Hats off to the Class of 2012

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Photo by Sheri Hemrick
More than 100 seniors from the Class of 2012 remembered the good times, said their farewells, and looked forward to great days ahead at this year’s Hillsboro High School (HHS) commencement ceremony on Friday, May 25, at 8:00 p.m. at Eagle Stadium.

Most of the graduates plan to continue their education beyond high school. Their career ambitions span a range of fields including teaching, nursing, medicine, culinary arts, photography, law enforcement, dental, physical therapy, electrical engineering, and more. “These students have worked hard, and I believe they can become whatever they want to become,” said Superintendent James “Buck” Gilcrease. “This is just the beginning of many more great things for them.”

Among the students honored at the graduation event, Gilcrease and district administration commended the top two students of the Class of 2012 – Valedictorian Beatriz Trejo and Salutatorian Efrayn Hernandez.

Trejo’s many high school activities and honors included National Honor Society, recipient of the History Award and Art Award, and member of the Soccer Team, Business Professionals of America, and Learn and Serve. She also placed in Social Studies at the UIL Academic District Competition. At the end of her junior year she completed a summer fashion design program at Moore College of Art and Design.

She has completed four college-level classes. Trejo will attend the University of Texas at Arlington this fall where she will pursue a degree in accounting.

While at HHS, Hernandez was Vice President of the National Honor Society and an active member of Future Farmers of America for four years, qualifying for state two times. He also assisted in the re-establishment of the Business Professionals of America organization at HHS. He has completed two college courses and will finish a third this summer. Hernandez will attend The University of Texas at Austin this fall to pursue a Bachelor’s in psychology with plans to also obtain a Master’s and Doctorate degree in the same field.

The HISD administration, teachers, and staff congratulate all graduates of the Hillsboro High School Class of 2012 for a job well done!
Hillsboro ISD has named Stephanie Jo Hayes, 5th grade science teacher at Hillsboro Intermediate School (HIS), and Jennifer Faulknor, 9th grade biology and pre-AP biology teacher at Hillsboro High School (HHS), as its 2011-2012 Teachers of the Year.

Hayes has a Bachelors and Masters from Sam Houston State University. Now in her 5th year as a teacher, she is known for successfully encouraging and challenging children to grow academically and personally by designing instruction based on individual student interests and needs.

She was instrumental in coordinating this year’s Super STAAR Saturday for 5th grade students who needed extra help preparing for the STAAR test.

As 5th grade science team leader, Hayes communicates regularly with her team, serving as an excellent role model and assisting them however she can. She is described by her peers as sincere, creative, helpful, supportive, professional, and responsive.

HIS Principal Angela Boyd said Hayes is “a teacher who exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding educator and exceptional team leader.”

This year Faulknor developed tutorials for her students that promoted higher level thinking to better prepare them for the challenging new End of Course state assessment. And she is not only highly supportive of her own students but also serves the school with involvement in a variety of HHS events and activities.

Faulknor earned a Bachelors from Tarleton Texas A&M at College Station and a Masters from Tarleton State University and has been teaching in HISD for 13 years.

She is skilled at using a variety of instructional strategies that highly engage her 9th grade students. She sincerely cares about them and goes the extra mile to ensure that they have what they need to succeed.

Hillsboro ISD congratulates and thanks these two extraordinary educators for their dedication to their students and schools!
Before April of this year, the district campus libraries operated with 12-year-old software that was adequate when purchased but had become inefficient due to increasing data management needs. Also, newer computers with the latest operating systems were no longer compatible with the dated technology.

HISD Library Director Ann Teel investigated new software options, but with statewide budget cuts that affected library spending, the district was not in a position to fund the purchase.

“Our administration fully supports our libraries. With limited funds this year, however, some important educational projects like this one would have to wait,” she said.

“Reading is vital to student success, and having an efficient library system that gives children access to the books they need is key. So I continued to look for how we might be able to fund the software.”

Teel then noticed a reminder in the local newspaper about the annual application for grants from the Smith Foundation, an organization with the mission of enriching the lives of Hill County citizens by financially supporting worthwhile projects. She also received news that the software the library needed was being offered at half of its original price.

