When the State Requires It
But Doesn’t Pay For It

“Aid Cuts Have Texas Schools Scrambling”… “Texas Budget Cuts Trickle Down to Local Governments”… “State Slashing School Funding”… Alarming headlines top newspapers across the nation while school superintendents brace for the largest cuts to public education since World War II. Texas is not alone. Schools across the country are in trouble as billions in emergency stimulus grants run out.

Since the Texas Legislature rewrote the Education Code in 1995, more than 60 unfunded or partially funded mandates have been placed on school districts. This number does not allow for passing through new mandates that often result from legislation. But it does not stop there. The Texas Association of School Administrators and Texas Association of School Boards Report on School District Mandates updated in October 2010 lists 78 unfunded mandates. “Hillsboro Independent School District (HISD) and most other districts in Texas could handle some of the cuts if the State eliminated many of the unfunded mandates imposed by the Legislature,” said HISD Superintendent Buck Gilcrease.

What is an unfunded mandate exactly? It is a regulation or condition for receiving grants that imposes costs on school districts that are not reimbursed. In other words, unfunded mandates are “drivers that increase the cost of education and take away local control,” explained Gilcrease.

“Not all mandates are bad,” he continued. “Mandates begin as great ideas to help students and better the education process. For example, accelerated reading instruction for students in kindergarten through grade eight is a great idea and we would do it anyway. The problem surfaces when mandates dictate how it must be accomplished.”

Dr. Gilcrease argued that while skilled HISD educators may be able to provide the accelerated reading instruction successfully in groups of 15 to 20, the mandate restricts no more than ten students for each teacher. This requirement increases the workload for existing employees and requires hiring additional ones, not to mention the necessary costs of supplies, equipment, technology, and programming. The budget is strained in multiple areas.

...........................................cont. on page 2

Teachers Win Grants to Benefit Students

And the winners are…the more than 1,900 Hillsboro Independent School District (HISD) students who will reap the benefits for years to come of nearly $10,000 in grants awarded to teachers by the HISD Education Foundation on February 28.

An “Accolade Parade” made up of Board members, donors, district board of trustees members, and the superintendent visited students and teachers at five campuses to present supersized checks to teachers who submitted grant applications for new and innovative instructional ideas and curricular enhancements. The checks ranged from $227 to $1000 and will enhance math, science, reading, and fine arts initiatives spanning all grade levels across the district.

The 15 grants given this year represent the second round of annual awards from the Foundation. The grants also signify strong community support for achieving educational excellence in the schools and at a level beyond the reach of limited state funding and school property tax capacity. Donations—from large and small—from across the community were pooled, grant applications were solicited and evaluated, and the result will provide a substantial boost to individual teachers and the district as a whole to strengthen student achievement.

............................................cont. on page 6

2010 Grant Recipients Report
Increased Test Scores and More

Last year’s recipients of Hillsboro Independent School District (HISD) Education Foundation grants report successful outcomes from their projects, which consisted of everything from flip video cameras, reference sets, news magazine subscriptions, and more. The classroom strategies implemented resulted in many educational benefits to students such as enhanced comprehension and retention of content, increased engagement in lessons, and improved TAKS scores.

For instance, grant funds for the project, “The Bluebonnets are Here,” allowed seventh-grade reading teacher Debbie Baker to purchase classroom
Students Ready for a Successful TAKS Season

Hillsboro students are marching into spring armed and prepared for success. March 1 marked the kickoff of this year’s TAKS testing season with fourth and seventh grade writing and freshman and sophomore ELA/reading. The remainder of testing occurs in April.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAKS TEST DATES</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Content Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>5th, 8th</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>5th, 8th</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 10th</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th</td>
<td>Exit</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5th, 8th, 10th, Exit</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>8th, 10th, Exit</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last year the district proudly earned a Recognized rating and a Gold Performance Acknowledgement in Texas Success Initiative: Mathematics.

State Requires...cont. from front

The College Credit Program mandate is another example. Requiring students to earn the equivalent of at least 12 semester hours of college credit in high school is a great idea, but someone has to pay for it. “Fortunately, we have a great partnership with Hill College and pay a reduced rate for our students,” said Gilcrease.

