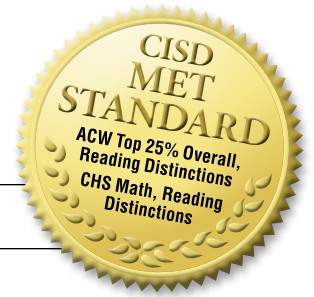


CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

COMMERCE ISD E-LETTER • FEBRUARY 17, 2014



Sliding into the Spring semester

After a relatively quiet return from the holidays, students and staff find themselves headed into a busy spring with sports, UIL competition, field trips and testing.

After Texas Public Schools Week open houses and spring break, it's a race to finish the 2013-2014 school year.

Bad weather conditions caused the district to close February 6; therefore, schools will be open on April 18 to make up for the lost day.

Middle school students are raising funds for their trip to Washington D.C. and New York City while juniors are preparing to host seniors at the annual prom at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

The ACW PTO has kicked off its fundraiser for playground equipment. See www.mixedbagdesigns.com for products for sale. The group's goal is to raise \$80,000 to \$100,000 within two years. Other fundraisers are being planned.

Commerce Elementary School held its annual 100th day of school celebration. Students and staff created posters and wore clothing decorated with 100 items, such as buttons, pom poms or stickers.

It's always a fun day on the 100th day as CES students celebrate by counting to 100 many different ways. Whether it is stacking cups or placing numbers on a number line, CES students have fun while they learn.

Zero the Hero visited each classroom encouraging students to keep on counting.



McKinney ISD team picks CES, ACW for learning opportunity

Commerce elementary schools hosted guests from McKinney ISD who came to see how schools with a large economically disadvantaged population can make huge gains in academic performance.

Members of the McKinney ISD Leadership Academy, Newly Guajarao, David Weintraub and Kristina Odom toured Commerce Elementary School with Principal Jeanne Lay and A. C. Williams Elementary School with Principal Deanna Hays. The teachers were chosen from dozens of teachers applying in their district to participate in the yearlong program devoted to growing MISD administrators.

Some might think that schools are much the same throughout the state, but these teachers were impressed by the programs and schedules that have resulted in ACW, and subsequently CES, receiving distinctions from the Texas Education Agency in last year's STAAR testing. Because no grades at CES take the STAAR tests, the school is paired with ACW for performance reporting.

From the morning assembly at CES where all students gather to pledge allegiance to the flags to all students eating free breakfast in their classrooms, the team saw how routines flowed smoothly to get the day off to a good start. Lay explained the Response to Intervention (RtI) process that identifies struggling students and how teachers work with them to increase their success. Top students are challenged with higher level thinking activities during RtI, she explained.

Principal Hays said technology at her campus was a highlight for the team. They visited a



Members of the McKinney ISD Leadership Academy visited Commerce Elementary School and A. C. Williams Elementary School to see how academic gains were made in the latest STAAR testing. Left to right, Kristina Odom, David Weintraub, CES Principal Jeanne Lay and Newly Guajarao shared their love for educating children at a recent visit to CISD.

flipped classroom where lessons are introduced as homework and students return to class to discuss and work through problems they didn't understand. Communication with parents, including the 99.3 FM radio announcements each day, as well as the partnership with Texas A&M University-Commerce, were seen as ways to increase community and parental involvement.

The future leaders saw how ACW uses art throughout the school and agreed that art enhanced learning for the students.

The principals explained how staff development activities are aligned on both campuses so a seamless approach to learning is carried throughout pre-kindergarten to fifth grades.

The team members will prepare a final report of what they learned through the campus visits which will be presented to their entire leadership team in March.

Spring Event Schedule

Texas Public Schools Week	March 3-7
Open Houses	
CHS	March 3 · 5:00 – 6:00
CMS	March 3 · 5:30 – 6:30
CES	March 4 · 6:00 – 7:00
First-grade musical:	6:00
ACW	March 4 · 6:30 – 7:30
Musical:	7:00
Ag Co-op Auction	April 5 · 6:00
CSEEF Boots & BBQ	April 12 · 6:00

Bad weather make up	April 18
Senior/Parent Banquet	May 12 · 7:00
4th-Grade Play	May 15
Boys & Girls Club Golf	
Tournament at Webb Hills	May 16
CHS Prom	May 17 · 8:00
CHS Honors Night	May 19 · 6:30
Last day of school	June 5
Graduation	June 6 · 8:00
Texas A&M-Commerce Fieldhouse	

Save the date...
April 12



The annual Boots & BBQ Celebration and Fundraiser will be held at 6 p.m., Saturday, April 12 at CHS. Sponsored by the Commerce Schools Educational Enrichment Foundation, the event raised over \$15,000 for CISD schools last year. The Foundation has given CISD over \$300,000 to fund teacher-proposed projects and field trips. Tickets for Boots & BBQ will be available in the Central Office after spring break.



Senior's steer brings \$8600 at Fort Worth sale

CHS senior Garrett Jackson placed second in the lightweight polled Hereford division at the Fort Worth Stock Show, placing fifth overall. His steer brought \$8,600 or \$7.50 per pound in the auction which included the top ten of each class.

