

Thoughts of a Superintendent . . .

From the Desk of Vicki Adams



WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?

I was having difficulty thinking up a topic for this month’s newsletter. I had already started three or four different articles in the last couple weeks and was not satisfied with any of them. (It is not often that I am at a loss for words.) I discussed my dilemma with Judy, my right-hand person and she suggested something in regards to Thanksgiving, which is right around the corner. Now why didn’t I think of that?? I guess I have been dwelling on too many negatives with the cuts in funding, the painful transformation of a new State accountability system, the even more painful transition for teachers and administrators to a new curriculum program plus a new grade book program, the ever growing needs of our students and so on. But here in Palacios, there are many things for which I am truly thankful for and would like to share just a few of them with you this month.

The other evening on the spur of the moment, my husband packed up the dog and me and took us to watch the sun set over the water. There are a limited number of places in Texas where you can watch the porpoises swim, hear the palm tree fronds rustle while watching the sun set. Best of all, it took less than five minutes to reach this destination. I remarked then how lucky we were to live in Palacios. Unfortunately the busier I get, the more I tend to forget how truly wonderful it is here and I do not take the time to enjoy all the beauty around me. Not only am I thankful for our environment but for the person who assisted in helping me pause to take pleasure in our surroundings.

I am also truly grateful that I am employed in an outstanding school system. We have our challenges as all school districts currently do right now. Trying to work towards an accountability system where the standards have not yet been set is taking a toll on all of us. What puts us above most districts is that we have a supportive school board who values our staff and who feel empathy for the teachers and the changes they are undertaking. I cannot say enough good about our staff. Even with the numerous struggles, they are positive with the students and are still working diligently to ensure our children learn all they can to be successful – both in school and upon graduation. We have staff members who have earned state and local honors for being the best and bringing out the best in others.

Our students and parents are the best! Occasionally I will hear teachers comment, “Whew, this is a tough group of students!” It used upset me that they were talking negatively about students, but from a different perspective I am delighted they feel this way. Our ‘bad’ or struggling students here are so much better than in most school districts. Our teachers and parents have high expectations for our kids and the result is a district full of good, hard-working children who excel in a variety of areas. In years past, I have seen my husband while he was an assistant principal come home with blood on his shirt from breaking up a fight, or he had his office torn up by a student who was out of control (probably from something she had ingested). My husband and I have been in districts where the children who were disrespectful and rude were in the majority rather than just a select few as in Palacios. Our teachers and administrators work with our parents to expect and receive the very best out of our kiddos. In turn our parents are supportive of the teachers and administrators and try to assist them in a number of ways.

As you know, I could write pages about all the great things in this school district and community. All year long and especially during this season of thankfulness, I urge you to take time out of your busy and hectic schedules to think about what you are grateful for. I know I am a poor role model for putting life on pause to truly enjoy my family – both my personal and professional family, as well as taking time to be grateful for my many blessings. I allow situations and ‘stuff’ to distract me from what is really important. When I do finally “stop to smell the roses”, my work, family and friends are so much more meaningful and rewarding to me. The days I begin with counting my blessings, I seem to be more productive and positive. (So, why do I not do that each and every day?) Have a truly blessed Thanksgiving!! Take the time to ask yourself,

“What am I grateful for?”



DISTRICT PREPARES FOR NEW STATE TESTING

In the Spring of 2012, students will take end-of-course exams and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exams which are being phased in to measure academic achievement. At this time, educators are unaware of what the new passing standards will be as they have not been set by TEA.

For 2012 the STAAR/End-of-Course/TAKS exams will be administered to the following grade levels: STAAR testing will be administered to grades 3-8; students in the 9th grade and some 8th graders in advanced courses will be administered end-of-course exams; and students in grades 10-12 will be administered the TAKS Exit exams as they apply for graduation.



