

Homebound brings it home

Students in the most unfortunate of situations in the Arlington ISD are lucky because they're in the most caring of hands.

That's the case for students who are part of the Homebound program, which is for students from pre-K through 18 PLUS who will miss at least four-consecutive weeks or four weeks in a school year for chronic illnesses. Whether the student has a bone in traction or battling cancer, being confined to home doesn't mean they're missing school.

The four Homebound teachers make sure that's the case.

"They are like our family," said S. Ashley

SEE HOME, PAGE 3



S. Ashley Borton, Stephanie Hudson, Julie Barganier and Diane Crowson bring the classroom into students' homes in the Homebound program.



A message from Dr. Cavazos

Teachers in the Arlington ISD aren't limited to their classrooms on their campus. No team is better proof of that than our four Homebound teachers who each have to be prepared to know a little bit of everything and give students lessons in some of the toughest of circumstances. The story in this *My Arlington ISD* is a great reminder of the wonderful work they do.

I can't wait to see the new playgrounds at our elementary schools start taking shape. The playgrounds, which are part of the 2019 Bond, appear to be in good hands thanks to the expert voices we had in helping choose what will be part of them.

Congratulations to our five Biggest

Loser winners who competed in the competition at the end of last year. They were honored at our first Fitness Expo earlier this month. It was great to see so many employees focused on their health and the great community support we had as evidenced by all of the vendors who showed up at the Arlington High School Multipurpose Activity Center.

And while I'm congratulating people, kudos to our employees of the month for February. It was great to see the four of them and really nice to end the trip in front of so many enthusiastic students at Arlington College & Career High School as we surprised Corporal Gallegos from our security department.

When they know you care

This year, my son decided to try something new and enrolled in a theater arts class at his high school. I was proud of him for taking a risk and engaging his curiosity. While he isn't a stage actor, he was interested in working on the team that managed sound during the productions. The students in the class have been working all semester to prepare for their school musical, and he invited me to come and observe their pre-opening night rehearsal. It was so fun to see him with the earphones on working the sound booth!

At the end of the rehearsal, the students gathered on stage to receive feedback from the director. As I sat and listened from the audience, a positive and energetic teacher approached me from behind and asked if I was his father. When I confirmed that I was, she proceeded to tell me how much she enjoyed having him in class, what a terrific student he was and how grateful she was that we shared him with her. As we closed the conversation, I couldn't help but think, "Every student deserves a teacher like her!"

What was it about this experience that struck me so deeply? It wasn't that she was complimenting my son. It was the obviously genuine love and kindness she felt toward him. She could see his talent, and she affirmed it. She enjoyed his contributions to the class, and she told him. She gave him opportunities to try new things and encouraged him while he learned. He has really excelled with her as his teacher and is eager to



participate in her course. And this is all because she makes her relationship with him as her student a priority. You see, I believe that if we really want to have the greatest impact on our learners, we have to start by making sure they know that we care about them as unique individuals and make our investment in their success visible.

In an article published by "The Guardian," a 16-year-old said, "The perfect teacher. [To some], that probably means exemplary lesson plans and 30 immaculately marked books with targets for improvement. But, as a 16-year-old, I'm not sure I agree. What students love about the best teachers - the ones whose lessons are discussed at the dinner table, whose names are always remembered and whose impact is never forgotten - is quite different." It is about showing you care.

So how can we do that? How do we build positive relationships with our learners in a way that they can visibly see? This young author shares a few ideas

for us to consider and the impact each has had on him personally:

- **Put in the time to get to know your students as people.** "Although passion is inspiring, a deep knowledge and understanding of [your students] is just as important... I have a teacher, who from the beginning of my two-year course, offered an after-school session every single week... I am often the only one there but she doesn't mind. She has completely changed my life by believing in me, pushing me and caring about me... Know[ing] someone values you enough to put in time is amazing."

- **Show respect.** "Respect isn't about having 30 silent faces shouted to submission. If you treat us as humans, know what you're talking about and take an interest in what we have to say, you will gain our respect."

- **Show your personality** (but not too much - his words not mine). "The best teachers are the ones whose personalities are so bright that the light bulbs inside

30 heads are switched on anyway. We genuinely like the teachers who smile [and] who can do the voices in books without feeling embarrassed... We know you're not here to be our friend, but some sort of relationship is important."

- **Tell them when they have done well.** "Teachers may be expected to write pages of feedback, but if you want to improve your students' self-esteem and encourage them to further their thinking, it's the verbal feedback that really sinks in."

Being a teacher is hard work. It requires not only expert skill sets, but also high emotional intelligence. As you consider the impact you have on the students you are blessed to serve, I invite you to find one way you can begin to make your care for them a bit more visible. Once they know how much you care, I am confident they will be interested in knowing how much you know.

