

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

COMMERCE ISD E-LETTER • SEPTEMBER 2017

Grandparent support meeting set for Oct. 4

CISD Family Services will conduct a training in conjunction with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension entitled “Grandparents Raising Grandkids.” It will be held at 1 p.m., Wednesday, October 4 in the Family Services Building behind CMS.

Organizer Alison Walker said it is a support group for all grandparents who face the challenge of raising their second generation of children.

For additional information, contact Walker at 903 366-0642 or email Alison.Walker@commerceisd.org.



CMS changes broaden student choice

Schools are called upon to do many things. Schools make sure students are healthy, safe and nourished with up to two meals a day, but a school's primary purpose is to set the environment so that students learn. That includes selecting the best teachers and giving them the tools they need to impact student learning.

Commerce Middle School Principal Dr. Shenequa Miller arrived during the 2016-2017 school year with the intent to make sure students showed academic improvement from one year to the next.

“Everyone taught one grade level and planning and collaboration among teachers wasn't where it needed to be,” Miller said.

She decided to change teacher assignments and move teachers so that subject area teachers could be together. That meant teachers who had taught in the same classroom for 20 years were asked to move.

Miller's request was met with mixed response, but now teachers teaching the same subject area can collaborate more easily and share ideas for lessons and their feedback has been positive, according to Miller.

In addition to moving teachers to different classrooms, Miller assigned core subject area teachers to teach more than one grade level. For example, last year a math teacher taught only sixth



Above: In her second year as principal of CMS, Dr. Shenequa Miller made changes to the instructional day to allow more choices for students and better collaboration among teachers. Below: Teacher Pam Eilers uses the flexible arrangement of the CMS library to work with groups of students.



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CMS tries new instructional arrangement

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graders. Now math teachers teach at least two grade levels making planning more relevant and shared.

After looking at the achievement data, Miller put the best teachers with students who struggled and maintained a class



TAMU-C student teacher Detrick Moore played the lead detective to solve the mystery of the Unknown Variable. Students worked together and solved the case to become Junior Detectives in Patricia Nelle's eighth-grade math class.

size of 12 students or less. Special education resource classes were brought back to help students in core subject areas.

Other changes were made to instructional delivery such as requiring two activities for every TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills), which are state standards for what students should know and be able to do.

Miller also revamped the Honors program so that “we put kids in a position where they can be successful.” Homework is now called an enhancement activity and Honors students must have one or two enhancement activities per week.

During last year's ASPIRE partnership between Texas A&M University-Commerce and CISD, Miller proposed bringing the AVID program to CMS. The program strives to improve college readiness for all students, especially those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Students now write

in every class and every teacher corrects spelling and grammar errors. Sixth graders are taught how to organize their work and take notes. Clinton Farrell teaches sixth graders and Lisa Webb has seventh and eighth graders.

Elective classes such as BIM (business information management) and Touch Systems Data Entry (keyboarding) were added to improve college and career readiness.

Students say the most fun change for the year comes at the end of the day when they can choose from almost 20 different activities to participate in. Miller asked teachers to name a hobby they were passionate about and then offered classes in areas such as cooking, dance, crafts, crocheting, STEM, woodshop, Bible study, ACT/SAT prep, outdoor living, book club, theater, Spanish Club, blogging, yearbook art, retail/e-tail, student council and cheer. Students can switch classes at the end of the semester.



CMS teacher Amanda White teaches the enrichment dance class during eighth period at CMS. Students choose activities of interest for each semester. CMS Principal Dr. Miller says giving students activities aligned with their interests helps keep them engaged with learning.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS



The Tigers take to the field through the new inflatable cat.

It's football time
Tigers have something for everyone



The CHS color guard warms up prior to the varsity football game versus Leonard High School..



CES Principal Diane Stegall escorts some tunnel runners through the welcome line prior to the start of the game. Elementary school tunnel runners are chosen for each home game in recognition of their good citizenship.

First responders were recognized prior to the game in remembrance of the 9/11 attacks.





Fifth graders read a story called "Ten Mile Day" about the building of the Transcontinental Railroad and learned that many of the workers were immigrants. As part of their study of immigration and heritage, Lisa Burden's class designed their own coat of arms using Google Drawings. Burden said the students enjoyed the project and really showed their creativity.



CES Students of the Month

The following students were chosen for their hard work, dedication to learning, and leadership: front row, left to right Pre-K, Zayden Johnson, Ava Payne and Kindergarten: Noah Perry, Hailey Barton. Back row: First Grade; Parker Burns, Dulcee Whipple. Second Grade; Brayden Bloodsoe, Aiwa Moses



CMS wins at Caddo Mills

The eighth-grade Black volleyball team won first place in the Caddo Mills Tournament held on Saturday, September 9. The team is coached by Julie Brown, right.

Criminal Justice classes produce safety videos



In light of the recent law that just went into effect, the Criminal Justice class at CHS has been discussing the dangers of texting while driving.