Gilcrease, the HISD school administration, and the school board saw this shortfall on the horizon years ago. “We have a balanced budget because we have planned ahead for the past three years. We examined every expense for cost effectiveness and efficiency and have offset the reduction in funds by reducing expenditures,” said Gilcrease. He further stated that there will be no major reduction in district personnel. Annual attrition produced a 10 percent staff reduction over the past three years allowing current roles to be doubled or positions to be shifted.

While Gilcrease knows these solutions are stop-gap measures for now, he breathes a sigh of relief as he stated, “We are in great financial shape to weather this storm.”

Senior Theater Arts Student Steals the Show

Hillsboro High School Senior Sarah Sampson recently attended the Texas Educational Theatre Auditions. More than 250 senior theater students from across the state competed for scholarships and admission to the schools of theatre from twenty plus colleges including the University of Texas, University of Oklahoma, University of Houston, and Texas Tech University. Sampson received 26 callbacks, more than any other student at the auditions. Her cumulative scholarship offers totaled more than $100,000.
Scholarship Honors the Memory of Beloved Hillsboro Teacher

Rene Dollar Kemp, resident of Hillsboro for most of her life, was a dearly loved wife, mother, sister, aunt, cousin and friend. She was also a passionate math teacher for eight years first at Hillsboro Elementary School and then at Hillsboro Intermediate School. She lost her battle with cancer on January 8, 2009, at the age of 52, leaving behind a legacy of courage, joy and compassion that inspired all who knew her.

Mrs. Kemp’s family is proud to honor her memory with the Rene Dollar Kemp Memorial Scholarship. High school administrators and teachers will select a senior student to receive the annual $1,000 award. Interest earned on the principle, donated to the district by her family, will allow the scholarship to continue. Other family and friends are invited to give to the scholarship account as well.

Mrs. Kemp graduated from Hillsboro High School in 1975 and was ranked third in her class of 87 students. Her school activities and honors were numerous and include National Honor Society, Student Council, Band, Speech Club, Theater, FHA, and more. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Hill College in 1977. After raising her children, she returned to her pursuit of higher education at the University of Texas at Arlington where she also graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2000 before beginning her teaching career with HISD.

“She was a marvelous individual, both personally and professionally,” said Grover Kemp, Mrs. Kemp’s father-in-law. “Anyone who aspires to be like Rene will surely be a success. We are pleased to be able to honor a student who emulates her spirit.”

Band Members Earn Rave Reviews at UIL

Hillsboro High School (HHS) Golden Eagle Band members participated in the Region 8 UIL Solo and Ensemble Competition February 18 at Waco High School. Students selected and prepared pieces from the State Prescribed Music List ranging in difficulty levels with some requiring memorization. Most selections require performance with a piano accompanist.

Charles Nemec earned a first division rating on trumpet, and Erika Sy received a first division superior rating on tuba. Sy will advance to the state competition in May.

The following students received second division excellent ratings: Deneb Lopez (flute); Jack Cumins (bass clarinet); Anna Able (baritone); Keshau Boyd (tuba); and Shelby Sifford (alto saxophone).

“I am proud of the work that members of the band have put forth, said Kenneth Pointer, HHS Band Director. “They are truly an amazing group of young people to work with on a daily basis.”

On February 25, the sixth grade Eagle Band participated in the Riesel Solo Ensemble Contest and brought home 55 first division medals and 19 second division ribbons. Band members represented their school, district and community with excellence and pride.

Family Consumer Science Students Cook Up Class Credit

Students are cooking up fun while earning class credit in two culinary arts vocational classes at Hillsboro High School. The courses were offered several years ago, and with the growing popularity of the Food Network and television shows like Iron Chef, the district reintroduced the classes and is pleased to have full enrollment.

Each class period has 28 students consisting of nearly as many boys as girls. The special classroom is equipped with five kitchens and a lecture area. Though hesitant at first to prepare and taste new foods, the students are enjoying the adventure. They are also learning about kitchen safety and healthy cooking.

During football season, students prepared typical tailgate party snacks. They also cooked food and set a table for Thanksgiving brunch, putting into practice what they learned in a unit on etiquette. Several students entered baked goods such as pies, cakes, decorated cakes, bread, candies and cookies in the Hill County Fair in January and received prizes including seven first place showings.

According to Marilyn Hill, the family consumer science class teacher, the students’ favorite thing about the class is cooking with friends and sitting down to enjoy meals together. “They are not only gaining useful skills for healthy living, they are learning to work together and communicate,” said Hill. “Some of them may even discover they are interested in a career as a chef or caterer. And who knows, one of them may become the next Rachel Ray or Wolfgang Puck.”

