

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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New principal sets priorities to achieve excellence



When she began her job as principal of A. C. Williams Elementary School last December, Lisa Palazzetti set to work assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses. With great teachers in place and a beautiful facility for the 365 students enrolled, Palazzetti concentrated on academics and building a sense of community.

"We began having conversations about reality. I wanted to determine what was really going on," Palazzetti explained. "Why were our students having struggles and what could we do to help," she continued.

As the conversations progressed, the campus leaders decided to focus on four areas:

1) poverty and discipline—how

ACW Principal Lisa Palazzetti (center) brings solid instructional practices to support growth for teachers and students alike.

to understand why children of poverty react certain ways; 2) restorative practices—positive discipline based on developing relationships with students and learning who they really are and what they need; 3) parent involvement—make parents feel welcome by increasing communication and activities; and 4) academics—use data to determine areas of need and then give teachers the tools, strategies and training to implement change.

Palazzetti said that good teaching was already taking place at the campus, but teachers needed tools and strategies. A growth room was set up for teachers where during weekly meetings they work on specific objectives for that week based on weaknesses uncovered by data analysis.

A structure was developed so that enrichment activities happened every day for one hour in every grade level and subject. By focusing on 10 to 12 essential TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) every day, Palazzetti says the targeted instruction should pay off with increased STAAR scores.

"We make sure that everyone is growing," she said.

Palazzetti worked for 19 years in metroplex school districts before coming to Commerce. She says people should be proud to have their children go to school in Commerce.

WINTER ARTS FESTIVAL

Celebrate the season with music, art and drama

December 7

*Commerce High School
5 p.m., Vendor Market
& Art Exhibits*

*6:30 p.m., Choir, Band
Drama & Literary Works
performances*

*For a free vendor booth,
contact Ludonna.Smithers@commerceisd.org*



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Palazzetti seeks partnerships to aid progress

“We are a hidden gem,” she continued. “I see more rewards here every day than I ever saw in larger districts,” she said.

She expects the word to get out about the great things happening in Commerce and she envisions that many educators will be coming to observe our practices.

Other strengths noted by Palazzetti include assistant principal Tina Bronson, who is a natural administrator, and Cari Sturch, elementary instructional coordinator, who is housed at ACW two days a week to help teachers with strategies and resources.

Palazzetti is proud that students have a choice to expand their interests through new clubs such as the art, music, leadership and science clubs. Student council has been initiated and the after-school Boys & Girls Club was revamped through a partnership with Texas A&M University-Commerce.

As these new initiatives continue, Palazzetti has set her sights on other projects including a stronger library program with parent volunteers, expanded involvement with



ACW administrators and office staff — standing left to right: Joe Venable, chief of police; Lisa Palazzetti, principal; Linda Grubert, counselor and Racheal Bailey, PEIMS clerk. Seated: Tina Bronson, assistant principal; Courtney Mills, school nurse; and Diane Freeman, secretary.

A&M-C reading mentors and growth of the PTO.

“I want more people to have a voice in our schools and also give teachers a chance to shine,” she said.

CHS Drama Department’s annual production features outlandish characters

The CHS Drama Department presented “The Shame of Tombstone or Dirty Work at the Lucky Cuss” by Tim Kelly as its annual dinner theater production in October. The cast and crew produced the story of a Boston society belle who moves west to Arizona with her infant daughter to make a new life.



Above: Marely Garcia, Bailey Guinessey and Jason Ocampo.

Left: Emma Felts, Grace Bailey and Raquel Medrano-Palacios

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Studying for performance

CMS one-act play cast members prepared for their performance by visiting the Holocaust Museum in Dallas.

They wanted to gain insight into playing Jewish children in the Terezin ghetto during World War II, according to sponsor Shelbie Embro.

They will compete on December 2 in Princeton with their interpretation of Celeste Raspanti's "I Never Saw Another Butterfly."



CES celebrates 50th day

Poodle skirts, rolled up jeans and cat-eye classes were spotted everywhere at CES on October 24 – the 50th day of school. Teachers planned counting activities to capitalize on the theme of the day.



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Headed to State!

For the first time in CHS history, a cross country team won the honor of competing in the State UIL Cross Country Meet. The boys team placed 14th out of 221 teams. Coach Colton Reynolds said he was proud of his athletes and the great showing they had at state.



Shown from left to right boarding the bus for the competition held in Round Rock: Leo Rodrigues, Allan Anderson, Korrighan Smith, Miguel Zavala, Juan Arreguin, Welsey Chavez, Connor Green, Ney Hernandez and Ty Myers farthest right.

Sharing good news with former trustees

Who best to get the news out about the great things happening at CISD? People who have already shown their support and served the district as a member of the Board of Trustees, that's who. Superintendent Charlie Alderman welcomed trustees to a luncheon where he shared information about new initiatives in the district. Foremost in the list is the partnership called ASPIRE with Texas A&M University-Commerce. Through the collaboration, a program called AVID was introduced at CMS to help students get on track for college and career success, the Boys & Girls Club after-school program gained a new focus on academics, a recreation program for summer school students engaged them at A&M-C and numerous mentor programs have been developed. Former superintendent Blake Cooper shared updates from the latest legislative session and explained the political climate for public schools.



Attending Superintendent Charlie Alderman's "State of the District" address were former board members (back row, left to right) Willie Blow, Jim Hudson, Medley Wilson, Dick Latson, CHS Principal Steve Drummond, CISD Board President Kathleen Hooten, former board members Donna Tavener, Ted Oats and current member Dr. Mark Reid. Front row: former CISD superintendent Blake Cooper, former board member Dr. Anthony Harris, current board member Etta Herring. CMS Principal Dr. Shenequa Miller, ACW Principal Lisa Palazzetti and former board member Dr. Mary Hendrix.

ACW pumpkin decorating contest winners



Diego Balderrama, First place



Brenden Clayton, Second place



Canaan Clayton, Third place

A Salute to Veterans



ACW welcomed veterans and families to a Veterans Day recognition on November 9.

The ACW Choir sang patriotic songs and students explained the meaning behind patriotic symbols.



CMS held a veterans recognition program on November 10. The CMS Choir, led by Dominick Stephenson, and the CHS Band, directed by Jesse Casarez, provided patriotic music. Allan Folsom, an Air Force veteran, allowed Principal Shenequa Miller to display his presentation sword.

