

# MyArlingtonISD

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## STARS ALIGN FOR ELLIS TEACHER



*Antonio Young got the Rowdy treatment*

Ellis Elementary sixth grade teacher Antonio Young expected January 28 to be just like any other day at school.

He couldn't have been more wrong.

Young's morning started when he was escorted outside the school by principal Keith Boyd to find the Dallas Cowboys bus, team mascot Rowdy, Arlington ISD Superintendent Dr. Marcelo Cavazos and others waiting to honor him. It ended with his class talking to Cowboys offensive lineman Joe Looney on a Zoom call about Young, his students and teaching.

Those are the kinds of days that happen when you've been selected as the first Dallas Cowboys/Reliant Energy Class Acts Teacher of the Month.

**SEE YOUNG, PAGE 3**

## A MESSAGE FROM DR. CAVAZOS

It makes sense given the kind of school year it has been that Antonio Young's teacher of the month honor he won for October came in 2021.

Our entire staff has been the definition of adaptability since the pandemic began last year, and Antonio is a perfect example. He's learned new ways to teach, reach his students and impact the district through his lessons and videos. It was wonderful to participate in the surprise as he was honored by the Dallas Cowboys and Reliant Energy for his work. Antonio is just one example of the outstanding and deserving teachers we have in our district.

One thing that makes our teachers so successful is the resources they are provided. Our technology innovation and integration department does an excellent job providing new and exciting ways for our teachers to learn and connect.



Hopefully, you've had a chance to head over to the Arts and Athletics Complex. I've been there several times and am amazed every time I go, whether for National Signing Day or touring the Center for Visual and Performing Arts. I'm not alone in that thinking, either. The complex is a finalist for D CEO's 2021 Commercial Real Estate Awards. It's a well-deserved honor.

Thank you for everything you've done in February. I know it hasn't been an easy month for any of you, but you've continued to lead the way for our students in the Arlington ISD.

## HELPING STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH TO THRIVE

If it could happen in 2020-2021, it has. Never in our lifetimes have we experienced so many culminating challenges at the same time. And while we have been pushed to innovate at a pace previously considered impossible, we as a society have risen to the occasion and see brighter days in our near future.

Throughout this experience, I have been reminded of the work of Dr. Carol Dweck and the importance of having a growth mindset. We have studied what a growth mindset is and value its role in learning so much that we have embedded it into the Active Learning Cycle and our Leadership Definition. To me, the concept of a growth mindset is the foundation of what we call lifelong learning. We can experience challenges, personal and professional, and learn from those experiences to grow and improve over time.

Having a growth mindset does not mean walking with naive positivity. It is about seeing the reality for what it is and finding the opportunities to grow in the process. For many, the growth is skill-based encouraged by continued practice and effort. For others, it is emotional. It is about looking introspectively and strengthening the mental and emotional stamina needed

to weather the challenges life puts in front of us.

As we work through the second semester, I want to invite us all to intentionally take care of the emotional well-being of ourselves and the students we serve. Our learners are being asked to carry unanticipated burdens while also simultaneously striving to perform academically. So, how can we support them mentally and emotionally through the process? Grace Berman and Allison Dubinski of the Child Mind Institute share some simple strategies for supporting students' mental health during the COVID-19 crisis. Let's consider a few:

- Build a daily routine into your instructional day that is focused on social and emotional health. This will provide students with a reliable outlet to work through the emotions and experiences they are having. As they reinforce, 'Even small exercises can go a long way in helping kids feel safe and validated.' For example, you could do a 'feelings temperature' each day similar to the temperature checks we do before kids enter the building. Students can rate the intensity of their feelings

on a scale of 1-10, notice how they are physically reacting to it and journal about it.

