

Classroom calling for Ware

To launch each school year, Workman Junior High teachers are tasked with a rather intriguing assignment: come up with an inspiring buzzword for their new crop of students to live and work by.

Call it an anchor to help steady the choppy academic seas to come.

While such a charge might be a tough one for even the most analytical of instructors, it was a no-brainer for Arnita Ware.

She knew her word right away. "Perseverance," she whispered to herself.

Of course.

Google p-e-r-s-e-v-e-r-a-n-c-e (never giving up; doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success) and you'll likely find Ware's mug pop up early and often in the search engine, cheesing right back at you.



SEE WARE, PAGE 2

The 30th year in the district marks the first in the classroom for Arnita Ware.



A message from Dr. Cavazos

One thing that's been evident as we've started the 2020-21 school year is how passionate our staff members are about what they do.

No one exemplifies that more than Arnita Ware. Her story of getting to the classroom in her 30th year in the district is a great example of the passion our teachers and staff members have about education. She always wanted to be a teacher and now she has her opportunity. She got there through hard work.

I also saw the passion our teachers and food and nutrition service workers have on the first day of school as I was able to Zoom across the district and drop in on several classes as well as visit with the food

and nutrition service workers at Boles Junior High.

I was so happy to see how our teachers have created engaging online activities for their students already. We've talked a lot about how this fall's learning will be different than it was in the spring, and I could see that was the case on the first day of school. The teachers were prepared and the students were engaged.

That's another great indicator of how your hard work is paying off. That was the case at Boles, too, as the student meal pickup ran smoothly from the start. Everyone should be proud of their efforts in getting the year off to a great start.

SEPTEMBER DATES

Library Card Sign-Up Month

Christa McAuliffe's Birthday	Sept. 2	Citizenship & Constitution Day	Sept. 17
Labor Day (Staff Holiday)	Sept. 7	Rosh Hashanah Begins (sundown)	Sept. 18
Patriot Day	Sept. 11	Texian Navy Day	Sept. 19
Texas First Responders Day	Sept. 11	Rosh Hashanah Ends (sundown)	Sept. 20
Grandparents' Day	Sept. 13	Peace Day	Sept. 21
Cowboys Super Bowl Run Starts	Sept. 13	First Day of Autumn	Sept. 22
National Arts in Education Week	Sept. 13-19	End of First Six Weeks	Sept. 25
Hispanic Heritage Month Begins	Sept. 15	Yom Kippur	Sept. 27-28
Stepfamily Day	Sept. 16	Start of Second Six Weeks	Sept. 28

WARE FROM PAGE 1

Anyone within Arlington ISD who has met Ware – and based on this, her 30th year in the district, there has been quite a few – swiftly names her “positivity” and “perseverance” as traits that ooze out, much like a pot or rice boiling over and spewing everywhere and on everybody.

“She leaves you with a feeling that everything is going to be all right after all,” said AISD Executive Director of Finance Tony Drollinger, who met Ware when providing campus activity fund training to school secretaries. “She models Christian values in every encounter, and inspires people to be just a little better.”

The fact that Ware is presiding over an English class at Workman this year might not sound like such an overarching achievement on its own.

Until you learn that this is her first year as a classroom teacher.

Which means she did something entirely different for the first 29.

“Well, let me tell you what,” Ware explains, a wide grin spreading across her face via a Zoom conversation.

“I started out as a receptionist at Workman. I helped open the campus at Barnett before going over to Carter as a principal secretary. I worked in the math curriculum office as an administrative secretary, as the principal secretary at Morton, a telephone specialist, in telecommunications, and an administrative assistant to the assistant over technology.”

Since pint-sized and pigtailed in New Orleans, Ware wanted to be a teacher. Her mom, now 80, used to call her “my little English teacher” because of her unrelenting but gracious way of laying down the grammatical law.

So how Ware worked in the district for three decades before presiding over her own classroom clearly illustrates the perseverance she possesses. She fell for English in high school because she had such a terrific teacher. They still converse today. Sitting on the shelf of Ware’s living room is an English trophy that, she says, “serves as a reminder and motivator.”

It was a motivator to obtain her college degree. While her mother begged her to go directly to college after high school, Ware had other plans. She was ready to start her family. So she did.

“That’s the path I took,” she said.

Once her Arlington ISD colleagues learned of this veiled love, they routinely encouraged her to return to school. She did enroll, at Tarrant County College South, in January of 1996. She completed her degree, in Applied Arts & Sciences, from Lamar University, last year.

“I know, I know,” she said. “That’s quite a bit of time.”

Kids happened. So did divorce. Remarriage. A blended family that now counts eight sons (three apiece from her and him) and 15 grandchildren.

“Life,” she said. “Life happened.”

Ware kept trudging along anyway with a class here, a class there. Motivation went up. Down. Out. Up again. By 2014, though, she decided: this is it. No breaks. No stops. She pushed through those last six years.

“I couldn’t stop,” she said. “I had to get it done. So I kept going.”

Shortly after snagging her degree and entering the Education Career Alternatives Program (ECAP), Workman came calling.

The first year is often the roughest for teachers, but instructing in a COVID world “has been interesting,” Ware said, “and that’s interesting with all caps.”

“I have always had a deep respect for teachers,” she said. “Now I have an understanding of what they have to go through. COVID adds an extra layer of work. Having to produce and do things online. It’s not what I pictured. But, then again, it’s not what anyone pictured.”

The challenge of beginning remotely, especially as a newbie, has been connecting to her kids and creating a family-style, safe haven in the classroom. Still, she feels she’s off to a pretty good start.

“I get them,” said Ware who, by the way, is in Strathmore’s Who’s Who Worldwide, the database of leaders and professionals on the Web. “I know how to communicate with young people. I won’t have a problem in that area, particularly once we get back into the classroom.”

Drollinger agrees. “From the moment I met her, I was impressed by her calm, caring and professional way of dealing with anyone she came in contact with,” he said.

After decades of being so close – yet so far – from teaching in a classroom, Ware is eager to be the inspiration and encourager much the way she was inspired and encouraged by her own English teacher.

As she and her students figure out this new educational normal of online and in-person and everything in between, she hopes to instill her buzzword of p-e-r-s-v-e-r-a-n-c-e.

“I’ll tell them what I told myself,” she said. “Just keep going.”

New look everywhere at Gunn

Most schools are quiet right now as students started the school year learning online from home. But not Gunn Junior High. It was even louder than a normal first week of school with demolition, renovation and new construction – plus instructional development – all going on at the same time.

The Bond 2019 project to renovate and build an addition to the school turned Gunn into a busy construction zone throughout the summer and now into the fall. With the addition and renovations, Gunn will become home to a new junior high fine arts and dual language academy while continuing to serve the 7th and 8th grade students zoned for the school.



CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

If you come to Gunn – and many parents and students have visited recently to pick up devices and school supplies – it looks like nearly every corner of the building and site has work going on.

Inside the existing building, renovations for the fine arts rooms include dance, piano, theater and music. The band, choir and orchestra rooms are almost finished, and the theatre and dance spaces are underway.

Outside, a new parking area on the west side of the building is now open. Construction of a new fire lane loop is complete on the west side and continues around the north side of the building. Work on the north-side parking lot should be

finished by mid-September.

The athletic field is getting resurfaced with field turf and will be ready in September as well.

Work on the additions is also ongoing. The piers for the main addition on the south side of the building and for the addition between the two existing buildings (the main school building and the cafeteria and gym building) have been set and foundation work continues. The two additions will open next school year.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRESS

Construction and COVID make for a unique mix of challenges, but Gunn principal Dr. Matt Varnell sees them as opportunities.

The new normal has Varnell and the Gunn faculty

looking at things differently.

“We are challenging teachers to rethink how they deliver instruction and how students demonstrate learning,” Varnell said. “We are re-envisioning how kids show us what they learn.”

The Gunn teachers are considering and implementing tools other than the standard test that can demonstrate learning. Video recordings, interactive online collaboration tools and even students designing their own animations all offer students ways to engage with the material and demonstrate their comprehension and mastery. Using creative ways to assess student learning is more engaging and often allows students to extend beyond the limits of traditional tests.

“Our teachers are really

embracing this,” Varnell said.

The new mindset fits perfectly with the philosophy Varnell already champions.

“We are changing the question from ‘How smart are you?’ to ‘How are you smart?’

Every student is smart in some way. The key is tapping into their interests, identifying their strengths and inspiring them to learn.

Construction really is going on in every corner of Gunn, and not just on the buildings. The new tools and philosophy that Varnell and Gunn’s teachers are exploring during this unique phase in Gunn’s history are helping build a new instructional model that will impact and inspire students long after the pandemic has passed and construction crews have gone.

Arlington ISD Board calls for VATRE

The Arlington ISD Board of Trustees has called for a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election – or VATRE – on Nov. 3, 2020. If approved, the VATRE would generate approximately \$56 million in additional revenue for our operational, day-to-day expenses.

Approval of the VATRE would primarily fund teacher and staff pay increases and give our district access to additional state funding. It would mean approximately

\$18 million in additional state aid that we would not receive otherwise.

Arlington ISD has never had a VATRE. In fact, our Maintenance and Operations tax rate has remained the same or



declined in each of the past 15 years. This VATRE would increase the district's total tax rate by 8.84 cents.