So Teel began work immediately to gather the necessary data to submit a grant by the March 1 deadline. HISD gladly received notification on March 23 that it had received full funding just in time to get the promotional pricing.

As of April 30, the HISD Project Team completed training, and the software is up and running and in use by students, parents, teachers, and library staff.

The new software, called Follett Destiny, is Web-based, easy to use, and easy to access through a link on the home page of the HISD Web site or at https://hillsboroisd.follettdestiny.com (no www).

Students, parents, and teachers retrieve library and textbook information from home computers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Each school library and all classrooms have computers that students can use to access the site. Students can reserve books on their own. The home page shows the most popular books, most checked out books, and new arrivals.

Follett Destiny provides more effective library management and textbook control and allows improved student accountability and parent communication.

And district costs are lowered by the software’s ability to show inventory at all schools, thus allowing the transferring of books from building to building and accurately predicting needs instead of purchasing unnecessary replacements.

“We are so thankful to the Smith Foundation for supporting this important educational need in our district,” said Teel.

“Children who are successful readers have more confidence, do better in school, and lead more productive lives. The Foundation’s support helps ensure that our students have the resources needed to develop this essential skill.”

-HISD Library Director Ann Teel
High School Students Compete Hard, Finish Well

Hillsboro High School students finished the year strong in academic, theater, and athletic competition

At the UIL academic district contest, first place in Social Studies went to the team of Mikel Lewis, Beatrice Trejo, Aaron Sy and Keshoun Boyd. Mikel Lewis received first place as an individual, and Dewey Brannan took first place in Number Sense.

At regionals, Beatrice Trejo won first place in Social Studies, and Peyton Castleberry won second place in Prose Interpretation, earning both students spots at the State Meet in Austin.

Theater students’ performance of “Mother Courage and Her Children” at the district level secured them a trip to the regional competition. They brought home 52 medals from the two events including Best Actress for Peyton Castleberry at both district and regionals and Best Actor for Jaryd Lyon at district.

Athletically, three teams in particular stood out this season. Led by Bryan Segura and Sonia Morales, all 14 members of the track team qualified to compete at the regional meet this year.

The boys’ tennis team competed in seven tournaments this spring, placing second in five. And the girls’ team placed second overall at district, sending singles players Macy Bagley and Carolina Herrera to the regional competition.

After a challenging start, the girls’ softball team came together to win three district games in a row and earn a playoff berth.

Interim athletic director Jimmy Hestand notes the growth and improvement of athletic programs at the district and credits the coaches and kids for their hard work as well as the administration’s commitment to the program.

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A MOMENT LASTS ALL OF A SECOND, BUT THE MEMORY LIVES ON FOREVER...

Thank you to our students, parents, teachers, and staff for making the 2011-2012 school year a great one!
class of 2012 scholarship awards

Hillsboro ISD thanks the following scholarship providers for their contribution to the future of our students and congratulates the hardworking seniors who earned more than $221,000 in awards.

