Congratulations
Class of 2017!

story on page 12–13

Photo by Sheri Hemrick
Hillsboro High School’s (HHS) speech and debate team recently claimed the University Scholastic League (UIL) district 17-4A team sweepstakes award for the highest overall point total. In addition to bragging rights, the team received a plaque and additional points for the school’s overall academic team.

Notably, Alex Perez (senior), Raj Patel (sophomore), and Luke Steeke (sophomore) swept the poetry division, with Perez winning poetry and informative speaking. Steeke also earned the “Golden Gavel,” awarded to the individual with the highest total speaker points in cross-examination debate. Olivia Hunt (sophomore) won prose interpretation. Hunt and Steeke both advanced to the state UIL, where Hunt received a 5th place medal in prose interpretation and Steeke received the state silver medal in poetry interpretation.

“This is the first time in Coach Aimee Kasprzyk’s tenure the team has won sweepstakes, the Golden Gavel, or qualified multiple students for state,” Kasprzyk said. “Competing at this level requires intelligence, talent and a strong work ethic,” Kasprzyk said. “The 15 members of the team have worked hard all year, and I couldn’t be more proud.”

HHS Speech and Debate Team Claims First District Sweepstakes Award

High School Bands

The Sweet Sound of Award-Winning Seasons

After completing auditions, the Hillsboro High School marching band musicians are divided into the concert and symphonic performance bands, entertaining audiences throughout the rest of the academic year, most recently at the Spring Concert held on May 15.

Both bands competed in University Interscholastic League (UIL) events throughout the season. The UIL is a key component of the public school curriculum, sponsoring 10 music events throughout the year in which nearly 600,000 middle, junior, and senior high school musicians participate. Both the high school concert and symphonic bands were awarded first division honors for their performances in these events.

The symphonic band went on to claim the top spot in the first division of the UIL Sight-Reading Competition.

A sight-reading competition adds a unique—and challenging—twist to a traditional performance. “Students are asked to play a piece they have never seen before,” explained Darrington White, the director of the symphonic band. “We are given eight minutes to prepare, to go over tone and tempo, but we are not allowed to practice.” Once the time is up, they perform the new piece before a panel of three judges.

The students’ tremendous accomplishment of placing in the first division for both performance and sight-reading competitions.

The students’ commitment throughout the year paid off with the tremendous accomplishment of placing in the first division for both performance and sight-reading competitions.

Junior High School Bands Hit the Right Notes Across The State of Texas

On May 18, both the 6th grade and the 7th/8th grade Hillsboro Junior High School (HJHS) concert bands set out for Temple, Texas to perform in the Temple College Band Invitational. Over two days, junior high school bands from across the state performed for a panel of judges.

“The bands are judged on sound, tone, the ability to play together, music choice and their overall stage presentation,” explained Glenn Doyle, the band director for HJHS. “They perform a program of three songs, and then the judges give them an overall rating among the approximately 25 bands who competed.”

The 6th grade Eagle Band and the HJHS Concert Band received Division One Ratings from all the judges at the Temple College Band Invitational.

The following day, the honors band headed to the Lone Star Classic Festival at the University of North Texas to perform at the Murchison Center, one of the premier concert halls in the United States.

The band received a “Superior” rating in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitions—an achievement that both recognized and honored the students’ hard work, dedication and talent.
EagleBots Pave Way for HJHS Robotics Program

With a “figure it out as we go” attitude, the Hilsboro Junior High School EagleBots had a successful first-year team experience with their robot R.O.B. at the Central Texas FIRST Lego League (FLL) qualifier event in February.

“Although they didn’t advance, the EagleBots did very well,” said robotics coach Tammy Fry. “This was the first year for everyone involved, including coaches, and I will forever be impressed with the way they worked together.”

For the project, students identified a problem in human and animal interaction, designed a solution for improving the interaction and shared the information. The EagleBots were also judged on their team dynamics, robot design and robot game missions.