You can learn more about this VATRE and how it might affect you. The details, along with FAQs,

are available at aisd.net/vatre. Please keep in mind that while on duty as school district employees, we can provide facts and information about the VATRE, but we may not advocate for or against it. Learn more about what you can and can't do in our [Dos and Don'ts fact sheet](#).

Please vote on Nov. 3. If you need to register to vote, please visit the Tarrant County elections [website](#) for the application form.

September Employee Perks

TEACHERS GET 10% OFF

AS OUR WAY OF SAYING THANKS

Offer valid 9/1/2020-9/30/2020 in-store and online.

Academy
SPORTS+OUTDOORS

academy.com/teachers

Free appetizers for teachers + staff every Friday 3-7pm

1 free appetizer per 2 people. 1 school I.D. badge required per 2 people. App sampler is excluded.

Locations

Addison
Allen
Alliance
Arlington
Grapevine
Lovers & Greenville
Plano



Zooming Along with Dr. C

Fourth-grade students at Percy STEM Academy got to take a look inside the virtual locker of Arlington ISD Superintendent Dr. Marcelo Cavazos on the first day of school.

What the more than 60 students who were on the call found out was that his favorite color is blue and that his favorite foods are tacos and enchiladas.

It was that kind of day for Cavazos, whose annual Tweet Along changed to a Zoom Along to allow him to drop in on classes across the district. By the time Cavazos left his final class, he had visited nine campuses virtually. Additionally, he did an in-person stop to see how the student meal service program was running at Boles Junior High.

It was a rewarding day for him.

"I stressed to the teachers and students how proud I was of them for their efforts," he said. "We all know we'd rather start the school year in-person. That's never been a question. But the students were excited to be back at school and that excitement carried over to everyone."

Cavazos started his day visiting a full-day Pre-K class at Larson Elementary. It was one of three Pre-K classes he visited as the Arlington ISD rolled out full-day Pre-K throughout the district Monday. He also visited an advanced art class that will eventually be taking place at the new Center for Visual and Performing Arts.

Cavazos also played show-and-tell at a bilingual first-grade class at Thornton Elementary where he heard stories read to Pre-K students. Similarly, he fielded questions on everything from bus service to when school will return to in-person learning.

At Boles Junior High, he got to visit with food and nutrition service workers at one of the district's 30 student-meal plan distribution sites.



RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

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Arlington ISD
1203 W. Pioneer Pkwy.
Arlington, TX 76013
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*** Accident *** What to do next?

Contact supervisor.
If an emergency
response professional
is needed call 911.

Contact the risk
management office
at 682-867-7649.

[Complete workers'
comp packet.](#)

Completed packet
should be sent to the
risk management office
in the administration
building.

**Whatever you want to
do, if you want to be
great at it, you have
to love it and be able
to make sacrifices for
it.**

Maya Angelou

Preventing sprains and strains at work

Sprains and strains are common injuries for employees. Sprains result from stretches or tears to a ligament (tissue that connects multiple bones at a joint), while strains are caused by stretches or tears to a muscle or tendon (tissue that connects muscle to bone). Both sprains and strains can happen suddenly or over an extended period of time. The likelihood of an employee like you experiencing a sprain or strain injury largely depends on the nature of your workplace tasks and responsibilities. Specifically, tasks that require excessive force, frequent repetition or awkward positioning can elevate your risk of experiencing a sprain or strain injury on the job. What's more, ignoring a sprain or strain injury can lead to it worsening into a long-lasting, painful problem. Nevertheless, there are several precautions that you can take to help lower your risk of experiencing a sprain or strain injury at work. Consider the following guidance:



- **Practice healthy habits.** Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help keep your bones and muscles strong, reducing your risk of injury. Be sure to take care of your body by eating a balanced diet, getting regular exercise, drinking plenty of water and keeping a proper sleep schedule.



- **Stretch it out.** Tightened muscles are increasingly vulnerable to strain injuries. Try to loosen up before your work shift with some light exercise, followed by a full-body stretch session. Consider spending extra time stretching out muscles that you use frequently during work tasks.

- **Follow workplace protocols.** Be sure to follow all workplace health and safety protocols regarding ergonomics, body mechanics, machine usage and lifting techniques to help minimize your risk of injury.

- **Know the signs.** By recognizing the early symptoms of a sprain or strain injury, you will be able to detect the injury sooner and make necessary workplace adjustments before it becomes a serious concern.

Common signs of a sprain and strain injury include excessive fatigue, discomfort, swelling, tenderness and limited range of motion. If you are experiencing any symptoms of a sprain or strain injury, make sure you inform your supervisor and talk to a doctor.



Remember: practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.