- Incorporate mindfulness and relaxation into the day. Take a two-minute relaxation break. Help kids notice the small details in their surroundings - how things, smell, taste, see and feel. Build their toolkits to include relaxation techniques, including intentional breathing, muscle relaxation and guided imagery. These can be done easily while social distancing in their seats.
- Prioritize hands-on learning activities. During COVID, students spend so much time in front of screens. Intentionally work to build non-screen activities into their learning process and encourage your students to make time at home to do some of their favorite activities/hobbies. As a people, we often put our physical health ahead of our mental and emotional when they are all equally important to sustain a quality life. May we continue to make space for ourselves and the students we serve to allow our mental and emotional health to thrive.

*Dr. Steven Wurtz is the Arlington ISD Chief Academic Officer*



**YOUNG FROM PAGE 1**

“I had no idea,” said Young. “They got me on this.”

Young found out about the honor in December when the Cowboys announced he was the winner on social media. As part of the award, the school received a \$3,000 grant, which will be used for an interactive learning experience in Young’s classroom.

That was where Young thought the honors ended. Instead, Young was given a Cowboys jersey with his name and the No. 1 on it, and his class had a chance to talk to Looney during an afternoon class period.

“Antonio Young demonstrates excellence,” Cavazos said. “We met several years ago, and he does a phenomenal job connecting with the students. He represents our teachers extremely well.”

Young, who teaches English Language Arts, uses his writing and rapping ability to interact with his students. Several of his students have starred in videos with Young, including one during Black History Month last year featured on Access Hollywood and in People Magazine. Young also put together a return to school video with students for the 2020-21 school year and another for the city’s Martin Luther King Jr. celebration.

And that’s just what he does with his free time outside the classroom.

When Ellis Elementary principal Keith Boyd found out that Young was nominated for the award, he wasn’t surprised.

“He was just in my office asking me what more he could do,” Boyd said. “I can’t think of anyone better to be honored.”

Young’s students were also involved as they got to go outside to see him get surprised by the Cowboys team bus being in the parking lot. They also got to participate in the Zoom session with Looney, where they got to talk about their favorite Cowboys players as well as their favorite class. Looney was also able to talk to the students about the importance of education.

Since they have a teacher like Young, they already knew that.

“As a person who’s always loved education, I loved education as a student myself,” Young said. “I feel that the future these kids are going to walk into as they graduate from high school, they have to be prepared and ready. But they first have to love education. So to do it, bringing education to them in a way that’s going to make them want to learn and have fun in the classroom, just that element of writing rap songs to provide a positive outlet for them. It means the world to be recognized for it.”

**MONTHLY MENTIONABLES FOR MARCH 2021**

**Texas History Month  
Theatre for Life Month**

**Music in Our Schools Month  
Youth Art Month**

Early Dismissal for Elementary	March 1
National School Breakfast Week	March 1-5
Texas Public Schools Week	March 1-5
NEA’s Read Across America (Birthday of Dr. Seuss)	March 2
Texas Independence Day	March 2
National Meatball Day	March 9
Begin Daylight Saving Time	March 14

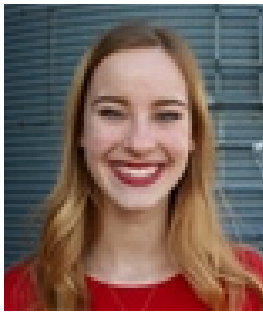
Pi Day	March 14
Spring Break	March 15-19
St. Patrick’s Day	March 17
Absolutely Incredible Kid Day	March 18
First Day of Spring	March 20
Purple Day (Epilepsy Awareness)	March 26
Passover	March 27-April 3



# TECH CORNER ENGAGEMENT HUB

On February 1, the technology integration & innovation department launched the all-new Engagement Hub, an interactive and playlist-driven professional learning opportunity for teachers and librarians. The primary aim of the playlists is to provide teachers with new strategies and ready-to-implement resources to increase levels of student engagement this semester

Dozens of teachers have so far explored these playlists and earned district exchange time for completing the straightforward requirements. Here are some of these teachers' thoughts about their learning experience via the Engagement Hub, which offers different playlist options for PK-2 teachers and teachers in grades 3-12.