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<th>AWARD/SCHOLARSHIP</th>
<th>STUDENT RECIPIENT(S)</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACU Awards: A.B. Barrett Award</td>
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<td>ACU Awards: ACU Grant</td>
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<td>Hill College Academic Scholarship</td>
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<td>Hill College Band Scholarship</td>
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<td>Hill County Retired School Personnel Scholarship</td>
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<td>Hill County Texas Exes Scholarship</td>
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<td>Hillsboro Garden Club Scholarship</td>
<td>Rubi Chaire</td>
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<td>Hillsboro Go Texan Scholarship</td>
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<td>Hillsboro High School Teacher’s Scholarship</td>
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<td>Jack Neal Memorial Scholarship (Hillsboro Exes)</td>
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<td>Justin Jamar Brooks Memorial Scholarship</td>
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<td>Les Causeuses Hill College Scholarship</td>
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<td>Les Causeuses Science Award</td>
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<td>Lion’s Club Scholarship</td>
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<td>Marshall and Marshall Scholarship</td>
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<td>Michael Harris Scholarship</td>
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<td>Michelle Chavez Memorial Scholarship</td>
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<td>Monday Review Club Scholarship</td>
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<td>Pedro De Los Santos Scholarship</td>
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<td>Rene Kemp Memorial Scholarship</td>
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<td>Rotary Club Boy and Girl Scholarship</td>
<td>Juan Lince, Jakara Terry</td>
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<td>Rotary Club Scholarship</td>
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<td>Sesame Club Scholarship</td>
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<td>Rubi Chaire, Deyanit Garcia, Edith Mosca, Blanca Rodriguez, Jakara Terry</td>
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<td>UMHB Scholarship</td>
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<td>University of Texas at San Antonio Scholarship</td>
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<td>Women in Business Scholarship</td>
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<td>Woodmen of the World – Milton Porter Memorial Scholarship</td>
<td>Sabrina Castillo</td>
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The accomplishments of the top ten percent graduates of the Hillsboro High School Class of 2012 were celebrated at the third annual Eagles Legacy Awards Banquet on May 19. More than 200 people attended the event sponsored by the Hillsboro ISD Education Foundation. In turn, the top ten percent students honored HISD teachers and employees who made a significant impact on their lives. Superintendent Buck Gilcrease concluded the evening with words of admiration for the students’ accomplishments, and Foundation Directors presented each with a new iPad. All plan to attend college in the fall. This year’s students and their honored teachers/employees are:

**CORINNA CRUZ**  
College: University of Houston  
Major/Career: Psychology  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Coach Jimmy Hestand

**ALVARO FUENTES**  
College: University of North Texas, Denton  
Major/Career: Mechanical Engineering (Minor in Criminal Justice)  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Kyle Davis

**DEYANIT GARCIA**  
College: Abilene Christian University  
Major/Career: Bachelors of Science in Nursing/Registered Nurse  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Rosa Lopez

**ABIGAIL GILLIAM**  
College: Baylor University  
Major/Career: History (Minor in Political Science)/Historian for Document Conservation at Museums (will also pursue a Ph.D.)  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Michelle Steele

**EFRAYN HERNANDEZ (SALUTATORIAN)**  
College: University of Texas, Austin  
Major/Career: Psychology (will also pursue a Master’s and Doctorate)  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Bill Woody

**JESSE HUGHES**  
College: Baylor University,  
Major/Career: Computer Science  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Tabatha Davis

**EDDIE PINEDA**  
College: Tarleton State University  
Major/Career: Biomedical Science (will go on to Medical School)  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Jennifer Faulknor

**JOSE PINEDA**  
College: University of North Texas, Denton  
Major/Career: Engineering  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Coach Joey Moss

**MARLENE PRIETO-CORTEZ**  
College: Tarleton State University  
Major/Career: Biology  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Rosie Grindstaff

**AARON SY**  
College: University of Texas, Austin  
Major/Career: Civil Engineering  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Cynthia Morris

**BEATRIZ TREJO (VALEDICTORIAN)**  
College: University of Texas, Arlington  
Major/Career: Accounting  
Most Influential HISD Teacher/Employee: Anand Salodkar
From Student Teacher to Assistant Superintendent, It’s Been an Adventure

NANCY DIVIN RETIRING AFTER 36 YEARS OF SERVICE

Assistant Superintendent Nancy Divin leaves behind a legacy of commitment to students that will be remembered for years. She has positively impacted thousands of Hillsboro students and families for more than three decades through her sincere love for children and dedication to excellence in education.

After earning a Bachelors of Arts in Education from Texas A&M Commerce and a Masters of Educational Administration/Mid-Management from Tarleton State University, Divin devoted her entire career to Hillsboro ISD (HISD). She began as a student teacher in 1973-1974, followed by positions as a 1st grade teacher, 3rd grade teacher, gifted/talented elementary teacher, district gifted/talented coordinator, assistant principal, principal, director of curriculum and instruction, and her final role as assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

“Every year has been a great adventure,” said Divin. “I am extremely proud to have worked for a district that continues to be innovative in its approach to education, and where the best interest of students is the priority.”

She recalls many special moments in her career, including one when she was the principal of Hillsboro Elementary, and the school received an exemplary rating. A similar event occurred a few years ago at Hillsboro High School when it achieved a remarkable turnaround in student assessment performance.

