

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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Tiger band members advance to All State Band

Six CHS band students secured their spot in the ATSSB/TMEA All State Band and will perform at the convention February 10-13 in San Antonio. Students include Rachel Montgomery, Kristina Moyer, Jordan Bolin, William Bowes, Gabriel Castaneda and John Naizer.

Previously, 26 students made the All Region Band, with six first chairs. Fifteen students advanced to the ATSSB Area tryouts and one student advanced to the TMEA Area tryouts.

CHS Band Director Monte Ashcraft says that students attending Area practiced at the high school during the Christmas break and their commitment and dedication was recognized at the tryouts.



Exemplary Expectations

Spring semester gets an icy start

Students and staff are ready to dive into the spring semester filled with new activities and challenges. Teachers started back with a half day of staff development which focused on meeting the needs of students from all backgrounds, environments and cultures.

Administrators used four different methods to notify parents and staff about school closure on January 10. Heavy snow and hazardous driving conditions warranted Superintendent Blake Cooper's call for school closing early Sunday evening. Calls went out to parents and staff through the School Messenger system. Notice was also provided to area television and radio stations, through Facebook and also on the district Web site.

The first of a series of parent workshops was held January 11. Led by a Region 10 ESC consultant, a small group of parents learned strategies to help take the hassle out of homework. Upcoming workshops feature tips for communicating with children, helping with study skills and explaining Title I resources available for improved academic performance.



Jasmin Guzman, a consultant with Region 10 ESC, led a staff workshop on how to involve today's parents in their child's education.



In a parent involvement workshop, ACW teachers ranked influences on today's students compared to influences in students lives in the 1960s.

The soccer team's first game January 11 was cancelled due to snow. Coach Kyle Abshire says about 30 students are participating this year, with a strong group of returning starters and lettermen. He expects the team to improve and compete for a playoff spot in district.

Bad weather make-up day May 6. School in session

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CMS teams have begun practicing for the January 26 UIL academic meet in Celina. Here, students practice for the ArtSmart competition, where they must identify 40 paintings by artist, title and style. Students sometimes act out the painting and other students guess the title of the art work they are depicting.



The CHS gym floor is being replaced after a water leak caused it to buckle making it unsafe for play. Basketball games are being played at the middle school gym until the floor is completed January 21.

CES interim principal home again

One look at Jeanne Lay as she sits behind the principal's desk at Commerce Elementary School and one can tell she feels at home. Not only is Lay returning to a principal's desk, but she has also returned to her hometown.

Lay, now interim principal at CES, was reared in Commerce and attended East Texas State University for her bachelor and master's degrees. She landed her first teaching job at Como-Pickton ISD where she remained for 22 years, teaching second grade for 15 years, gifted and talented and English as Second Language classes for four years and then becoming high school principal for three years. She came back to Commerce during the 2009-2010 school year to become the secondary curriculum facilitator.

"It was not a tough decision to return to Commerce 18 months ago because of my roots here and my love for education. My family (the Lytles and the Pirkeys) being here, plus the opportunity to work with Julia Robinson in the CISD curriculum department, sealed the deal," Lay said.

Lay also likes the idea of following in former CES principal Bobbie Thurman's footsteps. Thurman retired from the position she held for 19 years last December.

"So many great things are going on here. It is wonderful to have this opportunity. It was an easy choice," Lay added.

Lay says her goal is to ensure that each teacher has what they need to reach every student.

"I want to make sure students' needs are met—to see and nurture the whole child and make this school a positive experience which will set the foundation for what they can expect later in school," Lay continued.

"I couldn't hand pick a better staff to fulfill the goals we have set. From the custodians, food service workers, support staff and teachers, I have the absolute best available," Lay said.

She credits her assistant principal, Diane Stegall, for getting her off to a fast start. Having known Stegall for many years, Lay said the two were ready to get to work, building on the trust that began years ago when they played volleyball together in school.

Lay's family has been educating students in Commerce for many years. Her father, Jerry, was a principal in the district while Jeanne was a student. Deanna Hays, Jeanne's sister, currently is an assistant principal at Commerce High School.

Jeanne is married to Chuck Lay, also a Commerce native, and they have a daughter who is a college student. Chuck has been a veterinarian in Sulphur Springs for 30 years.



CES Interim Principal Jeanne Lay welcomed students back to school January 4.