

# CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

COMMERCE ISD E-LETTER • NOVEMBER 2014

## Strong partnership with A&M-Commerce enhances learning

It's been a two-way street for Commerce ISD and Texas A&M University-Commerce for many years. Our students gain from their exposure to the world-class learning opportunities offered by the university personnel and facilities and the university's pre-service teaching candidates practice their skills with our students.



Second-graders visited the A&M-Commerce Planetarium where they saw "Kaluoka'hina: The Enchanted Reef." The trip was arranged by Dr. LaVelle Hendricks, CISD board member and associate professor at TAMU-C. Above, a special telescope helps a student look at the sun.



The Beta Beta Beta National Biological Honor Society members conducted experiments during the CES students' university visit. Dr. Venugopalan Cheryath is the Tri-Beta sponsor.



A.C. Williams Elementary students participated in hopscotch, relay races, holding up their answers on small whiteboards and much more while learning about math and science. For the fifth straight year, the campus partnered with Texas A&M University-Commerce's LeoTeach program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

The Leoteach students, who are all future math and science teachers, paired up in teaching teams that were mentored by ACW teachers Sondra Feduccia, Kortni Toon, Julie McLeroy, Kourtney Clayton, Carol Adams and Keiondra Simpson.



What does it mean to be a connected educator? This topic was recently discussed by Commerce ISD teachers and

staff using Twitter, an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called “tweets.”

Several CISD teachers have gathered online every Tuesday night to Twitter chat between 8 and 9 p.m. since school started. Led by Heather Kilgore, CISD instructional technology specialist, and Cari Sturch, coordinator of elementary education, the teachers use Twitter as their forum for sharing and learning new classroom ideas, teaching strategies and apps.

The use of twitter chats embodies what it means to be a connected educator, according to Kilgore. Creating blogs, reading other teachers blogs and networking outside of their sphere

are also ways teachers connect by using technology.

Middle school math teacher Patricia Nelle says, “Twitter allows me to learn from other teachers instantly! I can see all of the great ideas that my colleagues have and add it to my own repertoire, without having to wait for a staff development day. Plus, not only am I learning from people within my own district, but all over the world.”

Teachers from other districts also tune in to the weekly chats. Even Dave Burgess, author of “Teach Like a Pirate,” joined in the chat when the group was discussing his book.

CHS Spanish teacher Fany Loftin says, “I like [Twitter] because it is a fast way to send information to everybody. Also, I can find out what is happening at the school instantly. I find out about students, teachers, the campus and the district. The ability to stay informed about Commerce and share information is essential to understand the needs of the school and how to help better when needed,” she concluded.

Not only do teachers use Twitter

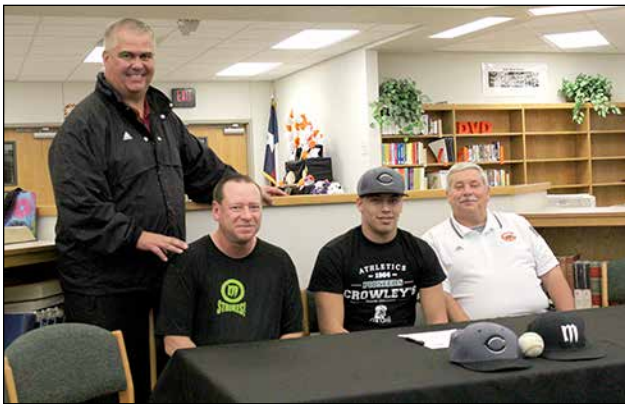
to share ideas and collaborate with other teachers, but they also use it to share photos of students and show how they are learning.

“Parents love to see what’s happening in their child’s classroom first hand,” kindergarten teacher Ashley Sepulveda said. “I can actually show them activities that we did everyday very easily by tweeting,” she added.

Topics on Twitter are organized by using a hashtag, or the pound symbol. CISD staff is encouraged to use the #cisdtigers hashtag on all school-related tweets. Teachers access the weekly Tiger chats by using #cisdtigerchat.

Several teachers said that there was no way they could keep up with technology on their own. Chats help them learn new technology and applications. Connected teachers collaborate with other innovative educators and then provide unique learning experiences for students. Every day can be a new learning experience for teachers and their students when they are connected to what others are doing, says Kilgore.

### Tigers headed for college athletics



Jeffrey Hilsdon signed a letter of intent to play baseball with Crowley’s Ridge College in Arkansas. Shown with Jeffrey are Coach Cleveland, Jeffrey’s father and Coach Kirk Bird.



D’Lance Sharp signed a letter of intent to run track with Stephen F. Austin State University. D’Lance is shown with his family and Coach Jeff Cleveland.



## City sponsors poster contest

The City of Commerce sponsored a fire prevention poster contest for all CISD students in October. The winners will be recognized at the CISD Board meeting and the City Council meeting. They will also be guests on the fire truck during the Christmas Parade December 6.



▲ CES Caleb Winston



▲ ACW Mia Cardona



◀ CHS Telsi Sorim



▼ CMS Libby Blount

## WINTER ARTS FESTIVAL

Thursday, December 11  
6.00 p.m.  
Commerce High School

Vendors are invited to sell commercial products and handmade items with no booth fees. Make reservations by calling 903 886-3755



## Honoring our veterans

The Commerce Middle School Student Council attended the Veterans' Vigil at Texas A&M University-Commerce where they participated in the processional and interviewed veterans about their experiences.

*The Student Council students are shown below with their sponsor Rebekah Jacobson and CISD Board President and veteran Ted Oats (center).*



## Looking around...



*CES PE teacher John Walker paid off his challenge when students raised over \$2800 for Jump Rope for Heart. First, he endured silly string and then a pie in the face.*

*AP English IV students enjoyed their trip to the Dallas Museum of Arts.*



*Pre-K students learn the tasty way...with "C" cookies.*