“I watched everyone work so hard to make changes and improve – the students, the parents, the teachers, the administration,” said Divin. “When they received the news of their improved rating, they were so proud and excited, and I was, too!”

Another career highlight for Divin was the opening of the new Hillsboro Intermediate School campus. In addition to collaborating with other district administrators during the building phase and ordering of furnishings, she pulled teachers from two different existing schools to build a new, unified team and culture. “The staff worked together to create an environment where students would thrive and succeed,” she said. “It was a privilege to be part of such an important step forward for our district and community.”

As Divin enters retirement, her devotion to her life calling – children and education – does not waver. “Retirement is just a word,” she said. “I still plan on remaining involved with HISD and in the ever-changing world of education.”

She does plan on spending a large part of her newfound extra time with her husband, Norman, of 38 years and her sons, daughters-in-law, and precious grandchildren. Another trip to China to visit her youngest son and his wife is on the horizon as well.

Divin considers the HISD staff to be an extension of her family. She is overwhelming grateful for their personal commitment to one another and how they have walked through many difficult times together. And she is proud to have served the extraordinary community of Hillsboro.

Divin leaves HISD staff with this parting challenge: “Our students deserve the very best education possible so that they have every opportunity to be successful in the future. As an educator, you help them achieve that success, making lives better for students and their families. Keep your focus on the children, like you always have, and they will accomplish more than you could ever imagine.”
LYNDA DUNCAN Just Like a Family

After a career of 27 years in education, including 22 with Hillsboro ISD (HISD), Lynda Duncan, Director of Student Academic Services, retires and leaves behind fond memories of people who are more than co-workers – they’re family.

After receiving a Bachelor’s of Science in Education from the University of Houston at Victoria, Duncan started her career in education teaching 3rd grade for five years in Beeville, Texas. She and her family then moved to Hillsboro where she continued as a 3rd grade teacher for three more years at Hillsboro Elementary. During that time she earned a Masters of Education at Tarleton State University. She was promoted to principal of Franklin Elementary in 1993, and in January of 2007 she added the role of Hillsboro Elementary Principal, leading both campuses until December 2009 when she moved into her current position at the district office.

“When I first moved here, the teaching staff welcomed me with open arms,” said Duncan. “What impressed me the most and still does is how they invest in each child by truly getting to know each one. They really care about their students and about each other.”

Duncan also noted the powerful team attitude of the teachers in the district. “When we face challenges or decisions, everyone gives input and offers solutions,” she said. “We come to a consensus based on what is best for the students and then stand together on that decision.”

She can’t recall a time in her life when she didn’t want to be a teacher. She grew up with two sisters and a brother, and while they were playing “house” she was playing “school.” “I guess it’s just what I was always meant to do,” Duncan said.

As she enters retirement, one thing she is looking forward to is not getting up so early. But since she lives on a farm, Abney will still rise before the sun on some mornings as she helps her husband and sons with everything from bookkeeping to bailing hay. She is also very excited about having more time to spend with her two very young grandchildren who are 8 months and 19 months.

Hillsboro ISD offers its best wishes to Patricia Abney and is grateful to her for her decade of service to the children of our community!

PATRICIA ABNEY Helping Students Was Best Part of Ride

For almost 19 years, including 10 with Hillsboro ISD, Pat Abney rose before the sun to begin her work day as a school bus driver. What started as “just a job” soon became one of her greatest joys. “It never really felt like work,” said Abney. “I have loved getting to know the students and being an encouragement to them whenever I could.”

Abney selected the role because the schedule allowed her to be with her own young children when they finished school each day. But when her kids grew up, and she just kept on driving. She has received much gratification over the years from listening to and helping out students. If they were struggling in school, she would encourage them to talk to their teachers, and many times they would return to tell her that they followed her advice and that it helped.

As she enters retirement, one thing she is looking forward to is not getting up so early. But since she lives on a farm, Abney will still drive. What started as something she really felt like work, became one of her greatest joys.

"Helping Students Was best Part of Ride"
BRENDA REID  Retired High School Secretary Celebrated Students’ Successes

After 16 years of service to Hillsboro ISD, Brenda Reid relinquished her cherished role as Hillsboro High School (HHS) Secretary last September to enter retirement. She worked at schools and school districts most of her 38-year career, including positions as a teacher’s aide, counselor’s secretary and principal’s secretary.