If you have any questions or concerns with regards to the new testing system, please contact your student’s campus. For further information you may go online to <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>

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**E**ast Side is “Going Green”. As part of a new recycling program, East Side Intermediate is going green by recycling batteries, cell phones and printing cartridges. Items are turned into the Funding Factory and in return East Side will have the opportunity to choose from a reward catalog or receive a cash reward. If you have any of these items, please bring them by the East Side campus: old print cartridges; cell phones; batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, and 9 volt).



**T**he Mobile Dentist came to Palacios ISD and visited both the Central Elementary and East Side Intermediate campuses in September and October. The dentistry team



consisted of a dentist and a dental hygienist who provided care for over a 100 students. Services provided to the students consisted of dental examinations, cleanings, fluoride treatments, x-rays, and sealants as

needed. Referrals to dentists were made if signs of tooth decay or dental disease were seen. Services were provided to all students whose parent/guardian completed and returned the necessary forms.



### Holiday Safety Reminders

**D**uring the holidays families either travel to see one another or they may choose to celebrate at home. No matter what families decide to do for the holidays, it is always important to be safe and to be aware of possible dangers. Here are a few safety tips for the holidays:

1. Be prepared for weather changes if driving.
2. Ensure car is safe and ready for a road trip.
3. Check weather at destination and ensure proper clothes are packed.
4. If at home, ensure fire alarms and fire extinguishers are operating and safe.
5. Never leave grease burning on the stove.
6. Ensure flashlights have fresh batteries.

### Health Safety Tips

**T**o protect yourself and your family, practice and encourage good hand-washing techniques. Encourage family members who are coughing or sneezing to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue or use their upper sleeve if a tissue is unavailable. If possible try to limit your family’s exposure to sick individuals. If someone does become sick, try to keep them away from everyone else to help prevent spreading the illness to others. If you and your family have not received your flu shots this winter, try to get them as soon as possible. For more information on holiday health and safety tips, visit [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org) and [www.webmd.com/](http://www.webmd.com/).

### American Education Week

**A**merican Education Week (AEW) celebrates its 90th anniversary. It was created 90 years ago after WWI due to 25% of draftees in WWI who were illiterate and 9% were found physically unfit. Representatives of the National Education Agency (NEA) and the American Legion met to seek ways to generate public support for education and in 1921, the NEA designated the 3rd week in November as American Education Week. Each year, the President of the United States signs a Presidential Proclamation declaring which week will be designated to observe AEW. For 2011, November 14th – 18th has been proclaimed as American Education Week.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER:

- Nov 1 Junior High picture retakes
- Nov 4 High School Choir Region Concert at Rosenberg
- Nov 5 ATSSB JH Region Band Audition  
Miss Palacios Pageant at the Fine Arts Building
- Nov 7 East Side PTO Meeting
- Nov 8 Junior High Reading Night
- Nov 9 DEIC Meeting  
East Side picture retakes
- Nov 10 FFA District 3 Leadership Contest at WCJC
- Nov 11 High School Veteran’s Day Assembly at FAB  
East Side Veteran’s Day Assembly in the Gym
- Nov 12 Cross-Country State Meet at Round Rock
- Nov 14 School Board Meeting
- Nov 15 SHAC Meeting
- Nov 17 Central picture retakes  
Fall Play Community Performance at FAB  
Junior High STUCO Movie Night
- Nov 9 FFA Area 3 Leadership Contest at Blinn
- Nov 21 FFA Meeting  
East Side Parent Academy “Creating a Home for Learning” in room 13
- Nov 22 **EARLY RELEASE**
- Nov 23 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 24 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 25 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 28 Jr. FFA Meeting at East Side
- Nov 30 College Day in Cafeteria

