

MARCH 2022

# GOOSE CREEK CISD

## *At A Glance*



# Spring is in the Air

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# DR. RANDAL O'BRIEN

Goose Creek CISD Family,

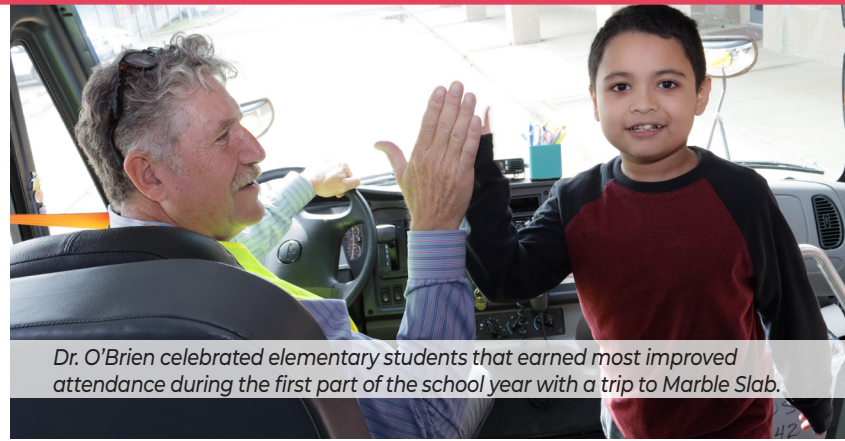
Spring is often called “the season of new beginnings.” Flowers begin to bloom; the temperature begins to change from chilly to warm and we see more families enjoy spending time together outside. Spring is also a very important season in Goose Creek CISD. Our students and staff are in “preparation for excellence” mode. Whether it be for exams, end-of-year programs or graduation, our district is ready for any challenge that may come our way. Every department in our district is “all hands on deck” as we push forward through the remaining months of the school year.



**DR. RANDAL O'BRIEN**  
Superintendent of Schools

In order for a district to be fully prepared, they must have the tools of success in their arsenal. As an educator, I believe in the importance of continuous professional development. It is integral to the success of not only the individual, but the district in which they are employed as well. Gaining more knowledge and expertise in your field of choice preps you for success for many years to come. I am proud to say the educators in our district not only receive countless hours of professional development through our district, they receive it through their respective professional organizations as well. The knowledge they have received has provided many of our leaders with the opportunity to share their expertise with others. Just this year alone, district leaders have presented at several state conferences, including the Texas School Public Relations Association, Texas Alliance of Black School Educators, and the Texas Association of School Administrators and School Boards; just to name a few.

The state of Texas has many professional organizations that our district employees are not only members of, but they also hold leadership positions. Dr. Pilar Moreno-Recio, Director of Bilingual and ESL Education, was named the President Elect for the Houston Area Association for Bilingual Educators and was re-elected to serve on the board for the Texas Association for Bilingual Education as the Bilingual/ESL Representative. Kristyn Hunt Cathey, Director of Communications, was named the Houston-Beaumont Area Vice-President for the Texas School Public Relations Association, and Dr. Regina Patrick-Sims, Bowie Elementary School Principal, was named the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators “Principal of the Year.” Matt Flood, Chief Technology Officer, received the Grace Hopper Award and was named the Texas “Chief Technology Officer of the Year” by the Texas Education Technology Leaders Association and Dr. Precious Reimonenq, Director of Social Emotional Learning and



*Dr. O'Brien celebrated elementary students that earned most improved attendance during the first part of the school year with a trip to Marble Slab.*

Wellness, received the Heroes and Hope Award, presented by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. We congratulate these district leaders on their GIANT recognitions. They represent the district well and are proof that what we do for our students is not going unnoticed.

The 53rd annual Phi Delta Kappa poll of the “Public’s Attitude Toward Public Schools” revealed that despite challenges of the pandemic, Americans continue to have high opinions of their local schools and teachers. Per their website, “Two-thirds of adults overall give their community’s public school teachers an A or B grade for their pandemic response.” We appreciate the fact that there are many communities that are much more favorable toward public schools than they have been in the past. The national rhetoric on schools’ failing is changing and we are grateful for the support that we have in our district. We believe in focusing on what is right versus what is wrong and highlighting what our students know; not what they don’t know. There are many lessons to be learned from the two years we have spent educating students in the midst of the pandemic, but what is most important to note is that we must never waiver from doing what is right for our students. The 24,000 students in our district deserve to receive the best education possible that will prepare them for college and career readiness and I have no doubt that we are doing that and will continue to do so in the many years ahead.

Warm Regards,

GCCISD Superintendent of Schools

*Goose Creek CISD At a Glance* is a community newsletter published by the Community Engagement and Marketing Departments to inform citizens about the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District schools.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INNOVATION  
**Dr. Matt Bolinger**

DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
**Kristyn Hunt Cathey**

DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & MARKETING  
**Kendall David**

MULTI-MEDIA DESIGN SPECIALISTS  
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# BE WELL™ BAYTOWN CONTINUES THE TRADITION OF SUPPORTING THE WHOLE CHILD

BY: AMANDA KENNINGTON, HEALTHY COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Goose Creek CISD, with the support of Be Well™ Baytown, continues to embrace and promote a “Whole Child” philosophy by supporting active living, healthy eating and environments to encourage wellness in our district. Be Well Baytown is an initiative of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center sponsored by ExxonMobil, which aims to mobilize the Baytown community to promote wellness and stop cancer before it starts.

A central component of this initiative is aligned with our district’s implementation of the CDC’s Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model. CATCH® (Coordinated Approach to Child Health), a school-based health program, has enabled teamwork in each elementary and junior school that share a common goal of creating a culture of health and wellness. In-person, drive-thru and virtual nutrition and physical activity educational events infused with fun activities are reinforcing healthy decisions while celebrating progress for all family members. CATCH framework and the support from our partners provide the necessary resources to create and sustain healthy change for the future.



Bowie Elementary School students are guided across the street by a smiling crossing guard as part of their “Walk to School” event.

You can access CATCH activities at home by scanning the QR code.



For more information about Be Well Baytown and the current programming, visit [www.mdanderson.org/BeWellBaytown](http://www.mdanderson.org/BeWellBaytown) or contact GCCISD’s Healthy Community School Coordinator, Amanda Kennington at [amanda.kennington@gccisd.net](mailto:amanda.kennington@gccisd.net)

## Fine Arts Leads the Way to Excellence

BY: KRISTYN HUNT CATHEY,  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

An article on [bctv.org](http://bctv.org) entitled, “The Importance of Fine Arts in Education” states, “Fine arts improves and encourages kids’ creativity, confidence and perseverance, which is essential to a child’s growth....it also develops academic and motor skills, visual learning, decision-making, focus, collaboration and accountability.” Ray Lavan, Director of Fine Arts, was introduced to the fine arts world as a child growing up in Lake Charles and recognizes the importance that early access to its programs serves. “In the body of education, fine arts is the soul,” he said. “It is the truest expression of the human condition.”

In this school year alone, the Fine Arts department, which includes music (band, choir and orchestra), dance, visual arts, cheerleading and theatre, have exceeded their expectations. Continuing the Goose Creek tradition, all music programs earned awards and traditional sweepstakes programs. Nineteen high school choir members earned All Region and five earned All State designation and nine orchestra members earned All Region. The dance program, traditionally only on the high school level, implemented a junior school program that will provide younger students with more access to the techniques needed to perform on a more advanced level. The program



District winners of the Houston Rodeo art contest along with their parents, Superintendent Dr. Randal O'Brien, Ray Lavan, Director of Fine Arts and GCCISD Board President, Richard Clem, pose proudly. These students will have their art work displayed at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

includes the award-winning drill teams; including three TDEA All State dancers. Visual arts students participate in the Houston Rodeo art contest annually. This year, three students earned Best of Show and four earned gold medals. Visual Arts instructor, Annie Watson, also won Texas Art Education Association “Sponsor of the Year;” which is one of the highest honors for a campus Fine Arts sponsor.

Rebranding is the name of the game and Fine Arts is doing just that. Aside from a new logo, created by a Lee High School dance student, Courtney Childs, debuted in February 2022. The “Champion of the

Month” initiative was implemented in September 2021. Each month, Fine Arts department leaders nominate a teacher that has gone above and beyond the call of duty for their students. The winner is presented with a belt, similar to the one used in the WWE, that they get to keep on display for one month. “There have also been discussions on the relevance of fine arts in schools, but I am so grateful that our Board, Superintendent and community have shown continuous support for every opportunity we provide to our students,” Lavan stated. “As long as we have their support, our students can succeed.”

# LEADING BY EXAMPLE IS THE TRUDELL BERRY WAY

BY: KRISTYN HUNT CATHEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Trudell Berry, defensive back and wide receiver for the Baytown Lee Ganders, is the true epitome of a gentle giant. His calm and quiet demeanor is quite the opposite from the intense, focused athlete he is known for on the field. His ability to successfully navigate two worlds-academics and athletics-have propelled him to where he is today. Berry is a native Baytonian; having spent his entire academic career in the district. His parents (including his mother, a teacher in Goose Creek CISD) and younger sister, also an athlete, are his biggest supporters. "My parents are the best," he said. "They believe in me, push me to do and be my best and I always want to make them proud."



Trudell Berry smiles as he shares his story during an interview with the *The Goose Call* podcast. Scan QR Code to listen to podcast.

dependable; I don't remember him in four years missing anything. You don't have to worry about him academically. He's a coach's dream, I guess you could call it." The importance of academics before athletics is not lost on Trudell. In fact, it's at the forefront of everything that he does. "Tru has told us many times if he goes home with anything under a 90, he won't be playing," Finn exclaimed. "I am so grateful for his parents; for instilling in him the importance of academics first, and everything else second."

He experienced his first taste of the big league during the 2022 All-American Bowl that took place on January 8th in San Antonio. He was a member of the winning West Squad and was overwhelmed by his experience. "It was

Outside of his immediate family, Trudell believes the coaching staff he has established strong relationships with over the course of his time in the district have also impacted his life. "Sports has always been a big part of my life," Trudell stated. "All of my coaches-from my younger years to now with the athletic staff at Lee; they have all played a very important part in my life and what they have poured into me, I will take with me." Timothy Finn, Lee High School Head Football Coach and Campus Coordinator, is one of the people that Trudell shouted out. Finn was equally enamored with him. "Trudell is a maintenance-free student," he said. "He is hard working,

surreal getting to play with other top tier players," he said. "But it's just preparing me for what lies ahead, like my first football game in Hawaii. I'm really looking forward to that!"

Berry officially committed to private research university, Vanderbilt, in Nashville, Tennessee where he will begin his collegiate career in the fall of 2022. Though undecided on a major, Trudell is certain that whatever he chooses to do with his life, it will make a difference. "I'm proud of being from Baytown. I'm proud of my experiences and Goose Creek," he said. "I just want to make my city proud." We are sure that he will.

## IMPACT ECHS Honored with 2021 College Success Award

GreatSchools.org Honors IMPACT ECHS with 2021 College Success Award - Gold National recognition celebrates high schools with a multiyear track record of preparing students to succeed in college

IMPACT Early College High School received a College Success Award - Gold from GreatSchools.org, the nation's leading nonprofit providing school information to parents and families. New in 2021, the Gold level distinction recognizes high schools with a multiyear track record of preparing students to succeed in college, as determined by the school having won at least two College Success Awards in recent years.

"Our school being recognized for the College Success Award-Gold is a testament to the efforts of our students, teachers, and staff," says Laura Reyes, Principal of IMPACT ECHS. "Everything we do at our school is with the goal of college readiness and attainment, and helping each student feel special and supported. Focusing on student learning, developing critical thinking skills, and reinforcing and refining essential soft skills keeps our students challenged and constantly growing. Our school is positively affecting generational change in our community and we thank our GCCISD district leadership and our partnership with Lee College for making it



Nancy Orellana-Barba, lead counselor, Dr. Randal O'Brien, Laura Reyes, principal, and campus ambassadors pose with the College Success Award-Gold banner. The campus was one of several that won the prestigious award.

possible for us to provide this opportunity for our students. I am proud to be the principal of this amazing school!"

Despite the continued disruptions to the educational landscape over the past two years, IMPACT ECHS has adopted and upheld many best practices to support their students' college preparation and success, including: providing access to rigorous academic offerings in high school classes and in college courses, recruiting and supporting at-risk students, equipping students with strong academic and interpersonal communication skills, providing personalized academic and college counseling as well as emotional

and mental health support, and maintaining a culture of inclusivity and acceptance that has fostered connections that leads to academic and personal success.

"We applaud IMPACT for consistently prioritizing a high-quality public education and putting students on the path to bright futures," said Jon Deane, CEO of GreatSchools.org. "Over the past two years, students, parents, teachers, and communities have relied on one another like never before. We congratulate and thank all of these individuals at IMPACT for their unwavering, ongoing pursuit of college success for all students."



# THREE NEW PRE-K ACADEMY OPTIONS!

Will your child be four years of age on or before September 1st of the upcoming school year? It's time to start thinking about pre-kindergarten! You could probably guess that sending a child to pre-kindergarten results in better kindergarten readiness, improved vocabulary, and enhanced reading skills.

But did you know that the benefits of Pre-K go far beyond their school years and into their adult lives? Starting at age four, nationwide studies reveal that investing early in a child's education by sending them to pre-kindergarten yields a long list of benefits that go beyond test scores and into the very fabric of their, and our, futures.

## IMPORTANT DATES

DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME
<b>Feb 9, 2022</b>	Pre-K Registration Survey Opens	If you plan on enrolling your student in one of our pre-k academies for the 2022-2023 school year, please complete this registration survey.	<a href="https://bit.ly/3cG8y5s">https://bit.ly/3cG8y5s</a>	
<b>April 1, 2022</b>	Pre-K Registration Opens	Registration for Pre-K opens	Online	
<b>April 2, 2022</b>	Pre-K Registration	In-person event for Pre-K registration	Baytown Junior	8 AM - 3 PM
<b>April 5, 2022</b>	Pre-K Registration	In-person event for Pre-K registration	Alamo Elementary	5 PM - 7 PM
<b>April 15, 2022</b>	STEAM & Dual Language Deadline	Deadline to register for STEAM & Dual Language Academies	Online	
<b>May 13, 2022</b>	Notice of Admittance	Deadline to receive notice of admittance into Pre-K academies		



# EARLY LEARNING PRE-K ACADEMY

LILES, PUMPHREY & SAN JACINTO

POWERED BY  fuelingbrains

**LOCATIONS:**

- Central, Pumphrey & San Jacinto

**COST:**

- Free for students who qualify under federal guidelines.

**OVERVIEW**

Are you interested in boosting your prekindergarten child's development?

Our Early Learning Academy, in partnership with Fueling Brains, uses a research-led approach to provide prekindergarten students with the knowledge and skills to start on the road to success.

Students will have the opportunity to build their creativity and curiosity through interest-led learning in a state-of-the-art facility with thematic, hands-on classrooms. Students and teachers will rotate through the thematic classrooms every two weeks.

Classrooms provide group and individualized lessons that support students' development and increase their self-control, thinking, and problem-solving skills as they discover, explore, and connect to the world around them.

# DUAL LANGUAGE PRE-K ACADEMY

ALAMO, ASHBEL SMITH & HARLEM

DELIVERED BY  GOOSE CREEK CISD

**LOCATION:**

- Alamo, Ashbel Smith & Harlem

**COST:**

- Free for students who qualify under federal guidelines
- OR
- \$500 per month for the 2022-2023 school year

**OVERVIEW**

The dual two-way language program is an enriched educational model that integrates native English speakers and native Spanish speakers in the same classroom to promote second language acquisition, high academic achievement, and cross-cultural understanding.

The goal is to promote bilingual, biliterate and bicultural students. The program starts in prekindergarten and continues through the elementary years with the goal of expanding to secondary education.

The benefits include high levels of academic achievement and literacy in both languages, increased cultural sensitivity and empathy, increased confidence, and self-esteem, and increased future marketability. The Dual Language two-way language program is offered at Alamo Elementary, Ashbel Smith Elementary, and Harlem Elementary. Students do not have to be zoned to these campuses to qualify.

# STEAM PRE-K ACADEMY

SCIENCE • TECHNOLOGY • ENGINEERING  
ARTS • MATHEMATICS

AUSTIN & WALKER

POWERED BY  fuelingbrains

**LOCATION:**

- Austin & Walker

**COST:**

- Free for students who qualify under federal guidelines
- OR
- \$500 per month for the 2022-2023 school year

**OVERVIEW**

Give your pre-kindergarten child the opportunity to learn more about Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math!

Goose Creek CISD's STEAM Early Learning Academy will prepare pre-kindergarten students in our community to be life-long thinkers, creators, and doers by immersing them in daily, hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math activities.

Students will have the opportunity to grow their knowledge and skills through an inquiry-based approach that encourages them to observe, explore, question, investigate and express themselves daily as they learn about the world around them.

Our STEAM classrooms provide immersive experiences that encourage hands-on learning. In addition, monthly field experiences in our community and surrounding areas will deepen students' understanding of their learning and give students the opportunity to make real-world connections. The STEAM Early Learning Academy will be offered at Victoria Walker Elementary and Stephen F. Austin Elementary. Students do not have to be zoned to these campuses to qualify.



# WALLETHUB LISTS GCCISD IN TOP FIVE OF MOST EQUITABLE

BY: KRISTYN HUNT CATHEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

The state of Texas ranks 24th most equitable in the U.S. overall, according to an August 2021 WalletHub article. Goose Creek CISD currently ranks number two in the state of Texas, with an expenditure of \$10,150 per student. Scurry-Rosser ISD, located in southwestern Kaufman County, currently holds the number one spot with an expenditure of \$10,415 per student. WalletHub scored 1,020 districts in Texas based on two metrics: average household income and expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools per pupil. Goose Creek CISD is the only Harris County district in the top 30.

Brigitte Clark, Goose Creek CISD CFO, believes that proper funding of education is the great equalizer. "Having access to the same high-quality education is key in closing the achievement gap and ensuring students from lower-income households have the same opportunity for academic success as affluent students," she stated. "Accordingly, during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, providing laptops and internet access to all students regardless of socio-economic status has become a community expectation and district standard."

"States that provide equitable funding to all school districts can help prevent poor students from having lower graduation rates, lower rates of pursuing higher education, and smaller future outcomes than their wealthy peers," per Adam McFann, WalletHub Financial Writer.

"We have viewed solving equity concerns through the lens of providing our students and their respective families options," says Clark. "Through these venues we have sparked student engagement beyond our imagination and become the benefactors of a community that loves their schools."



## GRADUATION DATES AND TIMES

CLASS OF **TWENTY 22**

**May 24, 2022**

Lee College Sports Arena  
200 Lee Drive  
Baytown, TX

**May 27, 2022**

Fertitta Center  
3422 Cullen Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77204



**IMPACT**  
Early College HS  
4:30 PM



**Goose Creek**  
Memorial HS  
10:00 AM



**Stuart**  
Career Tech HS  
7:30 PM



**Robert E.**  
Lee HS  
2:30 PM



Scan QR Code  
to view  
the most up-to-date  
Graduation details.



**Ross S.**  
Sterling HS  
7:00 PM

All graduations will be broadcast at [www.gccisd.net](http://www.gccisd.net)

# Attendance is Important for Student Success

BY: ERIKA FOSTER, GCCISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

A missed school day is a missed opportunity to learn. If a student does not attend school on a regular basis, they are more likely to fall behind in their studies and more often than not, it is extremely difficult to catch up. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), "Teacher effectiveness is the strongest school-related determinant of student success, but chronic student absence reduces even the best teacher's ability to provide learning opportunities."

The district has seen an increase in student absences this school year. GCCISD Superintendent, Dr. Randal O'Brien, is working diligently with campus principals, teachers, Student Services, district leaders and GCCISD Police to identify students that have missed an excessive number of days and what we can do to encourage them to return to the classroom and finish out the year on a high note. The Education Foundation, along with the City of Baytown Parks and Recreation department, fully support the superintendent and district in their quest to reduce student absences. In an effort to increase student success through attendance, the Foundation and P&C department are offering a free ticket to Pirate's Bay Water Park to any Goose Creek CISD student that has perfect attendance during the last nine weeks of school. "I'm a Goose Creek graduate and I understand the importance of going to school every day," Erika Foster, GCCISD Education Foundation Director stated. "That is why we are so thankful for the partnership with Jenna Stevenson, Aquatics Superintendent and City of Baytown Parks & Rec department. They believe in the vision for our district and the city and they want to do whatever it takes to ensure our students get the type of education they deserve."

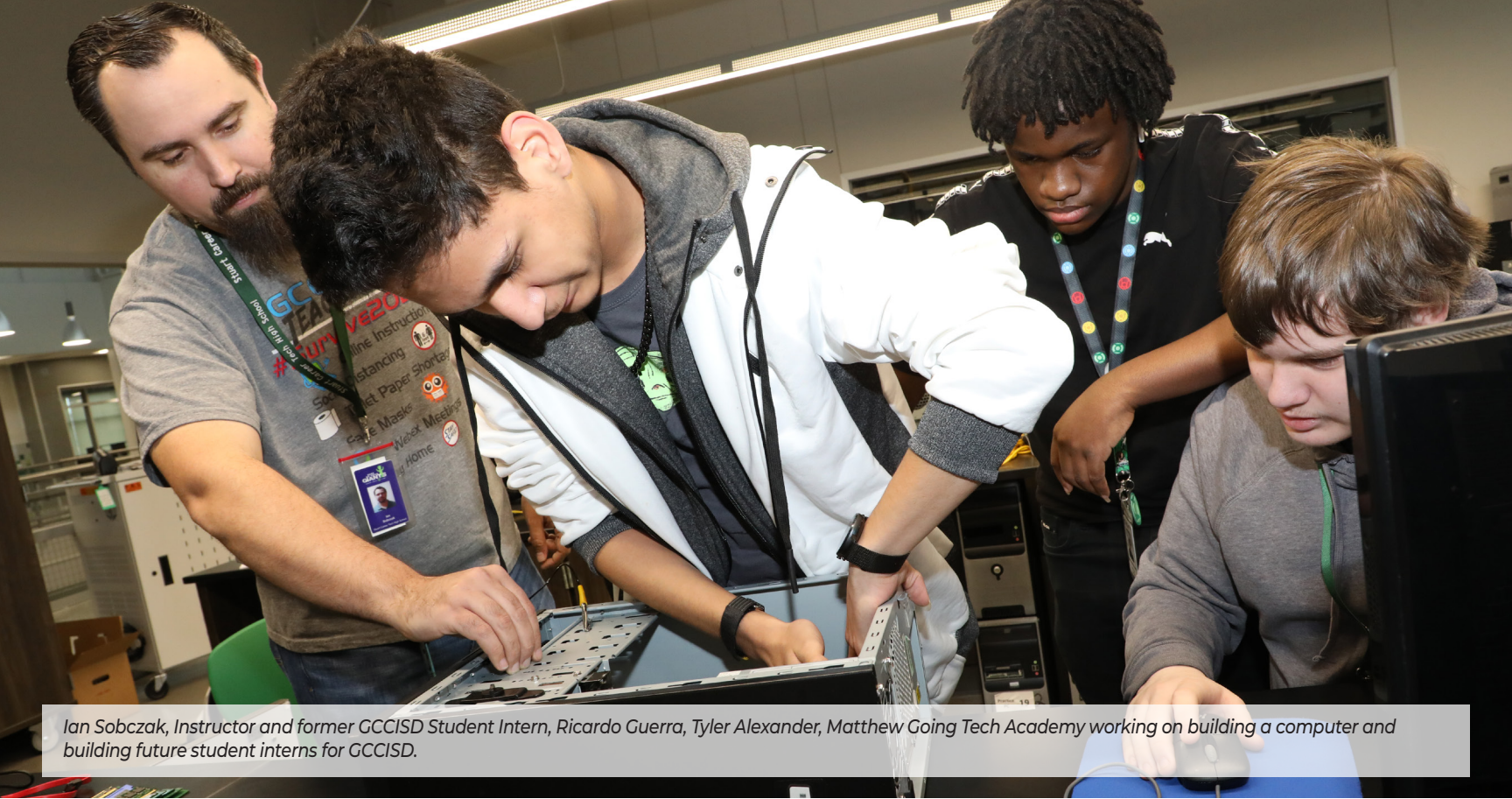
Students that finish the last nine weeks with perfect attendance will be contacted at the end of the school year to receive their ticket.



**LAST 9 WEEKS  
PERFECT  
ATTENDANCE =  
1 TICKET**

Erika Foster, Director of GCCISD Education Foundation and Jenna Stevenson, Baytown Aquatics Superintendent, pose with the GCCISD giant in front of Pirates Bay Waterpark.





Ian Sobczak, Instructor and former GCCISD Student Intern, Ricardo Guerra, Tyler Alexander, Matthew Going Tech Academy working on building a computer and building future student interns for GCCISD.

# MOVING THE NEEDLE FORWARD THROUGH I.T.

BY: KRISTYN HUNT CATHEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

When you think of internships, college students making coffee runs and colored copies typically comes to mind, but not high school students, right? Goose Creek CISD provides its students in several CTE programs and academies access to internship opportunities; many of them within the district.

The IT Academy at Stuart Career Technical High School is one of the newest programs developing a student internship program. Ian Sobczak, IT Academy instructor and GCCISD graduate, remembers the Stuart Career Center internship program vividly. “Stuart Career Center was juniors and seniors taking the internship course from the three high schools,” he said. “When our academies started with SCTHS, we went to just freshman. So now, this is our second year and by their senior year, they will start the internship. We are building up!”

Matthew Flood, Chief Technology Officer, is also a GCCISD graduate and remembers a time when there was no internship program in the district. “There really wasn’t a program when I was in school, but my Computer Science teacher told me the Technology department needed help researching an internet filter in 1998 and that’s how I got started,” he said. “They needed a student’s perspective. I visited for a few months after school,

tested the internet filter, and that’s how I got hired on as a part-time tech after school.”



CULPEPPER

Many employees in the district participated in the internship program, including Brittney Culpepper, Multi-Media Design Specialist. “Going through course selections for my junior year, I had two things in mind: finding classes that would fit my interest in web design and getting out of gym,” she said. Brittney’s experience took her from interning with a campus technology

specialist, to a paid internship the summer after graduation. “After the summer internship ended, I got a phone call from the Communications department. Matt Flood recommended me



Matt Flood, Chief Technology Officer, gained his experience in the field through an apprentice program in the district.

as someone who would be interested in working part-time in the department. I had been interested in graphic design since I was in 8th grade, so when the opportunity to intern in the communications department was presented to me, there was no way I was going to pass up on it.”

Flood was a Computer Science major in college and his vision for the technology internship program is long-term. “I’ve hired some kids during the summer to assist with iPads so they can get exposure working in IT,” Flood said. “We try to hold on to the best ones, like Brittney, and provide them with an opportunity to work full-time in the district if that is their desire.” Flood is truly making an impact in the technology field. There is no surprise he was named the 2021-2022 Texas Chief Technology Officer of the Year by the Texas Education Technology Leaders organization .

Sobczak is looking forward to the future for the IT Academy internship program. “If you look around the district, you’ll see interns from different academies, so we are looking forward to starting our program,” Sobczack said. “It’s definitely fun and interesting and the facilities will have now will make it even better.”

# Eighth Grade Isn't the End; *It's Just the Beginning*

BY: KRISTYN HUNT CATHEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Eighth grade is often considered the apex of junior school, and with that title comes great responsibility. According to a research report by ACT, students who are not on track for college and career readiness by eighth grade are unlikely to attain that level of readiness by high school graduation. The Marine Military Academy lists harder coursework, groups and social development, successful habits, and priorities as four reasons why eighth grade matters.

That's why Goose Creek CISD created a high school options timeline for the 2021-2022 school year, designed to guide eighth grade students toward a college or career track before entering high school. Last semester, students chose one of 10 career academies or a dual credit cosmetology program housed at Robert E. Lee High School, IMPACT Early College High School or Stuart Career Tech High School. Students were notified of their acceptance on December 8, 2021.

IMPACT Early College High School provides another option for prospective freshmen. At this nationally recognized school, students focus on academics with the goal of graduating with a high school diploma as well as an associate degree from Lee College or college hours to apply toward a degree. IMPACT ECHS prepares students to be successful, independent college students by providing college-ready academic behavior and skills, college placement exam preparation (TSIA2), and college course support.



Zaden Hilton, Rett Gaedchens, Ednaida Diaz and Jasmine Brown—eighth grade Cedar Bayou Junior School students—proudly display the college and career sign of their choice for the upcoming school year.

Altogether, Goose Creek CISD eighth graders can choose among over 40 programs of study in all five endorsement areas. Very few districts offer these diverse and specialized educational opportunities, which once again places Goose Creek CISD among the best districts for college and career placement.

## PUSHING THROUGH STRESS AND ANXIETY: IT'S THE SEL WAY

BY: KRISTYN HUNT CATHEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

**"Stress acts as an accelerator: it will push you either forward or backward, but you choose which direction." – William James**

Stress is a part of everyday life. Common stressors such as jobs, children or where to eat for dinner were exasperated due to the pandemic. Students, parents and educators have experienced an increase in stress-related anxiety over the past two years and more districts are taking stress management tactics seriously. Dr. Precious Reimonenq, Director of Social and Emotional Learning and Student Wellness, and the SWI team are equipped with the tools to provide solace to students and staff, but they also encourage the public to take the steps necessary to reduce stress in their personal lives.

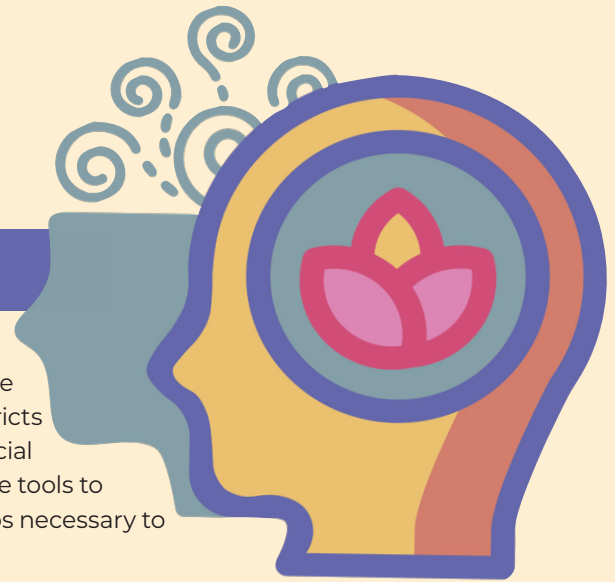
### ASK YOURSELF THE QUESTIONS BELOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE STRESSED OR ANXIOUS:

- ▶ Do you have trouble sleeping?
- ▶ Are you often agitated, angry, nervous or frustrated?
- ▶ Do you begin to panic when you think about all of the things that you have to do?
- ▶ Are you able to relax?
- ▶ Are you eating too much or too little?

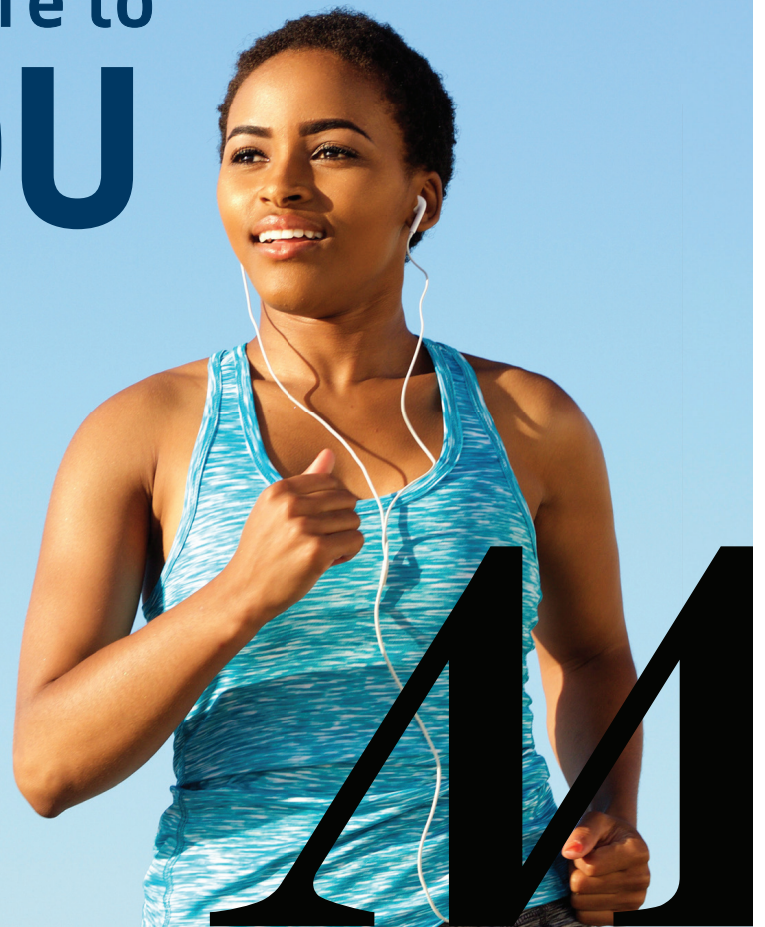
### HERE ARE SOME HEALTHY SOLUTIONS TO USE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING OVERWHELMED:

- ▶ **MEDITATE OR RELAX.** Close your eyes and imagine a calming scene. Count to four as you are inhaling and exhaling. Utilize mediation apps such as Calm, Headspace and Focus. District teachers can utilize campus calming spaces in order to relax during their breaks.
- ▶ **TAKE CARE OF YOUR MIND AND BODY.** Eat healthy, exercise and get enough sleep.
- ▶ **PRACTICE SELF-CARE OFTEN.** Do something that you enjoy. Listen to music, read a book, color, walk outdoors, ride a bike, or just sit and be still.
- ▶ **JUST SAY, "NO."** It's okay to say no to requests and invitations. Don't overcommit yourself for others.
- ▶ **FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL.** Don't stress over the things that you cannot change.
- ▶ **TALK ABOUT IT.** Confide in a close friend or family member about your stressors. When it begins to become too overwhelming, don't be afraid to seek professional help.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline Network is available. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (24/7) 1-800-273-(TALK)8255. This resource is available in Spanish Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio: 1-800-628-9454 and for the deaf and hard of hearing TTY: 1-800-799-4889



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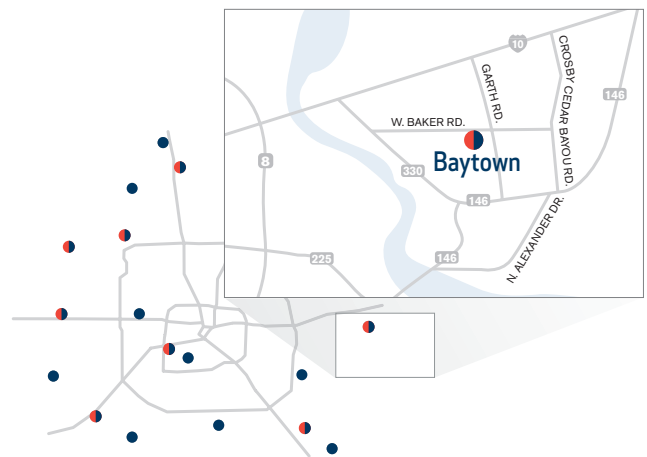


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## ON THE COVER

*Goose Creek Memorial Captain Brittany Guizar, Ross S. Sterling High School Colonel Addison Schmidt, and Robert E. Lee High School Colonel Mariah Mendieta pose in front of a mural located in the Downtown Arts District.*

*Photo by Carrie Pryor-Newman*



**Goose Creek Consolidated  
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