As HHS Secretary, she enjoyed the variety that each day brought. “There was never a dull moment in my job,” said Reid. “Though I had some regular routines in dealing with the daily business of the school, there was always something exciting and different happening, too.”

BRENDRA REID
Retired High School Secretary Celebrated Students’ Successes

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“Just to be there and support that student and help her celebrate what she had accomplished – it’s a feeling I can’t describe,” said Reid. “I am so proud of her and every student I have known in my years at HISD.”

Though she misses the kids and the faculty at HHS, Reid likes the new, leisurely pace of mornings as a retired person, taking her time to drink coffee, watch the news, and make the bed. Her days are kept busy with helping her elderly mother, working with her husband, Claude, at his company, tending her garden, taking care of their horses, and putting on rodeos every Saturday in Fort Worth.

“I will never forget all the students, teachers, staff, and parents who I came to know and love during my years at HHS,” said Reid.

DEBBIE BAKER  Teacher Gave Students the Invaluable Gift of Reading

As 7th grade reading teacher Debbie Baker closes the book on a successful 19-year career with Hillsboro ISD (HISD), she opens the page to a new, exciting chapter in her life as she enters retirement. She will fondly remember many HHS students who worked hard against tough challenges but overcame. She remembers in particular one year when a student was the first person in her family (including cousins) to graduate from high school. The student was afraid to walk across the stage at the commencement ceremony, but Reid and other faculty and staff encouraged her and cheered her on – and she did it.

“Just to be there and support that student and help her celebrate what she had accomplished – it’s a feeling I can’t describe,” said Reid. “I am so proud of her and every student I have known in my years at HISD.”

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“The great thing about being a teacher in a small town is that you still get to see your students for years after they’ve been in your class,” said Baker. “You can really get to know them and be a part of their lives here. I have loved that.”

Baker’s favorite moments in her career were the times when a reluctant reader would find a book he or she liked and have a change of heart. “Reading is vital to students’ success in the future,” she said. “It’s a skill they need for the rest of their lives, so I felt like it was not only my job to advance their reading but to also help them really enjoy it.”

As she leaves the classroom for retirement, Baker will miss her school family but looks forward to spending more time with her husband, Paul, of 34 years, and driving to visit her adult children, Katie, Jenny, and Paul Caswell, who live in other cities in Texas. She is also glad to have more time to devote to her favorite hobbies – reading, gardening, and travel.

A sincere thank you to Debbie Baker for giving the invaluable gift of reading to the children of Hillsboro for 19 years!
Hillsboro High School Class of 2012’s DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

“Becoming an electrical engineer and living a great life with a family.”

“To do well in college and become a Kindergarten teacher. And to be happy with what I do in the future.”

“To be financially stable. I never had that for myself with my family. It’s my greatest goal in life. I want to give the life that I’ve never had to my own children.”

“To acquire a doctorate in music and go wherever music takes me.”

“Become a doctor or a dentist and help people because that’s what I like to do.”

“Being successful and enjoying every day of my job.”

“Obtain my bachelor’s degree in computer science, focusing on software engineering. Afterwards, having a job in that field and living a comfortable life.”

“To have a successful career in the military and a happy life.”

“To be a social worker for CPS.”

“To become a nurse so I can make a difference in the community and maybe one day in another country.”

“To become a doctor and heal sick kids. And have a big house with an indoor swimming pool.”

“To become a doctor or a dentist and help people because that’s what I like to do.”

“To have a happy, fun, exciting, traveling life.”

“Going to college and starting my career. I want to have a better job and a better life and use everything my teachers have taught me.”

“To be a chef in a 5-star restaurant or a forensic scientist.”

“To do well in college and become a Kindergarten teacher. And to be happy with what I do in the future.”

“To be financially stable. I never had that for myself with my family. It’s my greatest goal in life. I want to give the life that I’ve never had to my own children.”

“To acquire a doctorate in music and go wherever music takes me.”

“Become a doctor or a dentist and help people because that’s what I like to do.”

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