## New Changes with CSCOPE

Beginning last year on a voluntary basis, Palacios ISD is now in its first year of full implementation of its new curriculum management system, CSCOPE. CSCOPE which was developed by Texas Education Service Centers and a team of content experts is a comprehensive, customized, curriculum management system built on the most current research-based practices in the field. Its primary focus is to impact instructional practices in the classroom to improve student performance. CSCOPE has been the source of both optimism and concerns for educators. It involves the core content areas of English/language arts, math, science and social studies. At the heart of the CSCOPE process is a guaranteed & viable curriculum. Content area experts ensure quality through a process of continual review. The key components of the CSCOPE curriculum are:

- ◆ A K-12 systemic model in the four core content areas;
- ◆ Common language, structure, and process for curriculum delivery;
- ◆ Aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- ◆ Clarified and specified Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) expectations assembled in a vertical alignment format; and
- ◆ Customizable instructional plans that allow district resources to be integrated into the system.

The primary reasons Palacios ISD is implementing CSCOPE are to align the curriculum in our core subject areas from kindergarten to 12th grade, exposing students to all of the TEKS in a systematic manner, and to provide the best possible education for post secondary readiness for higher education or for the work force. The end result will also see students being better prepared for STAAR and End-of-Course exams.

## Sharks Can Fly!!!

You may be still waiting on pigs to fly, but wait no longer to see flying sharks. Palacios ISD received an Air Swimmer shark and a Nemo fish from Pastor June White. The shark and fish swim through the air with incredibly smooth and life-like motion. They are remote controlled and will be used on the different campuses by administrators and teachers. PISD would like to thank Pastor June White for her generous donations.



## Everyone has a Part!!!

Palacios Junior High students and staff participated in an interdisciplinary unit where teachers of many subjects including choir and band had a part in creating lessons and teaching information on the same topic. The topic for the interdisciplinary unit was *Dark Water Rising* by Marion Hale, which was chosen by Shawna Richter, JHS English teacher. The book is about the hurricane of 1900 and the people of Galveston, TX and what they had to endure as well as how they survived. Each teacher chose a response as it applied to the book. Maggie Hearn's art students painted amazing pictures of sea life by using watercolors. Using bar graphs, math students from Mrs. Tran's class compared information from hurricane Carla to the 1900 storm that hit Galveston. Timelines of the storm were created by Mrs. Vavra's Texas history classes. Mrs. Galloway's lessons explored the food mentioned in the book and how the survivors lived on food such as rice and sardines. Mr. Glasscock's students brought in tools that were used during this time period. Students from Mrs. Gustafson's classes studied poetry and photos that were written after the storm and students then wrote their own poetry personifying the photos of the storm and its aftermath. Mr. Schurtz, JHS Band Director, wrote and directed the musical piece which was performed by the JHS band students and the JHS Choir students. The music was then applied to a video presentation created and designed by JHS students. The study was a success and the students and staff enjoyed the opportunity to work with one another on the same topic. Please take the opportunity to view the video presentation of the students' and staff's hard work by typing this link:

[tinyurl.com/PalaciosJH](http://tinyurl.com/PalaciosJH)

The *Dark Water Rising* video is in the middle of the page. The students in the picture are representing students and staff who worked on the project.



Pictured (l-r): (front row) Richard Jones, Joseph Aparacio, Thomas Garcia, Joseph Rodriguez, Kamryn Vickers, Megan Buckley; (back row) Allona Real, Cameron Greaves, Dominic Garcia, Ariana Zamora, Emily Broussard, and Jennifer Lopez.

We're on the web  
[www.palaciosisd.org](http://www.palaciosisd.org)

# As the second six weeks winds down ...

LOOK AT US NOW



*Adam Aucoin working in construction trades*



*Mr. Kelley on awards day at Central*



*Asia Green working on focus points in Mr. Garnett's art class*



*AR testing in Mrs. Hansen's class*



*Busy in the computer lab at the junior high*



*East Side choir practice*

*Palacios ISD is an equal opportunity employer. All positions and all school programs are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or handicap.*

Palacios Independent School District  
361-972-5491 [www.palaciosisd.org](http://www.palaciosisd.org)

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