

Seasons Greetings

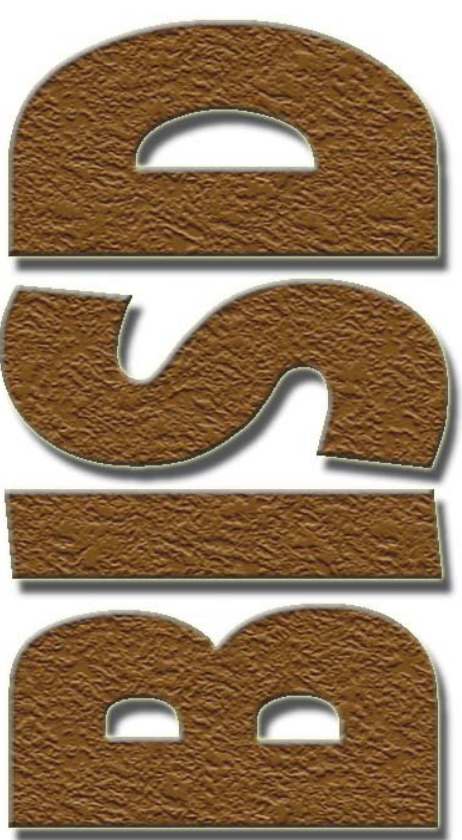


The Board of Trustees and administration wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

BISD campuses and offices will be closed
December 24, 2007 - January 4, 2008.

Employees will return on **Monday, January 7, 2008,** for a Campus Staff Development Waiver Day.

Students will return to classes on **Wednesday, January 9, 2008.**



Brownsville Independent School District

www.bisd.us

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BISD does not discriminate on basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services, programs or activities.

New Brownsville ISD High School #6



Front exterior elevation of the new high school including the front entrance, library and administrative offices.

In a matter of months, Brownsville ISD is scheduled to begin the simultaneous construction of five new campuses destined to change the landscape of our entire community. Architects are putting the final touches on designs for one new high school, one new middle school, and three new elementary schools.

All but one of the new elementary schools will be funded by the \$135 Million School Bond approved by Brownsville voters in 2006 by a 2 to 1 margin. Passage of this bond allows the school district to use Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) funds from the Texas Legislature to significantly reduce the local taxpayers' share of construction costs for four of the new schools.

Construction companies are slated to break ground on the five campuses in Spring 2008. With no significant delays, BISD students can expect to attend classes in August 2009 at the three new elementary schools and in August 2010 at the middle school and high school.

Bond funded classroom wing additions at six elementary schools are also scheduled to be completed by Spring 2009.

Board Trustees have also approved additional local funds for another elementary school to be constructed on a site that is not yet determined.

New BISD Construction Projects

- 1. High School #6**
Bond Funds To be built on an 80 acre site located on Military Highway across from the River Bend Resort
- 2. Middle School #12**
Elementary #143
Bond Funds To be built on a 43.3 acre site located off of Alton Gloor Blvd. close to Ortiz Elementary
- 3. Elementary #142**
Bond Funds To be built on a 16.7 acre site located off of Alton Gloor Blvd. in the Heritage Trail Subdivision
- 4. Elementary #141**
Fund Balance To be built on a 15.56 acre site located on Salida de Luna Road close to Garcia Middle School
- 5. Classroom Wings**
Canales, Egly, Hudson, Perez, Palm Grove, and Villa Nueva Elementary Schools
- 6. Other Bond Projects**
HVAC Upgrades, Re-Roofing Projects, Fire Alarm Installations, Intercom Upgrades, ADA Renovations, and TDI Windstorm Screen/ Shutter Installations

With a population rapidly approaching 50,000 students, these new schools and classroom additions will provide some welcome relief to several overcrowded BISD campuses.

Superintendent's Message...

Dear BISD Friends:

A long list of activities on the school district calendar reminds us that we are close to the holidays and the mid-winter break. December is a month of full throttle operation at BISD with band and choir events, parent conferences, assorted academic and athletic contests, and meetings of all shapes and sizes.

As you can see from our front page story, the district is about to embark on another ambitious building program. I wish that we could say that we are building for the future. The truth is that we are building for our present circumstances. While student population continues to grow, we are behind in dealing with the size

of our schools. The immediate goal is to get many of our campuses down to a more manageable size in terms of enrollment.

The ideal size for an elementary school is 500-600 students. Middle schools should be no larger than 700-850. The optimum size of a high school is no more than 1,800 students. Academic research has shown that a common thread to academic success is smaller schools. We owe it to our students to meet these population targets.

I am energized by the people I meet at our various coffees and committee meetings. There are so many good things going on in BISD. It is a pleasure for me to serve as Superintendent at this crucial time in our district's history.



Heads or Tails: Superintendent Hector Gonzales handles the coin toss at a recent game held at Sams Stadium to inaugurate the new synthetic turf installed at the beginning of the 2007 football season.

I hope to visit with you at one of our upcoming events. My focus is on working with the administrators, teachers, staff and students to make 2008 a great year in Brownsville. Best wishes to you

and your families this holiday season.


Hector Gonzales

BLA Expands Services

The Brownsville Learning Academy (BLA), opened in 2005 as an academic options school, has recently expanded its services to include students in grades 7-12. There are currently 245 students served by the Academy at two locations, Canales Elementary and the Webb campus. Jill Williams is the administrator.