Dr. Steven Wurtz is the Arlington ISD chief academic officer

MARCH DATES

Texas History Month
 Theatre for Life Month
 Music in Our Schools Month
 Youth Art Month

Early Dismissal for Elementary	March 2	First Day of Spring	March 19
NEA's Read Across America	March 2	Purple Day for Epilepsy	March 26
Texas Independence Day	March 2	Rangers Open 2020 Season	March 26
School Breakfast Week	March 2-6	Rangers Globe Life Field Debut	March 31
Begin Daylight Saving Time	March 8		
National Meatball Day	March 9		
Spring Break	March 9-13		
Pi Day	March 14		
St. Patrick's Day	March 17		
Absolutely Incredible Kid Day	March 19		



Arlington
 INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
More Than a Remarkable Education

HOME FROM PAGE 1

Borton, who is in her first year as a Homebound teacher and her 26th in the district. "They're like our kids."

Unlike typical classroom teachers, the four Homebound teachers visit between six and eight students a week at their home and go over the lessons to help students keep up with their schoolwork. The Homebound teachers work in collaboration with the students' home campus as they are still tied to their home school and count on the school roll. Students get their lessons from their home campus teacher and then it's up to the Homebound teacher to work with the students through the lesson, normally in two weekly two-hour sessions.

"We're still teachers," said Stephanie Hudson, who is in her third year at Homebound and 20th in the district. "Just like I would when I was in the classroom you really have to get to know your kids. It's very personal in Homebound. You really have to get to know their strengths. I have one student and I know I can give her English, and she's got it. You have to know what you're working with like you're self-contained."

Just like students, the Homebound teachers have their own strengths and weaknesses.

Since there are only four of them and they have students of all ages to work with, they have to have at least some knowledge of all the

subjects they're teaching from elementary math to high school physics. Sometimes that means extra homework for the teacher, too, as they observe classes when they can to help them know their subject better.

Technology helps, too, as some Canvas, Google and video lessons from the home campus can cover some of the lessons. That collaboration is huge to the program's success.

"We meet and collaborate with teachers," said department lead Julie Barganier, who has been with the Homebound program for the last 10 years. "We take their lesson plans and pare them down. Then the work is taken back to the campus and the teachers record it or grade it. Students finish assignments and get grades."

That's not all they do, either. Even though some students are limited by what they can do, there are breaks. Whether it's chair yoga, crafts, music or just hanging out, they try to put some fun into the experience.

While Homebound students have to be taken out of the program when the school year ends, if they are still sick the process can start back over in the fall. Barganier worked with one student for eight-straight years.

It's those kinds of bonds that make the program special. Diane Crowson taught in the district for 28 years and

was a long-term sub last year. She had no intentions of coming back but teaching Homebound changed her mind.

She's not the only one.

"It was a calling for me," Borton said. "I can tell you it's unlike any experience I've ever had, possibly the most rewarding. It's hard to put into words. It's a heartfelt, intense position."

Unfortunately it can also be a difficult one. There are times students are too sick to do their lessons. One student this school year has already died, too.

"We have spent the last day of a child's life with them," Barganier said.

While that's difficult on everyone, the reality is the students want as normal a life as possible. Having teachers come to their house is part of it because it makes them feel more connected to school where their friends and regular teachers are.

"The hardest thing for our kiddos, especially the older ones, is the isolation," Hudson said. "They are confined to their homes unless it's a doctor's visit. We're their connection to real life outside the illness. Very rarely do we have students who don't do their work. They want to be at school. They want to work. They want to have connections."

Lucky for them, they have the Homebound program.

Experts have say in new playgrounds

The Arlington ISD brought in the experts to help design new playgrounds for all district elementary schools.

The future playgrounds' users - the elementary students themselves - gave their feedback and input recently, and let AISD staff know what kinds of equipment they want on their playgrounds.

The student experts included many special education students from 11 elementary schools. Their input is critical as one of the primary goals for the new playgrounds is to ensure true accessibility for all children, including those who use wheelchairs.

The future new playgrounds are part of the 2019 Bond program, approved by voters in November 2019. The plan calls for two new playgrounds at each elementary, one for ages 2-5, and the other for ages 5-12. The playgrounds will include shade structures and accessible play equipment and surfaces.

"The size and scope of the district's playground improvements project is significant and will completely transform the form and function of exterior play spaces for the students of the Arlington ISD," said Kelly Horn, AISD executive director of plant services. "The improvements will provide greater safety, equity, access and inclusion for all students. The playground spaces will have new equipment set on new foundations with a durable rubber surface and solar canopies overhead for protection during periods when the weather conditions are harsh."



Most of the district's current playgrounds are aging, and few are accessible. Little Elementary's playground is just one example.

