarded posthumously). This amazing young man shared with AVID and Viking Academy students the story of how he came to serve in the U. S. Army and his deployment to Afghanistan. His humble attitude and leadership abilities were obvious in the hour he spent with students. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the faculty and students at Lamar. We would like to thank the Dunham family for sharing their nephew and his story.

Dawn Serman
Lamar PTA President

Have you heard of Project Celebration?

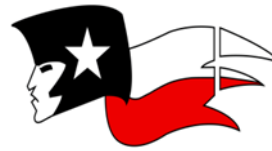
Project Celebration is the “official” LHS after-prom party put on by senior parent volunteers under guidelines of the LHS PTA. Senior students celebrate the end of their senior year at a safe alcohol and drug free party held from midnight to 5 a.m. immediately following prom. They will spend a fun-filled, non-stop evening with their friends winning prizes, taking pictures, playing games and eating. The kids have a blast and take away many great memories from this remarkable event! It takes months of planning, lots of fundraising and plenty of volunteers to put on this type of event. Please help PC 2012 by making a tax deductible contribution or by participating in one of the many PC fundraisers held throughout the school year.

What are some of those fundraisers? Visit http://lamarhighschool.txpta.org/index.php?module=dynamic_pages&level=main&page=10 for a listing. Or visit our Facebook page (Lamar PC 2012). Just remember, if a pink flamingo shows up on your lawn, any contribution you make goes to support an alcohol-free party for our students.

At Project Celebration, the students can win a variety of prizes, many of which are donated through the generosity of local businesses. If you or someone you know can donate electronics, dorm necessities, or other items a graduate might want or need, please contact Jamie Ratliff at jhratliff@aol.com.

Project Celebration has enjoyed support from our north Arlington community for many years. We thank each and every one of you for the continued support that you give us.

For more information about how you can help, or to make a contribution, please contact PC co-chairs Barbara Broussard 817-371-4121 (babsb52@tx.rr.com) or Julie Sessler 817-798-7377 (juliesessler@hotmail.com).



SHACKELFORD PATRIOTS:

Happy Autumn, Patriot Families!

We are off and running in sunny northwest Arlington with an emphasis on tracking student learning right out of the gate. We're using two primary mechanisms to assess how well our kids are learning the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS. These are the concepts our state deems imperative for students to acquire in each class through the course of a school year. The first tool we use is curriculum assessments that our teachers create and administer every one to three weeks and which cover recently taught TEKS. We can see trends along classes or groups of students, and most importantly, we can see what individual students are learning. These assessments drive our instruction. We can see what instructional strategies work well and which concepts need reinforcement. The second tool is the curriculum assessments created on the district level and administered to all students every six weeks. These assessments, given in each core discipline (math, reading, writing, science, and social studies), give us the added perspective of seeing our students' retention over the course of the six weeks, as well as how our students are learning in comparison to the other junior high students across the district. So, if Ousley Junior High scores high in a certain area, we can get in touch with them and compare how we present the material differently.

You might be inclined to say, “Andy, aren't you just teaching to the test?”. No, we're making sure our kids are learning the TEKS that we're responsible for teaching to them. We're teaching concepts, not test-taking strategies.

You might have seen or heard “Love Shack!” around our campus this year and wondered what is going on there in that little slice of heaven at the corner of Fielder and Lamar. It's a command, not a description of a structure. We're talking about basing our (students and staff) decisions on love of selves and love of others. Love in the sense of actions that further your own or another's growth. So, go forth and love yourself, love one another, and LOVE SHACK!

Andy Hagman, Principal



NEWS FROM NICHOLS:

Exciting things are happening at Nichols Junior High!

Our students continue to be involved in Art, Band, Orchestra, Choir, Volleyball, Basketball, and Football. Nichols also has student organizations such as STUCO and NJHS that promote excellence, leadership, and involvement at Nichols. Go Mustangs!



LARSON LIONS:

Great things are happening at Larson Elementary! The fall is always a busy time and this year has been no exception. Our PTA is feverishly working on plans for our annual fall carnival and silent auction. We have planned a fun

afternoon with plenty of bounce houses, carnival games, a pumpkin patch, and all of the mouth-watering food which makes our carnival THE place to be on a beautiful fall afternoon! Our silent auction is shaping up to be a huge success with the generous donation of so many priceless items. We have autographed Texas Ranger memorabilia, Cowboy ticket packages, hotel stays, and many, many more elegant gift baskets and surprises.

The Larson PTA has committed to carrying on and supporting the valuable Accelerated Reader Program. We have had a great response from students who are diligently accumulating AR points to spend in our AR Store. Our first AR store was a hit with everyone as we experimented with a new system of rewards which are designed to be budget-friendly yet still immensely popular with the kids.

Immediately after our carnival weekend, we will jump into Red Ribbon Week. We have several events planned which we hope will drive home the message about the importance of remaining drug-free. Our fall fundraiser this year could possibly be the most promising fundraiser we have ever attempted. We are partnering with Primo Bean and Mrs. Field's to offer a catalog of gourmet coffees and the ever-popular Mrs. Field's cookie dough. We hope to continue to raise the funds needed to support all of our PTA programs and activities. We also look forward to the holiday season when our Dad's Club will serve our Thanksgiving lunch and we decorate our Angel Tree which will support our Larson families in need.

Our Lion Pride remains strong at our "Recognized" campus and we look forward to all that this new school year will bring.



ROQUEMORE RAMS:

Our learning community is filled with excellent students and teachers who work hard each day in a warm and challenging academic environment. We are

proud to be a part of our children's formative years.

We are a community of committed staff, parents, and students establishing academic, social, and emotional development through mutual respect, positive support, and encouragement in a safe environment resulting in responsible adults.