People wishing to give to the Rene Dollar Kemp Memorial Scholarship Fund may contact Jimmy Adams, Finance Director for Hillsboro Independent School District, at 582-8585.
LITERACY FOR ALL  
**TEACHER:** Michelle Steele  
**PURPOSE:** A collection of high-interest, popular books for high school students to read will promote literacy skills and allow students to become successful, independent learners.

ELEVATE WITH ELMO  
**TEACHERS:** Pam Jones, Sharon Powell  
**PURPOSE:** The use of an Elmo character will provide reading enrichment and vocabulary building activities for elementary school ESL, bilingual, morning tutorial and at-risk students.

SCOPING OUT SCIENCE  
**TEACHERS:** Jennifer Faulknor, Holly Henderson  
**PURPOSE:** The SmartScope digital microscope displays on a computer and can be projected to the whole class. It takes photos and movies and creates time-lapse videos. Use of the instrument will increase junior high students’ academic performance, motivation and interest in science.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS: HELP STUDENTS SHINE WITH SENSATIONAL DIGITAL MEDIA  
**TEACHER:** Stephanie Barnes  
**PURPOSE:** Access and use of digital cameras and Flip video cameras for junior high school classroom and extracurricular projects will give students the experience needed to prepare them for a successful future in a world where effective use of technology is the standard.

STOP, LOOK, AND LEARN  
**TEACHER:** Pam Hamilton  
**PURPOSE:** Use of a document camera in intermediate school art and gifted/talented classes will help teachers more effectively model, explain and demonstrate concepts and help students focus, listen and learn skills that will transfer to other academic classroom settings.

HOOK’EM WITH A NOOK  
**TEACHERS:** Daniela Arellano, Mary Coleman (not pictured)  
**PURPOSE:** Wi-Fi Nooks are electronic readers that will offer junior high students a variety of reading options and improve fluency and comprehension.
PAGES 104-105
Connections: schools + community

ZOOMING IN AND FOCUSING ON SCIENCE
TEACHERS: Crystal Buxkemper, Kristi Darnell
PURPOSE: Kindergarten teachers and students will use pocket video cameras to capture videos and still photos during science walks around the campus, science lessons on change, field trips, experiments, cooking projects and other learning activities. Videos and pictures will be uploaded to recap and discuss in class and to share with parents.

GOING PINK - WHEN PIGS ROLL  TEACHER: Kandy Faris
PURPOSE: A composting device called the RolyPig will engage pre-k students in “green” activities and teach students about protecting and restoring the environment.

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ELMO’S WORLD OF ART  TEACHER: Daisy Abreu
PURPOSE: Use of a document camera for elementary art and gifted/talented classes will help students see the demonstrations live and enlarged on the projector screen. This device will also expose students to new technology and prepare them to become successful students and future adults.

PAINTING THE WIND – USING MENTOR TEXTS TO TEACH WRITING
TEACHER: Heather Landrum
PURPOSE: Mentor texts will be available to help junior high students envision the kind of writer they can become and will help teachers move the whole writer forward, rather than each individual piece of writing. Mentor texts serve to not only tell but also show students how to write well.

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PAGE TO STAGE  TEACHER: Karen King
PURPOSE: Bamboo Drawing Tablets will prepare high school students for higher education and future employment opportunities by enabling them to utilize electronic design, the latest technological trend in colleges and workplaces.

DOUBLE VISION  TEACHERS: Deana Headrick, Stephanie Tucker
PURPOSE: Use of a document camera in intermediate school classrooms will help students to better visualize concepts and improve learning outcomes.
connections: schools + community

2011 Accolade Parade Winners

IPADDING OUR WAY TO READING SUCCESS  TEACHER: Jessica Lee
PURPOSE: An iPad in intermediate school special education reading and language arts classes will motivate students and make reading more visual and appealing as well as give teachers an authentic assessment tool in the classroom.

PICTURE PERFECT PROGRESS  TEACHERS: Daisy Abreu, Lyndsey Riegel
PURPOSE: Two Flip cameras will be used in elementary classroom and extracurricular activities to record and document progress in art, art club, music and Rhythm Rascals as well as to reflect and improve upon future projects and performances.