"The playground at Little is not inclusive to my students," said Sara Steele, an alternative curriculum teacher at Little. "The ground is too rough for wheelchairs and students who have trouble walking. We have to have recess on a concrete courtyard because it's the only place all of my students can play. My class is looking forward to a playground where children of all abilities can play together!"

Planning for the new playgrounds began as soon as the bond passed in November 2019. Horn immediately established a planning committee comprised of PE teachers, principals, alternate curriculum faculty, district administrators and community members.

"They helped to develop ideas that benefit every student," Horn said.

At the committee's second meeting in January, committee members flipped through playground catalogs, discussed the various types of equipment

and cut out images of the playground equipment they liked best.

"The procurement and installation of the new equipment and surfacing is the easy part," Horn said. "Making sure that we select the right equipment is the greatest challenge. As a result, the district has gone to the experts ... our students!"

The AISD facilities team compiled all the playground equipment images that the committee selected out of the catalogs and pasted them onto large poster boards. The poster boards were then taken to 15 elementary schools during the week of Feb. 3 where boys and girls from each grade got to examine the options. Each student was given five stickers to put next to the playground options they liked best.

"Our students were really excited when I told them that we were going to get new playground equipment, and they were going to help choose it," Percy STEM Academy Principal Codi Van Duzee said. "We had approximately 65 pre-K-6th-grade students and 10 staff members vote on what they felt would be the most fun to

play on."

Kelly Hunt, a lead physical therapist for the AISD, took the playground poster boards to special education students and solicited their feedback. At Fitzgerald Elementary, a first grader who has a progressive neurological condition and is unstable on his feet, studied the boards at length and told Hunt, "I like this ramp because I feel scared on the stairs that someone will knock me over."

"I'm constantly reminded that our special needs students are so thoughtful and have to be overly concerned with their own safety at all times," Hunt said.

A third-grade student at Key Elementary, who also has a progressive neurological condition, selected options that would be fun for everyone.

"I want to pick something I can play on, but that my friends will also enjoy so I don't have to play alone," he said.

The students' input is now being compiled and will be used by the planning committee to continue the playground design process.

"We are excited to see what they choose and how it will inform the final designs," Horn said. "In the end, we will have some very special play spaces that will serve our community for a very long time."

Horn plans to complete the playground design and report to the AISD Board of Trustees by April 2020. Installation of the new playgrounds will then be phased over the first three years of the bond program, with the first projects slated to begin this fall.

TI² endorses several apps

The technology integration & innovation department (TI²) supports the purposeful and meaningful use of technology tools for learning. The best available web applications and mobile apps have been 'endorsed' by TI² and are showcased at <https://www.aisd.net/endorsedapps>.

Two of Arlington ISD's licensed endorsed apps are highlighted below:

Pear Deck

Pear Deck is an assessment tool that works with Google Slides to make presentations interactive and engaging. Teachers pose formative questions on slides (multiple choice, short answer, drawing, draggable, etc.) and students respond via iPads, Chromebooks, laptops or phones. All AISD teachers have premium Pear Deck accounts and can access Pear Deck directly by using Google login credentials at www.peardeck.com or through the Pear Deck add-on in Google Slides.

"Pear Deck shines a light on classroom ninjas who like to hide in the shadows of my fifth-grade math class by allowing them to participate without risk and to engage in the material and correct mistakes before misconceptions take root," West Elementary teacher Todd Miller said.

New users will be amazed to discover that their existing Google Slides presentations can easily

be converted to interactive Pear Deck experiences. Real-time responses help inform teachers' instructional decision making. Additionally, there are many ready-made templates for subject area use, as well as for topics like digital citizenship, social-emotional learning and critical thinking. Access the templates collection at peardeck.com/templates.

Pear Deck also has a fun mode called Flashcard Factory that makes vocabulary development an interactive and collaborative experience for students.

The TI² department thanks campuses including Nichols Junior High, Workman Junior High and Sam Houston High School for having the most students actively engaged via Pear Deck so far this school year! In regard to subject-area usage, social studies and ELAR teachers are leading the way.

Teachers desirous of adding new life to direct instruction and vocabulary work in their classrooms can learn the simple steps for getting started at peardeck.com/help-videos.



Seesaw for Schools

Seesaw for Schools is a platform for AISD's pre-K-2nd grade students that allows teachers to empower their students to create, share, reflect and collaborate.

Students can upload photos or videos, create



539,658
pieces of work
added by students

including 2,639 hours of
video and voice recordings
that document learning
and student progress at
your school!



58,519 Student Portfolios in 10,386 Classes

1,655
teachers are
using Seesaw to:

- Differentiate instruction
- Perform assessments
- Build 21st Century skills
- Keep families engaged

7,085 families
in the loop about their
child's learning

189,842
visits
by families to
student portfolios

73,897
comments
on student work

Top Schools

Short Elementary School

West Elementary School

Bryant Elementary School

**Take student-driven learning to the next level
with Seesaw for Schools!**

drawings with text, images, audio and shapes, or upload projects from other technology tools. Once work has been submitted to a student's digital portfolio, students, teachers and parents are able to provide feedback on the student's work.