WEBB WALLABIES:

Webb is a great school, with great teachers and a great community. We work hard with the students to raise the bar ever higher.

The staff at Webb are advocates for children and learning. We take every opportunity as a teaching moment and believe in creating life-long learners. We ask families to teach their children to be to be self-responsible and model traits of self-discipline, of a self-starter, and setting and working toward individual goals.

Webb Elementary is a place of learning and growing.



WIMBISH WARRIORS:

Science Night: An Electrifying Experience – Over 650 Wimbish students and parents attended the 8th Annual Wimbish Science Night Spectacular. Ten separate rooms with over fifty different science experiences kept the students and their parents engaged in

learning about science. Electricity, Sound, Air Pressure, Building, Slimy Stuff, Water Rockets, and Stomp Rockets were just a few of the topics covered this year. Faculty and staff were on-hand to assist the parents and students in making this a fun evening of "learning". In addition, everyone enjoyed the grilled hot dogs that were served up on the patio before and during the event.



BUTLER BRONCOS:

We have had a busy and exciting start to our school year here at Butler. The PTA fall fundraiser was a huge success. Students sold tubs of cookie dough to raise funds for much needed programs at our school. The PTA will also be sponsoring the 5th Annual Butler Family Fun Run on Saturday, November 19th at 3:00 pm. We hope to have lots of community involvement!

The Butler Dad's Club recently hosted the annual Disc Golf Tournament. Fathers and sons came out by the dozens to enjoy an evening of disc golf, hot dogs, and fun! We look forward to the Father/Daughter Dance which is coming up soon!



SPEER STARS:

This October, the Reading/Writing Team conducted a parent workshop titled “Helping Parents children in grades Pre K-6th” were invited to attend a demonstration on how they can help their child in reading and reading comprehension. A packet of useful materials including sound charts, questions to ask when reading, and high frequency words was given to each parent to help reinforce reading at home.

The Math/Science team hosted an “Ice Cream Parlor” Family Math Night event. Parents and students had a chance to go back in time as they entered a 50’s themed cafeteria. Everyone enjoyed math games and had a swinging good time.

A Favorite Book Parade and Door Decoration Contest will be held in November. Every class will choose their favorite book. Pre K – 2nd grade will dress up as the characters in their book and participate in a parade. 3rd-6th graders will decorate the classroom door with their book choice. Our judges will be employees from our neighbor, Texas Health/Arlington Memorial Hospital.

Speer’s new Family Center has become a great place to unite parents, strengthen family involvement, and build a stronger community. Social gatherings are held every Thursday at 9:00 am. We discuss school and community events, parent education classes, and community resources. Once a month, a parent volunteers to share one of their talents with us by teaching us anything from pastry making, sewing, cooking, sign language, or sharing beauty tips.

Speer has two great events planned this year: the Santa Fe “Strengthening Families Program” and Museum Night. The Santa Fe program is a 14 week program designed to help parents build their strength in showing care and concern for their children while setting limits. Youth 9-16 years of age develop skills to handle peer pressure and build a positive future. Then in December, Speer will have a family night at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

This spring, Speer will host the UIL A+ academic competition for Arlington elementary schools. This competition is for 2nd – 6th graders.



POPE PANTHERS:

It’s an exciting time here at Pope Elementary. In October, we held Kindergarten Math and Science Night and Math Night for second and third graders. November will bring a Science Night for the entire school to enjoy. By the time you see this newsletter, the Dad’s Club Fall Festival, scheduled for November 5th, will have been a resounding success. Good fun for all!

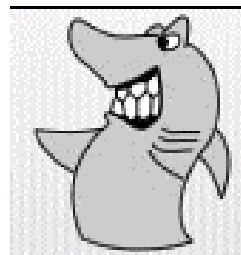


KOOKEN KOALAS:

Kooken continues its mission as the only school in AISD dedicated to special needs pre-schoolers. The staff of Kooken Pre-Kindergarten School is dedicated to maximizing the potential that each student has for work, pride, friendship, self-esteem, and all other gratifications that motivate and enable individuals to live their lives with dignity and purpose. We believe that all students can learn and that the learning process should be fun.

Kooken now has a Pre-K Science Lab for our Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 students. We received items from Lamar High School that will help us continue to build our Science Lab and create a practical, fun way to learn science. We have a Mobile Science Lab available for use this year, also.

The Kooken Education Center was recently honored with the unveiling of a Texas historical marker for our building. Kooken is also listed in the National Register of Historical Places.



SHERROD SHARKS:

Sherrod Sharks continue to strive for success. Our events, which include Club Investigate, Mad Science, Music, Band, Strings, Art, P.E., and our grade level teams all work together to keep Sherrod students on the path to success.



ELLIS EAGLES SOAR!

Ellis Elementary is an exciting place to be! Our parents continue to partner with us as members of our Parent / Teacher Association, Family Involvement Team and Site Based Decision Making Committee. Our students experience leadership opportunities through organizations and clubs such as: The Ellis Student Council, The Ellis Step Team, The Ellis Art Club, The Ellis Choir, The Ellis Green Recycling Team, The Ellis Spirit Team, The Ladies of Distinction, The Gentlemen of Honor, The Ellis Fitness Team, The Ellis Running Club, Slant 45 Community Service Club, The Ellis Band, The Ellis Orchestra, and The Lone Star Challenge Group.

Our goals extend beyond our Texas Education Agency “RECOGNIZED” status into everything we do for our students. Updated technology, extensive staff development, vertically aligned instruction, and engaging classrooms are the base of what you’ll find at Ellis.

Here at Ellis we strive for excellence from Pre-K 3 years old through graduation by instilling a value of education and teaching lifelong skills.