2010 Grant Winners ...cont. from front page

sets of Bluebonnet Award winning novels that engaged readers in energetic and natural conversations. Students also participated in a videoconference discussion with other schools in the district, corresponded with two Baylor students, and created plays based on the novels, complete with costumes and backdrops.

Two of the grant projects included the purchase of document cameras for the intermediate and junior high schools that provided students visual access to pictures and text during reading lessons, and to models and equations during math lessons. The technology helped reading and math teachers model processes and demonstrate thinking aloud while maintaining eye contact with students, thus increasing student engagement in the lessons.

Another successful 2010 grant project, “Flip for Science,” gave students the opportunity to record science experiments, presentations, reports, demonstrations and interviews. The flip video cameras increased student involvement in the learning process and provided an effective means of communications with parents about student projects.

“With support from the Foundation, we are able to employ many effective classroom strategies that we couldn’t afford under the regular school budget,” said Nancy Divin, HISD Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. “These innovative projects funded by the grants inspire students and provide them with important opportunities to succeed in school.”

Join us for Community Coffee

Wed., April 13, 7:30 - 9 a.m.
This month’s topic: Legislative Issues Update

Hillsboro ISD Annex
119 East Franklin Street

Free coffee and continental breakfast provided.

All community members are invited to this monthly opportunity to learn about the latest happenings in the district and ask questions of administration, board members and other staff.

HISD’s Community Coffee events are held during the school year every Wednesday after the second Monday of the month.
Students Go for Academic Gold

Nearly 100 Hillsboro Independent School District (HISD) second through fifth grade students competed at the UIL Elementary Academic District Competition on November 9. Forty students received medals in various subject areas including oral reading, creative writing, spelling, storytelling, art and music recognition, mathematics, dictionary skills, listening skills, and social studies.

Pam Hamilton, Hillsboro Intermediate School (HIS) UIL Coordinator, is particularly proud that HISD students took first place in spelling in all grade levels. The excitement built as teachers and students initially heard that a second grader won first place in spelling, then received word that a third grader accomplished the same, a fourth grader followed suit, with the grand finale news that fifth grade students earned first, second and third place medals.

Medal winners were honored at a special school assembly the week before Thanksgiving that included strobe lights, Olympic music, and a presentation of medals by HIS Principal Angela Boyd.

On March 10, more than 100 sixth through eighth grade students competed at the UIL Junior High Academic District Competition and took home 36 medals including 10 first place awards. Subject areas included art, calculator, dictionary skills, impromptu speaking, listening, maps/graphs/charts, mathematics, modern oratory, number sense, oral reading, science, social studies, and spelling. Some seventh and eighth grade students competed prior to the event day in ready writing and editorial writing.

Participation in UIL Elementary Academic is open to any student who is interested. Students choose areas of study for which they have the most success and passion. Hillsboro Junior High students qualify to compete at the district level through auditions and are selected for specific subjects after additional practices. Skills tested at UIL are above and beyond regular classroom offerings. For several months prior to competition, student teams meet with coaches before and after school and at other times as necessary.

“The students really work hard to prepare for UIL, and when the day of the event arrives, everyone feels the sense of excitement rising,” said Hamilton. “And once they’ve competed, students feel a great sense of release and pride for what they’ve accomplished. Nothing compares to the look of delight I see on their faces that day.”

Once Upon a Time Takes the Stage

One of the greatest scientists of all time, Albert Einstein, once said, “If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.”

Einstein would certainly approve as Hillsboro Intermediate School students not only read but performed one of the most beloved fairy tales of all time, Cinderella the Musical, on March 6 and 7. A cast and crew of more than 50 students entertained a standing room only crowd.

Glenn Doyle served as director and producer, with Judie Dibbern returning as choreographer and Kathleen Redell as set designer. Lynsey Riegel was assistant music director and Drew Youngblood served as stage manager.

Modern Twist on a Timeless Tale

The Hillsboro High School (HHS) Theatre Department prepared diligently for the Spring UIL One Act Play Competition on March 26 with their production of Kabuki Lady Macbeth by Karen Sunde. The play is a twist on the timeless tale of Macbeth with a focus on the viewpoint of the female characters.

The students incorporated elements of Kabuki theatre into all phases of the production. They studied specific make-up styles, movement, and shadow play which are utilized throughout the production. One of the essentials of Kabuki theatre is the KI player – an actor who punctuates the action through the use of traditional Japanese instruments. This actor is on stage throughout the play.