Fry said she’s expecting at least one team in each grade level next year.

“Robotics gives students opportunities to apply science, engineering, technology and math concepts to real-world problems,” said Fry. “It’s been an amazing experience, and we’re getting fired up for next year.”

Connections

HONORING THE 2017 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Each year Hillsboro ISD (HISD) honors two teachers who, as experts in their field, guide students of all backgrounds and abilities to achieve excellence through lifelong learning. Their leadership and thoughtful innovation foster a culture of respect and success both in and outside the classroom.

They will go on to be considered for Texas Teacher of the Year.

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Kandy Faris

Inspiring Leader

Kandy Faris inspires her prekindergarten students, fellow teachers and staff with her energy, passion and enthusiasm for trying new ideas. Her efforts have a broad reach throughout the school, working on the campus design team, which resulted in several successful events this year, piloting new digital portfolios and actively advocating for grants to receive new technology and other educational resources for the classrooms.

Ms. Faris embraces new ideas and creative solutions which she demonstrated this year by introducing flexible seating into her classroom when it had only been tried with older children. She believed that the same success seen in other grades could translate to her own students by creating a learning environment where they could make choices and discover what makes them most comfortable and focused in the classroom. This effort and the great results inspired other teachers to consider what changes or creative solutions they might adopt in their classroom environments to meet the different needs of their students.

Ms. Faris goes above and beyond the standard academic requirements to teach each student as a whole child. Her resourcefulness, generous spirit and tenacity make her a teacher everyone can admire.

Her nomination reads in part, “Ms. Faris has students of many different abilities and reads in her classroom, yet she works tirelessly to provide them each with an authentic learning experience, designed just for them, in a way that they would be encouraged to try new things and grow and still reach higher for a new level of learning.”

Secondary Teacher of the Year

John “Doc” Robertson

Learning For Life

John “Doc” Robertson inspires students to be lifelong learners teaching them lessons they use beyond the classroom walls. His focus is on the authenticity of the education process because he believes that leads to a more profound understanding of what has been taught.

As the athletic trainer for HHS and teacher for both Principles of Health Science and Sports Medicine classes, he has a unique opportunity to offer up real-world applications of what his students learn in the classroom.

Upon completion of a unit of study on CPR, his students become CPR certified, and sports medicine students serve as athletic trainers to fellow high school athletes, motivating them to become active leaders.

Doc’s own leadership and countless hours spent creating and organizing venues to honor leaders among the HISD community serve as inspiration for students to do the same. He has established and maintains both the HHS Athlete of the Year and the HHS Senior Athlete of the Year.

Doc also works diligently gathering photos and stories of former HHS students who were members of the Armed Services to display on the Veterans’ Wall of Honor. To quote his nomination, this serves to “publicly honor Hillsboro veterans throughout the hallways of the high school. Students stop, read and connect with the lives, legacies and sacrifices of former HHS students.”

Doc’s passion for his students and his ability to tap into their desire to become leaders is a reason to celebrate and honor him this year.

Honoring the 2017 Teachers of the Year
Top Graduating Students Honored at the Eagle Legacy Awards Banquet

On the evening of May 20, the Hillsboro ISD Education Foundation honored 13 graduating Hillsboro High School seniors representing the top 10 percent of students in academic achievement at the Eagle Legacy Awards Banquet. The distinguished students, their parents and honored teachers enjoyed a catered dinner with desserts provided by high school culinary students and served by members of the National Junior Honor Society. In addition to the recognition of the students’ achievements, each senior recognized and thanked an educator or HISD employee who served as a mentor and was integral to their academic success. The students were also rewarded for their accomplishments, with 11 of them receiving a $600 scholarship and two being gifted with laptops.

**GRADUATE:** Jada Benson  
**COLLEGE:** Texas A&M  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Rameisha Blackshear

**GRADUATE:** Ignacio Carmona  
**COLLEGE:** University of Texas  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Damaris Nuuanu

**GRADUATE:** Kade Crouch  
**COLLEGE:** Texas A&M  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Molly Hale

**GRADUATE:** Jared Easterling  
**COLLEGE:** Navarro College  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** John “Doc” Robertson

**GRADUATE:** Diana Hernandez  
**COLLEGE:** University of Texas Arlington  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Joey Moss

**GRADUATE:** Raven Healip-Shelton  
**COLLEGE:** University of Texas Arlington  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Kyle Davis

**GRADUATE:** Jared Easterling  
**COLLEGE:** Hill College  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Aimee Kasprzyk

**GRADUATE:** Greyson Lee  
**COLLEGE:** Temple College  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Jeff Hawkins

**GRADUATE:** Alex Perez  
**COLLEGE:** Hill College  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Aimee Kasprzyk

**GRADUATE:** Adriana Rodriguez  
**COLLEGE:** Texas State University  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Damaris Nuuanu

**GRADUATE:** Drew Schroeder  
**COLLEGE:** Texas A&M  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Terri Curry

**GRADUATE:** Luke Steele  
**COLLEGE:** Texas A&M Corpus Christi  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Michelle Steele

**GRADUATE:** Ben Wilson  
**COLLEGE:** Hill College  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL HISD EDUCATOR / EMPLOYEE:** Kyle Bodeker

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
Robert Skelton

**Love Your Life’s Work**

Robert Skelton knew she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher from her earliest years. She loved her own kindergarten teacher, admired her, and can still tell you exactly what she looked like to this day. Skelton fulfilled her dream and taught first grade and kindergarten for 24 years, the majority of which time was spent at Hillsboro ISD (HISD). She retired several years ago but continues to work with Hillsboro’s youngest students, storytelling for pre-K students, and mentoring and tutoring children at Head Start.

“Watching those eyes respond to what I am saying or doing, and watching them become engaged, is magic. It’s what I love,” said Skelton. She is grateful that HISD allowed her to grow as a teacher and encouraged her to try new things—reasons that teaching has been a passion of hers for so long. “To be recognized for what I love to do is a blessing. What I want for the seniors to take with them is that they should do something that fills them up, something they love. Then, it won’t be a job. Their life’s work should fill them with joy,” said Skelton.

District and Foundation Honored for Outstanding Communications

Each year, the Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) recognizes individuals, school districts, education foundations and others for their outstanding contributions in school communications.

HISD Education Foundation and Hillsboro ISD received two 2016 TSPRA Star Awards:

- **GOLD STAR AWARD**  
  Hillsboro ISD Connections Newsletter

- **SILVER STAR AWARD**  
  Hillsboro ISD Education Foundation Brochure
David vs. Goliath in the World Series of Woodshop

Once again this year, the wood shop students of Hillsboro ISD took their competition to the woodshed.

Vying against much larger school districts from around Texas, this talented and tight-knit group brought honor, beautiful projects and an abundance of blue ribbons back home with them from the annual SkillsUSA district and state competitions held this spring.

Senior Marrissa Merritt took the Best in Show award at the district competition in Waxahachie. Wood Shop Teacher Kyle Davis said the Windsor table and chairs Merritt made using a process called “steam bending” won for being a big, aggressive project with a unique style.

The team won 26 blue ribbons and three red at district, which earned the blue ribbon winners a trip to the state competition in Corpus Christi. The results there were outstanding as well, with the team bringing home 25 blue ribbons and one red. Congratulations, all!

Congratulations Christine Robinson from Hillsboro Elementary School!

Robinson was awarded a grant for $9,800.70 from the ESC Region 12 Technology Foundation to increase mathematic and critical thinking skills through computer coding apps and tools.

The foundation provides additional resources to Central Texas schools for programs that enhance learning through the integration of technology in the classroom. Robinson was one of nine award winners.

2017 HISD Retirees

CONGRATULATIONS HISD RETIREES!

After a combined 136 years in education, these seven members of the Hillsboro ISD (HISD) community retired this year. We celebrate them and offer heartfelt thanks to their commitment and dedication to our students.

Valerie Caudle
Valerie Caudle worked for HISD for 18 years as an instructional aide, most recently at Hillsboro Elementary School. She retired earlier in 2017 to spend time with and care for her new grandbaby.

Pam Dunn
Pam Dunn is retiring after 22 years in education, the last three of which have been at HISD where she taught math at Hillsboro High School. Before joining HISD, she spent 19 years with Connally ISD.

Carla Garrett
After 23 years in education, 22 of them spent serving the children of HISD, Carla Garrett is retiring. During her career, she has touched the lives of many of the district’s youngest children, teaching pre-kindergarten at Franklin Elementary School and as director of the district day care.

Laurie McDonald
Laurie McDonald has spent the last 10 of her 27 years in education with HISD. Most recently, she taught elementary music at Hillsboro Intermediate School. For many years, she has served the larger Hillsboro community, as the Praise Band director and pianist for the First United Methodist Church. Prior to teaching at HISD, she worked in West and Abbott ISDs.

Janet Walker
Janet Walker has served HISD for two decades, working in various capacities in the school offices at Hillsboro Elementary School and Hillsboro Intermediate School (HIS), as an instructional aide and most recently as Student Services clerk at HIS.

Darrington White
Darrington White’s career in music education spans 34 years across a variety of school districts. As HISD’s band director, he led the marching, concert and symphonic bands for the past two years, helping them to achieve great competitive success in the University Interscholastic League.

Wendy Wright
Wendy Wright is retiring after 19 years in education, with the last four spent at HISD. She has worked as an English teacher at Hillsboro High School as well as a girls’ coach during her time at the district. Before coming to HISD, she worked for Connally, Whitney and Birdville ISDs.
A Celebration of Learning at the Annual Eagle Expo of Excellence

On March 6, the gymnasiums and common areas of Hillsboro High School overflowed with a showcase of diverse student projects. Nearly 620 students presented at the fifth annual Eagle Expo of Excellence, known as E3. Projects covered a variety of topics from math and science to foreign language, history, literacy, and language arts. About 1,800 attendees also enjoyed choir and ensemble musical performances, a One-Act play, and works of fine art and culinary expertise. Students are proud to celebrate their hard work and communicate what they learned in the process.

““In Mrs. Timpf’s class we created our own version of the solar system. The sun is made up of many gases.”
— Gustavo Herrera, Hillsboro Junior High School

“I was explaining how 3-D printers work! The best part was how fascinated the little kids were with this type of printing.”
— Kyle Robinson, Hillsboro Intermediate School

“In Mrs. Timpf’s class we created our own version of the solar system. The sun is made up of many gases.”
— Gustavo Herrera, Hillsboro Junior High School

“I was really happy to be showing off my robot that I made. It was fun to get to learn about robots and build one with my mom and dad.”
— Skylar Beverly, Hillsboro Elementary School

“I was teaching how to match letters on the iPad.”
— Diego París, Franklin Elementary School

“I was explaining how to make a video broadcast and glad they were interested in what I was teaching.”
— Edain Gonzalez, Hillsboro Intermediate School

“I was very excited that my mom and I got to play a game that I usually play at school. This game helped me to learn how to count and exchange coins.”
— Brianna Moreno, Hillsboro Elementary School

“We were drawing on popsicle sticks at the art table to make a collage. It was fun and I was happy.”
— Misha Memon, Hillsboro Elementary School

“I enjoyed learning about oobleck’s unique properties and having fun showing the little kids about those properties.”
— Elva Morales-Zamudio, Hillsboro High School

“It was interesting and fun to interact with and teach the little kids about double helix.”
— Tony Cortez, Hillsboro High School

“I was explaining how to make a video broadcast and glad they were interested in what I was teaching.”
— Edain Gonzalez, Hillsboro Intermediate School

“I was very excited that my mom and I got to play a game that I usually play at school. This game helped me to learn how to count and exchange coins.”
— Brianna Moreno, Hillsboro Elementary School