In collaboration with Corporal A. Price (Community Resource Officer) of the Commerce Police Department, students in CISD Police Officer Dave Contreras's classes planned and filmed a public service announcement outlining the importance of refraining from reckless behavior. Corporal Price acquired t-shirts sponsored by several local businesses. This important safety message has been posted on the Commerce ISD Police Department's Facebook page.

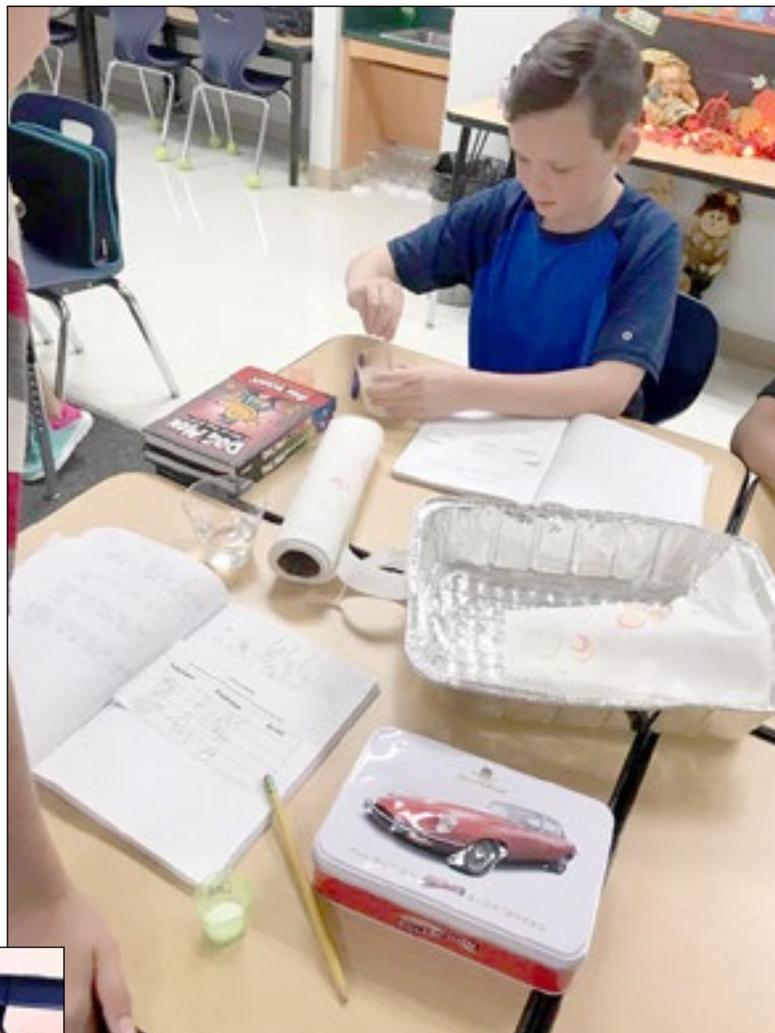
See the video here: <https://www.facebook.com/commerceisdpolice/videos/159256977987097/>

In the future, Criminal Justice classes will produce a series of public service announcements on other safety-related topics.



▲ The CMS English Language Arts Reading Team hosted its first annual Poetry Slam on September 11. Students wrote and performed their own creations. The program was held in conjunction with the CMS PTO meeting. Teachers are hoping to make it an annual event, according to teacher Autumn Deason.

Minds over matter at CES and ACW



▲ Fifth graders start the year by studying the physical properties of matter including solubility, which is a physical property that tells whether or not a substance can “dissolve” in another substance. Students tested salt, sugar, flour, and pepper in a mix with water to see which substance would dissolve. Before starting, students predicted in their journals whether or not they thought the substances would be soluble or insoluble. Students took turns adding the substances to cups of water and after quickly stirring, they observed the final result. They recorded actual results in their journals. Science teachers Teresa Robinson and Whitney Fox lead students through the experiment.



◀ Kindergarten students studied states of matter and they discussed how Oobleck (a popular kid’s toy) was a liquid and a solid. Students predicted which items would sink or float in the substance and then they tested their theories.

Hall of Honor induction ceremony set for October 12

Four former students and employees will be inducted into CISD's Hall of Honor at noon, Thursday, October 12. The eighth annual event recognizes Chris Clark, a 1991 graduate and a member of the "President's Own" U.S. Marine Band; Janet John, 41-year veteran CISD teacher; Dr. Mary Thomas, a 1972 CHS graduate and current director of State and Federal Accountability for Austin

ISD; and Charlie Wilson, former teacher, coach and CHS principal.

In addition to the luncheon, honorees are recognized at the CHS pep rally on Thursday and also serve as honorary co-captains of the Tiger football team at the homecoming game on Friday, October 13.

Tickets to the luncheon are \$15 and will remain on sale through October 5 at the CISD Administration Building.



Thursday, October 12
Noon

CISD Board Room

Tickets on sale now at
CISD Administration
Building



Vegetable cars aid study of physics

Engaging students by encouraging their creativity and willingness to play makes physics concepts come alive in Jennie Reynolds' classes at CHS. Students were asked to make a car using a vegetable, wheels and an axle. Tests were conducted to see which student's car traveled the farthest distance.