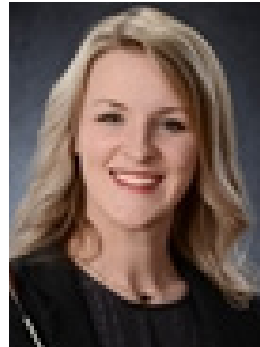
Hannah Cambron, Crouch Elementary

Hannah Cambron, a speech teacher, participated in the *Student Engagement via Interactive Content* playlist and reported, "I have been trying to find a new and engaging way for students in grades 3-6 to participate in speech activities online for IEP implementation. H5P will be

a great tool to create group or individual activities to target specific goals. I am able to create an interactive, self-paced video to help keep students engaged in the content."

But she didn't stop there! Cambron also completed the *Student Engagement via Dynamic Live Instruction for PK-2* playlist. "These signs will help manage behavior, while engaging all students in interactive, yet socially distanced work. This aligns to the Best Practice of Communication by creating a tool and means of communication for all students, despite their level or ability. The use of signs is a great way to emphasize nonverbal communication and listening skills!"

A Workman Junior High School math teacher, John Evans, completed multiple playlists, including *Student Engagement via Relationships*. He reflected, "Communication is very difficult this year, both between teacher and student, and between students. I've used Canvas discussions before, but now I want to use them more. This playlist gave me some ideas of how to make discussions more effective, too, which will give learners an opportunity to express their learning, ideas and reflections and to give feedback to others."



Katrina Benecasa, Martin High School

After completing the *Student Engagement via Progress Tracking* playlist, Katrina Benecasa shared, "I chose the Plug & Play learning path, and the progress/assignment tracker Google Sheet template is amazing! I love this idea. This is a great way for students to keep track of all of their assignments and their progress on those assignments in one place.

Having them reflect on how attendance / engagement affects their grades is also helpful here. They are less likely to give up in the middle if they have this tracker to help them check their progress."

We encourage you to check out the playlists and implement new ideas to further and more deeply engage your students this semester! You can access the Engagement Hub at <http://bit.ly/engagementhub2021>

## DYNAMIC DIGITAL RESOURCES FROM LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES

The African-American History database is an essential resource for exploring African-American history and culture. Designed for junior high and high school students, this resource includes curated topic centers that feature primary sources, articles, sharable slideshows, timelines, maps and videos on specific eras, subjects and people in African-American history. The topic centers cover high-interest historical subjects such as Black contributions to America, landmark court cases and African-American heritage.



To access this resource, click on the icon to the left and use the following credentials:

**Username: aisd**  
**Password: student**



## REPORTING AN ACCIDENT

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.

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

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKPLACE HYGIENE

Given the severity of recent health hazards like COVID-19, good workplace hygiene is essential to keeping yourself and your co-workers healthy. This is particularly important when you consider that workplaces are often crowded with large amounts of people working together in close quarters. In these instances, if one employee is not maintaining good hygiene, illnesses can easily spread throughout the workplace. As an employee, maintaining good hygiene can help ensure the health and safety of students, visitors and other staff. Additionally, by practicing good hygiene, you are doing your part to promote a happier, healthier and more productive workplace.



### WAYS TO ENSURE WORKPLACE HYGIENE

To ensure good workplace hygiene, consider the following:

- Maintain a clean workstation—Cleaning your workstation with district approved cleaners and sanitizers helps reduce bacterial contamination, which is especially important during cold and flu season.
- Uphold good personal hygiene—This includes frequent grooming and showering to ensure that you're ready to work alongside your coworkers.
- Keep restroom facilities clean—Be sure to wash your hands, clean up any spills or messes you may have left behind and let a supervisor know if the restroom is not up to standard.

***Above all, according to the CDC, washing your hands is one of the best ways to remove germs, reduce your risk of getting sick and prevent spreading germs to others.***

### FOR THE BEST RESULTS, FOLLOW THESE HAND-WASHING STEPS:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water.
- Lather your hands together with soap.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using paper towel or drying equipment.



If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. While this is not the top recommended option, sanitizer can significantly reduce the number of germs on your hands when soap and water are not available.