"Seesaw has not only changed how I can assess the students in my classroom, it has enhanced my teaching, differentiation and overall presentation

of information given AND received by my first graders," Short Elementary teacher Jennifer Brannen said.

Are you interested in learning more about Seesaw for Schools? Contact your [campus Seesaw trainer](#) or your assigned technology integration specialist, access [Seesaw's help center](#), or check out Seesaw's free [PD in your PJs series](#).

Health expo a huge hit

The first Arlington ISD Employee Health Fair Expo was a huge success Feb. 8 at the Arlington High School Multipurpose Activity Center.

More than 500 employees showed up for everything from biometric screenings to Zumba and Camp Gladiator workouts. There were also more than 40 vendors on hand.

The district honored the Biggest Loser winners from last year. Congratulations to Amanda Holder from Bailey Junior High, who was the overall Biggest Loser winner. The other winners were McNutt Elementary's Karina Longoria (Area 2), Shackelford Junior High's Chris Scroggins (Area 3), Blanton Elementary's Jeannette Reza (Area 4) and Consuelo Alonzo from the warehouse (Area 5).

To see more photos from the expo, click [here](#).



2020 TEXAS RANGERS

ARLINGTON ISD NIGHT

FRIDAY, APRIL 3 | 7:05 PM

VS TAMPA BAY RAYS | POSTGAME FIREWORKS

To order tickets, visit TEXASRANGERS.COM/COMMUNITYNIGHTS

This game will sell out quickly, so order your tickets as soon as possible!

RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

Tina Baze, Specialist
Risk Management
Arlington ISD
1203 W. Pioneer Pkwy.
Arlington, TX 76013
Office: 682-867-7649
Fax: 682-867-4682

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.

**The function of
education is to
teach one to think
intensively and
to think critically.
Intelligence plus
character - that
is the goal of true
education.**

Martin Luther King Jr.

Workplace Safety

The safest work environments occur when employees at all levels work together to communicate and adhere to safety standards. We encourage employees to report unsafe situations and behaviors, and encourage safe practices throughout each and every work day.

Be aware of your surroundings

Every job site has inherent dangers, whether that's heavy machinery or even tripping over items in the office. The best way to keep yourself safe is to be aware of your surroundings. The more familiar you are with your tasks and workplace, the more aware you'll be of the potential hazards. Knowing your surroundings and being aware of potential hazards will help you and your co-workers avoid unnecessary or dangerous situations.



Watch your posture

We've all heard that age old saying, "lift with your legs—not your back," but keeping correct posture refers to more than just employees who lift things regularly. If you work at a desk, you also need to make sure you have good posture to avoid back problems, neck pain and even carpal tunnel. Of course, if you do have to lift things at work, be sure to keep your back straight and lift with your legs. And if you ever need to lift something you think might be too heavy, take a few extra seconds to find the mechanical aid that can help you or lift with a partner. Whether it's a forklift or a wheelbarrow, your back is worth those extra few seconds.



Take regular breaks

It's important that employees always take their regular breaks. Tired workers are the most prone to an incident. The more tired you are, the less aware you are of your surroundings and the more at risk you are for an injury. Take the breaks you're given on a regular schedule to keep yourself fresh, and try to schedule your more difficult tasks for the beginning of your shift when you're most alert.



Be aware of new safety procedures

When the AISD purchases a new machine or equipment, it's important to make sure you're aware of the new safety procedures that go along with the machines or equipment. While your employer is responsible for providing the proper training and your supervisor will make sure you're assigned to a training time, it's your responsibility to ensure you understand the new procedures and implement them properly before you use any new machines or equipment. Be sure to ask questions if you don't understand the new procedures.

Keep emergency exits clear

Never place anything in front of an emergency exit door, even if it's only for a few minutes. While this might sound like a no-brainer, it's surprising how many ladders, trolley carts and even forklifts get set in front of emergency exits. Also keep all electrical panels clear of items in case something needs to be powered down immediately.

Report unsafe conditions

The only way to stop unsafe conditions from happening is to report them to supervisors as soon as you notice them and help be part of the solution. Your supervisor is obligated to provide all employees with a safe working environment and will take care of problem, but they have to be aware of those conditions to do so.

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

FEBRUARY EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Shellie Byrne
Amos Elementary
Elementary Teacher of the Month



Anya Hendrix
Bailey Junior High
Junior High Teacher of the Month



Brian Anderson
Venture High School
High School Teacher of the Month



Corporal Mark Gallegos
Security
Department Employee of the Month