Directed by Karen King, HHS Theater Arts Teacher, the cast included Jahni Garrett, Peyton Castleberry, Megan Ford, Sarah Sampson, Peter Zarate IV, Jaryd Lyon, Issac Harrell, Patrick Smith, Chris Pena, Jouse Ramirez, Dewey Brannan, Taylor Gill, and Timothy Weeden. Crew members were John Wilson, Ben Underwood, Emily Brown, Lauren Neal, and Abigail Wilson.

SkillsUSA Team Displays Superior Craftsmanship, Wins Best of Show

A person recently visiting the Hillsboro High School (HHS) building trades class may have thought they stumbled into a designer furniture gallery. That’s because for the last several months students have been working on extraordinary projects for entry in the SkillsUSA Team District Competition in Waco at Texas State Technical College in February.

Up against some big name schools from the Dallas/Fort Worth area, the HHS team proudly brought back 16 blue ribbons out of 19 entries, with Senior Francisco Gonzalez earning Best of Show for his red chestnut-stained maple side table/buffet. This year marks the ninth time HHS has earned this top award.

Other exceptional creations include junior Jesse Hughes’ walnut-stained maple executive desk and an entertainment center built by Junior Cory Pearson to hold his father’s large flat screen television. Senior Jamesica Price had the smallest project – a unicorn “piggy” bank with golden hooves and glittery purple mane and tail. When she arrived home after the competition she found a few dollars worth of coins in the bank given by admirers of her creation.

Some students participated in an onsite cabinetry building competition on the day of the event where they received blueprints and a limited amount of time to construct a piece with multiple complex joinery. Francisco Gonzalez earned first place and Isaac Abrego finished second. Gonzalez and other blue ribbon winners will represent HHS and District 6 at the state competition in Corpus Christi at the end of March.

“Once again, the Skills USA Team has shown exceptional creativity and craftsmanship in their projects,” said Kyle Davis, HHS vocational teacher. “I never cease to be amazed at how dedicated and talented these students are.”
Go Green to Earn Green for Hillsboro Schools

Recycling is good for the earth, and now it’s good for our little corner of the world.

US GreenFiber, the largest producer of cellulose insulation in North America, will provide free recycling bins on each Hillsboro Independent School (HISD) campus that accept the following items from schools and city residents:

- Brown paper bags
- Cardboard
- Cereal boxes
- Construction paper
- Magazines
- Newspaper
- Office paper
- Paperback books
- Phone books
- Shredded paper

(Glass, aluminum, metal, plastic bottles, plastic bags and Styrofoam are NOT accepted.)

Recycling these items will not only reduce the district’s $2,800 per month dumpster charges but also put a little “green” back in the district’s budget — US GreenFiber will pay the district $20 per ton for materials picked up from the bins.

“This is a win-win partnership for everyone involved,” said Jimmy Adams, HISD Finance Director. “We save on expenses and earn some revenue. US GreenFiber has access to materials that allow them to continue producing insulation made primarily from recycled materials, and our environment is better protected.”

Community members are encouraged to utilize the containers to discard their recyclable paper products to help the earth and benefit local schools.

For more information about the US GreenFiber recycling program, visit www.greenfiber.com, click on “Corporate” and “Community Paper Recycling Program.”

Hillsboro ISD Education Foundation Nearing Goal, Still Taking Pledges

The Hillsboro ISD Education Foundation is nearing its goal of raising $80,000 this year to fund innovative classroom strategies and support other vital educational needs for students of Hillsboro Independent School District.

The Foundation is proud to announce that it has reached 75 percent of its total, at $60,670. Pledges are from school staff, individual community members, Foundation board members, the school district’s board of trustees, and local businesses.

Only $19,330 from our goal! $60,670 Raised

Total Goal $80,000

Diamond $10,000
Gold $5,000
Silver $2,500
Bronze $1,000
Maroon $500
Investor $250-$499
Friends up to $249

Go Green to Earn Green for Hillsboro Schools

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Contact Katharine Matthys at (254) 582-8585, ext. 221, or matthys@hillsboroisd.org about giving and sponsorship opportunities.

Upcoming Eagle Legacy Awards Banquet

Mark your calendars for May 21, 2011 - tickets on sale now!

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