The Academy's self-paced curriculum allows students to complete courses more rapidly than traditional secondary schools. This is beneficial to overaged middle school students who are anxious to complete the coursework necessary to enter high school.

High school students who have fallen behind are also able

to complete the credits necessary to graduate.

High school students who want to graduate in three years can also attend the BLA in order to get a head start on college.

Whatever the need or challenge, the Brownsville Learning Academy provides a trained staff, smaller setting and flexible scheduling to help secondary students reach their academic goals and graduate from high school.

For more information about the Brownsville Learning Academy, call (956) 982-2860.



Did You Know?

CONCERN FOR OTHERS

BISD employees topped last year's campaign total by donating \$317,277.46 to the United Way of Southern Cameron County.

Top 2007 Campaign Contributors: Elementary Schools

Gonzalez Elementary	\$11,360
Russell Elementary	\$8,274
Vermillion Elementary	\$8,082

Middle Schools

Stillman Middle School	\$8,818
Lucio Middle School	\$7,065
Vela Middle School	\$6,261

High Schools

Pace High School	\$16,675
Rivera High School	\$12,643
Porter High School	\$11,297

This is over \$12,000 more than last year's employee contributions.

DUAL ENROLLMENT NUMBERS GROW

BISD students can earn college credits while still in high school thanks to an agreement with the University of Texas-Brownsville. Approximately 4,000 district high school students are currently attending dual enrollment classes and the numbers are increasing each semester. Students must qualify for college credit courses and meet the university's criteria to enroll.

For more information, call Dr. Minerva Villarreal, Advanced Academic Services, at 548-8291 or 698-0861.



View your Children's Grades Online

Parents are invited to utilize the district's GradeSpeed Program to access their children's grades online. Grades for students, elementary and secondary, are now available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via computer by logging on www.bisd.us. Simply contact the campus to set up a GradeSpeed account or to obtain more information.

Grand Opening of BISD Museum and Murphy Center

Honoring Our District's History

A crowd of approximately 200 people gathered on Saturday, November 10, 2007, at the Central Administrative Building (CAB) Auditorium to celebrate the opening of the BISD Museum and James R. Murphy Center.

Both facilities honor the district's rich 93-year history and its ties to the community. Three years in the making, the BISD Museum, located across from the CAB Auditorium, preserves memories of district schools and their namesakes as well as significant student achievements in athletics, band, choir, and special education. It also features a special exhibit on Raul A. Besteiro, BISD's longtime Superintendent of Schools.



The new BISD Museum and James R. Murphy Center are located in the Central Administrative Building Complex on Palm Boulevard.

The Murphy Center which is located in the former band hall at the CAB was renovated by the district's Maintenance Department into offices for the Fine Arts Department. It is named for James R. Murphy who lived and worked in Brownsville in the post World War II era. For 12 years, his talent was to teach local students with limited musical backgrounds to produce great music. Murphy, an Indiana native, directed the famed Brownsville High School Golden Eagle Band from 1946-1957. The fame came from a remarkable run of successes that included wins in eleven Sweepstakes, two appearances at the Midwest National Band Clinic in Chicago, and a three time sweep of awards at the Tri-State Music Festival in Oklahoma. Murphy's passion for students and music laid the groundwork for today's award-winning secondary BISD music program.

James R. Murphy passed away in 1983 in San Antonio. Three of his four children, were able to attend the grand opening ceremony. Several Brownsville High School alumni who were former members of Murphy's bands were also present to honor their director's memory.



Rolando Aguilar, BISD Board Member, and Bob Vezzetti, retired BISD Administrator, are pictured with three of James R. Murphy's children, Kathy, Pat and John Murphy.



Dr. and Mrs. J.B. Coulter, Brownsville High School alumni, were some of the first visitors to the new BISD Museum.

Ten Schools Named to State Honor Roll



Ten BISD schools earned spots on the prestigious Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) Honor Roll in 2007. TBEC identifies Honor Roll schools by analyzing three years of performance data for all Texas public schools. Representatives of Stell Middle School are pictured at a recent Board Meeting. Egly, Gallegos, Longoria, Paredes, Putegnat, Resaca, Sharp and Yturria Elementary Schools and Vela Middle School were also named TBEC Honor Roll Schools.

**Brownsville ISD
is online
all the time!
Check your child's
grades or
learn about the
latest campus
and district
activities at
www.bisd.us**



A Red Ribbon Parade held by Morningside Elementary served as a reminder to live drug free.



Lucio Middle School's Career Day provided students with presenters and information on careers for tomorrow.



Canales Elementary students generously contributed to the district's Thanksgiving Food Drive. BISD students, parents and employees donated 26 truckloads of food to assist their local neighbors in need.



Castañeda Elementary pilgrims and Indians gathered together in the spirit of Thanksgiving.

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Hector Gonzales, Superintendent of Schools



BROWNSVILLE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

1900 Price Road • Brownsville, Texas 78521

CALENDAR of Events

December

20 End of 3rd Six Weeks
 End of 1st Semester
 21 Christmas Holidays-Students
 (December 21-January 8)
 24 Christmas Holidays-Employees
 (December 24-January 4)

January

7-8 Staff Development Waiver Days
 12 New Teacher Inservice
 18 GED Graduation
 19 New Teacher Inservice
 Middle School Science Fair
 20-26 Healthy Weight Week
 22 An Evening of Theatre
 26 History Day

The *BISD Newsletter* is published several times each year to inform parents, students, and employees about the activities of the Brownsville Independent School District. To make comments or contributions, contact the:

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