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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lancaster ISD Creates All-STAAR Inaugural Class to Acknowledge Outstanding Teacher Instruction and Student Performance on State Assessments

Lancaster, TX/Lancaster ISD – No one will deny that teaching is hard work and that those who excel in the profession should be recognized and celebrated. This is why there are local, state and national programs that annually acknowledge teachers who are deemed the top in their profession.

But, Lancaster ISD wants to take recognizing teacher excellence a step further.

During the Fall Convocation, 40 teachers were inducted as the inaugural Class of 2018 All-STAARS. These educators had outstanding student performance on the most recent State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) with a student pass rate of 80% or above.



Latonya Jones teaches 4th grade math at West Main Global Communications & Fine Arts Academy and is one of this year's All-STAARs. She said that she uses hands-on activities to get her students excited about math.

“I do my best to make sure to reach students according to their needs,” she said. “To ensure my students are successful, I look at the data. I also know my students. I can look at faces and tell when they do not understand.”

She also said that she has established trust with her students and communicates her expectations by being honest.

“Testing season is hard on everyone, but we prepare day one. The expectations are high and laid out from the very beginning,” she said. “With doing this, it takes the pressure off of everyone. They understand that it is show time with every assignment because the test alone does not define us.”

Elsie Robertson Lancaster Middle School Algebra I teacher Larry Walker is an All-STAAR with a 98% state assessment student passing rate. He also agrees that trust goes a long way in fostering student achievement.

“I attribute high performance on the standardized test to utilizing proven classroom strategies—both academic and management— but more importantly to building student relationships,” he said. “My students and I have a trust and understanding of expectations. I can truly say that the process did not take place overnight, but has been a continuing experience over the years.”



Belt Line Information Systems and Software Design Academy Math Instructional Coach Camilla Hardaway is also an All-STAAR and said that working with her students' parents greatly contributed to their success.

"I definitely kept an open line of communication with my parents," she said. "Since I am a disciplinarian, I wouldn't accept students not turning in classwork or homework. I would call parents — my greatest resource — and get their assistance with homework." She said that it was also important that she did her part regarding communication, especially when it came to grading assignments.

"I made sure to get classwork, homework and tests graded and returned in a timely manner," she said. "That way the students were able to see where they might be struggling [before it was too late.]"

As far as preparing for the state assessment, she said that she focused on promoting attendance and making her reviews fun.

"First, I made sure that my students were at school and other students would also encourage their classmates to come to school," she said. "Next, I didn't treat it any differently than any other test. I made sure that we made it fun with games and competitions. They were still learning, but it didn't feel like it."

In addition to making learning engaging and relevant, many of the All-STAARs simply put in the extra time to achieve their results.

"I tutored during every Saturday School last year, and after school Monday through Thursday," Lancaster High School History teacher Dorothy Cooper said. "I don't wait until testing season, and I don't prepare for just a test. I do not even prepare the students for graduation. I prepare them for the day after graduation."

In August, each All-STAAR received a shadow box, containing a certificate and medal. During the September School Board Meeting, they received custom polos with the All-STAAR logo and their name. The district has plans to celebrate the All-STAARs every month during the school year.

For Superintendent Elijah Granger, identifying and celebrating top teachers is an opportunity that the district can't afford to miss. So, he was passionate about developing a yearlong campaign to honor teachers with high student achievement.

"We want them to know how much we appreciate them and how valuable they are to the district," he said. "Hopefully will add more to the roster for next year's class."



The Lancaster Independent School District serves more than 7,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 11 schools. Our vision is that all students achieve self-sustaining success and leave a lasting legacy. And our mission, in collaboration with parents and communities, is to ignite learning that translates into sustainable success for all students in an ever-changing society.



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Class of 2018 All-STAARs

3rd Grade

Christina Tyous - WME (Reading- 91%)

Latrice Cooks - WME (Reading -91%)

Sherry Williams - WME (Math- 91%)

Derenda Bradford - WME (Math- 91%)

Maria Tenorio - HOU (Math- 91%)

Clara Cummings - RHE (Math-80%)

4th Grade

Latoya Jones - WME (Math – 92%)

Danielle Davis - WME (Math - 88%)

Shannon Payne - WME (Reading - 82%)

5th Grade

Amber Mitchell - WME (Math- 95%)

Camillia Hardaway - BLE (Math- 96%)

Dametria Griffen - HOU (Math- 91%)

Simia Richardson - RHE (Math- 91%)

Tiffany Hilliard - RPM (Math- 89%)

Michael Edmond - PRE (Math-85%)

Ayesha Hodges - RHE (Reading- 86%)

Shaun Carey - WME (Reading- 83%)

Kimbernique Coleman - RPM (Reading- 81%)

Kimberly Hawthorne-Campbell - WME (Reading - 80%)

Sondra Waller - BLE (Science- 80%)

6th Grade

Danielle Martin - GWC (Reading 82%)

Bessie Smith - GWC (Math- 92%)

8th Grade

Danielle Akhidue - LMS (Reading -88%)

Latosha Dawn - LMS (Reading- 81%)

Henry Cobbs - LMS (Algebra I-100%)

Larry Walker - LMS (Algebra I- 98%)

Kourtne Graves - LMS (Math- 95%)

Rhonda Lowery - LMS (Math- 90%)

Brandon Sinney - LMS (Math- 86%)

LaTanya Spragin - LMS (Science- 87%)

Robert Miller - LMS (Science- 80%)

High School

Laura Jacobs - LHS (Algebra I- 85%)
Carl Looney - LHS (Algebra I- 82%)
Briana Peterson - LHS (Biology- 84%)
Leland Morrow - LHS (US History- 99%)
Dorothy Cooper - LHS (US History-96%)
Patrick Kinney - LHS (US History- 86%)

Early College

Ashley Tippett - ECHS (English I- 98%)
Jonathan Mullins - ECHS (Algebra I- 100%)
Sarah Martindale - ECHS (Biology- 100%)