Math achievements happen every day

Fifth graders were awarded prizes for reciting their multiplication facts. Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Britton's students received a bracelet, had their picture placed in the fifth-grade hallway and receive a gift card for a free meal at Sonic.



Mrs. Nelle's eighth-grade Algebra students learned how to "walk the line" using calculator based rangers (CBRs) which connect with TI-84 graphing calculators and basically act like a radar detector. According to Nelle, it graphs the movement of the student to and from a object. She says it is great to include technology in a real-life application where students can see what slope really means. The CBRs were on loan from A&M-Commerce.



Welders win in Fort Worth

Commerce High School Juniors Cody Benson (left) and Payton Swinson competed in the Fort Worth Stock Show Ag Mechanics Show in mid-January where they received a blue ribbon designating that they were in the 90–100 point range on judging critique. They were also awarded first place in their class, receiving a small wire welder, boxes of abrasives and \$300 worth of steel.



Military officer surprises granddaughter at CMS

Seventh-grader Kailee Robb was attending classes on a normal Friday morning when she got the surprise of her life. Her grandfather, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Jeffrey Spino, entered the CMS gym armed with a dozen roses for Kailee. Sergeant Spino has been deployed for the last eight months in Afghanistan. He said his experience there has been rewarding. He especially liked working with the military from 27 different nations, especially troops from Australia and Canada.



Deborah and Jeffrey Spino surprised their granddaughter at school.

ACW attends Dallas Symphony performance

ACW students traveled to Greenville to see a performance by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. They heard the premiere performance of “The probably untrue story of Mary (who) Had a Little Lamb,” by Micah Levy. Narration was provided by the composer himself. Music teacher Eilene Weimar said the composer took a traditional nursery rhyme and created musical images through variations on a theme.



Three seniors sign letters on National Signing Day

Three CHS seniors signed letters of intent. Front row left to right, Sam Wells signed to play football at the University of North Texas. Taite McBee will play softball at Northeast Texas Community College and Demetric Jennings will play football at Quachita Baptist University. Standing are CHS staff including Jerry Sturch, counselor; Scott Wells, athletic director; David Welch, principal; Rose Gardner, assistant principal; Anna Knutson, counselor; and Jeff Davidson, coach.



Tigers headed to playoffs

Coach Kirby Jackson's boys basketball team is headed for the playoffs Tuesday, February 18. With an overall record of 16–10 and a district record of 9–5, the Tigers will be playing Dallas Life School Oak Cliff at Terrell High School. Time will be posted online.

Principals for a day



Sixth-graders Jayla Demidio, Breann Mulcahy and Dominique Garcia traded their points earned in Mrs. Reid's math class for the opportunity to be "Principal of the Day" at Commerce Middle School. Principal Patrick Just allowed the girls to accompany him in his daily routines of planning activities and lunch and hall duties.

Kindergarten class seeing stars

After kindergarten students visited the Texas A&M University-Commerce Planetarium, they used their iPads to explore constellations with the GoSkywatch app. Teacher Stephanie Pullen says after they finished exploring, students were able to make their own constellations. "We are having so much fun learning about space," Pullen said.



Sound system lessens distractions

Second graders in Misti Gardner's class can hear clearly even when she is writing on the board or moving about the room. It's possible with the use of the REDCAT system, which amplifies her voice allowing students to hear her when she speaks in a normal conversational tone anywhere in the room. The system was provided by a grant from the Commerce Schools Educational Enrichment Foundation. It is expected that achievement will increase as discipline problems go down. A similar system will be used in a kindergarten classroom.



Second-grade teacher Misti Gardner wears a microphone around her neck to increase students' capability to hear.

Business law class visits Rockwall Courthouse

The CHS Business Law class, along with their teacher Earvin S. Larry, visited the Rockwall County Courthouse in late January. The trip was designed to broaden students' perspectives on career opportunities in law enforcement and enhance their understanding of the court system. The Justice of the Peace for Precinct 2 Judge Nancy Beaty and her staff conducted a tour of all four floors and the Veterans memorial of the new \$37 million courthouse facility. Students were given presentations by courthouse staff members on courtroom procedures, and records and documentation processing. Finally, students participated in a question and answer session with Judge Beaty; Jennifer Smith, Assistant District Attorney; and Mark Russo, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 9.



CHS seniors take the next step

Acceptance letters are landing in the hands of CHS seniors and they seem to be going near and far to begin their college experience. Many seniors still have decisions to make, but others anxiously awaited the one letter from the university or college they have dreamed of attending.

Logan Talley and Shelbie Patterson have been accepted into the Honors College at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Kayleigh LeBlanc will play softball at A&M-Commerce.

Laney Davidson (right) will be going to the University of Texas. Mac Robinson has been accepted at North Carolina State University.

Robert (Trey) Pitre and C.J. Walter received letters of acceptance from Tyler Junior College.

Athletes signing letters of intent (see page 4) are Sam Wells, the University of North Texas; Taite McBee, Northeast Texas Community College; and Demetric Jennings, Quachita Baptist University.

More decisions will be made throughout the spring.



Laney Davidson plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin.