



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Peter E. Hyland Alternative Learning Program approved by Board of Trustees

At its June 22 Board Meeting, the Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the renaming of the Alternative Learning Program to the Peter E. Hyland Alternative Learning Program. In a letter to the Board, past and present faculty, staff and students said, "We want to perpetuate the unique insight, spirit and legacy of our retired director of the Alternative Learning Program, Peter Hyland."

For almost 25 years, Peter Hyland passionately devoted his talents to the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) in Goose Creek CISD. Hyland, with the strong support of the late Associate Superintendent Mike Madison and the late Superintendent Johnny Clark, was the inspiration behind the development of ALP in 1980. As one of the very first alternative schools in the state of Texas, it became a mentor school for many others seeking to meet the needs of this special population. A true pioneer in alternative education, Hyland gave freely of his time and his expertise to those not knowing where to start in the development of an alternative school.

Under his leadership, ALP grew from a small program of one student to one that has helped hundreds of students graduate through a student-centered campus with a clear vision, flexible scheduling and the employment of teachers and staff who shared the simple goals of helping students feel good about school, graduate and become productive members of society. Hyland always looked for innovative ways to improve a student's chances to be successful. His motto was "whatever it takes to meet the needs of a very diverse population of students."

While assuring students received the benefits of a traditional high school curriculum through a strong teaching and support staff, innovative self-paced classes and traditional classes and the introduction of technology, Hyland also worked with the staff to provide social skills opportunities through Thanksgiving dinners and campus cookouts. He worked to provide opportunities for the co-enrollment of qualified ALP students to attend classes at Lee College to encourage them to "have a taste of college." He removed pregnant students from the isolation of self-contained classrooms and included them in the total ALP program. In later years, a self-contained classroom for pregnant junior high students was developed.

One of his greatest accomplishments was starting the summer graduation ceremony for GCCISD students from both Lee and Sterling during the time Interim Superintendent Ralph Pierce was leading the district. Prior to his insistence that this was important, there was no formal celebration for these students. ALP continues to plan and organize this activity each August.

Another major accomplishment was the writing of grants that have successfully funded child care services for teen parents throughout the school district. His experience had been that teen parents often drop out of school after the birth of a child. According to ALP counselor Paula Ellis, he was passionate about the need for child care to help keep these students in school and was extremely excited when his request for a Pregnancy Education and Parenting Grant was approved in the early 1990's.

The Child Care Center at ALP is now nationally accredited, one of a few hundred centers in the state of Texas. After retirement in 2004, he has continued in his efforts to help pregnant students and teen parents by overseeing the writing of grants and the receiving of funds for Pregnancy Related Services. Ellis said, "Peter was a caregiver of not only students, but for faculty as well. He created a family atmosphere for the whole program."

In a letter to the Board of Trustees, his faculty and staff credit him with keeping the program going. "The ALP program had to be nursed and cared for, sometimes picked up and carried, literally and lovingly nurtured, by Peter Hyland. Peter believed in the future of the program, and more importantly, the future of his students when others did not or would not. He did all of this ceaselessly and enthusiastically, because to him, the students were worth his time and effort."

Linda Roberts Kelly, a former teacher and assistant principal for Hyland, sums up his devotion by saying, "For over 24 years, Peter Hyland served as director of the Alternative Learning Program. He often went against mainstream thinking and might even have been considered stubborn in his dedication to keeping the vision of ALP. It would be hard to place a number on the students and staff members Peter Hyland has impacted by his strength and dedication. Naming the complex or changing the name of the program to include his name is the right thing to do. His name should always be a part of alternative education in Baytown."

Kelly thanked the Board of Trustees with these words, "I don't know any other person in my educational career that has had the quiet impact on both students and adults that Peter E. Hyland has had. Personally, he has been my mentor, my boss and my friend." She further stated that his influence has made many of us better educators and champions for all students. Kelly also said that one of her proudest moments was when she had the honor of presenting him with a plaque from the Board of the Texas Association of Alternative Education that stated, "Peter E. Hyland, Warrior for Alternative Education, TAAE Board."

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