“We were drawing on popsicle sticks at the art table to make a collage. It was fun and I was happy.”
— Misha Memon, Hillsboro Elementary School

“I enjoyed learning about oobleck’s unique properties and having fun showing the little kids about those properties.”
— Elva Morales-Zamudio, Hillsboro High School

“It was interesting and fun to interact with and teach the little kids about double helix.”
— Tony Cortez, Hillsboro High School
Soar High Beyond the Hillsboro High School Walls

As strains of Pomp and Circumstance rang out through The Ferrell Center and a sea of seniors decked out in maroon caps and gowns processed down the aisle, Hillsboro High School Principal Keith Hannah recalled the days when he knew this group as third graders at the Hillsboro Intermediate School where he then had the role of assistant principal.

“They were the quietest, shyest students,” he said. “But they really outgrew that to become outgoing young women and men who challenge themselves and ask, ‘Why not us?’”

Hannah said they have challenged each other as well, pushing one another to succeed and achieve more—something underscored by the fact that the valedictorian and salutatorian were not known until about a week before graduation. A competitive class, they shined in extracurricular activities while maintaining academic excellence. Some highlights from the year include:

- Softball team won the bi-district championship
- Football team made the playoffs
- Band members earned 1st at the University Interscholastic League competitions
- Student council voted by district peers to be the seat of the area student government
- Class took on ownership and management of their prom
- Earned $130,000 in college scholarships
- More dual college credit participants than ever before

After Hillsboro ISD Superintendent Vicki Adams presented the class and the Board of Trustees bestowed diplomas upon them, 135 seniors turned their tassels and rotated their rings to show the world they graduated. Then the entire auditorium was invited to stand and join the seniors in singing the Hillsboro High School Fight Song—a new tradition at the school. And finally, the quintessential graduation moment arrived.

“Our top ten percent led the class in the cap toss,” says Hannah. “The view from the stage was awe inspiring. There’s so much joy in that moment.”

Congratulations to the Class of 2017! Dream big, work together, and never stop asking, “Why not us?”
 CONNECTIONS    SUMMER 2017

Valedictorian Trey Holmes
A Legacy of Leadership

Whether it was as a class officer, FFA chapter president or National Honor Society vice president, Trey Holmes held numerous leadership roles in his four years at Hillsboro High School (HHS). But he saved the best for last.

“To be named Valedictorian is very rewarding,” said Holmes. “I feel so honored.”

Holmes said he hopes his leadership at HHS inspires others to lead.

“To hope students in next year’s senior class will take on that same responsibility,” he said. “I hope they take pride in fulfilling those duties as a leader.”

In his farewell speech to fellow graduates, Holmes said he wants to instill a lasting confidence in his classmates.

“Our class has a passion for excellence,” he said. “We transformed the Hillsboro programs. I believe my fellow classmates can achieve anything they set their minds to.”

Holmes will attend Texas A&M University at College Station in the fall. He plans to major in civil engineering and specialize in water resource management.

Salutatorian Luke Steele
Hard Work Pays Off

Hillsboro High School’s Class of 2017 Salutatorian Luke Steele has been working toward becoming an actor since childhood, and that hard work continues to pay off.

In addition to earning various district- and state-level University Interscholastic League One-Act Play and speech and debate awards, Steele received a scholarship from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s Department of Theatre and Dance.

“Being in speech and debate has not only trained me to be a better speaker, but it’s been an awesome training mechanism for the theatre world, too,” Steele said.

Steele said he attributes his motivation for success to those who came before him, and he hopes it’s a torch he can continue to pass on.

“Knowing the great reputations of past Hillsboro graduates is a huge motivation for my own accomplishments,” said Steele. “I hope I have set a new standard that current and future Hillsboro High School students are motivated to surpass.”

Class of 2017 Survey

- My fondest memory is...
  - marching band
  - knowing that I’m going to learn something new in class every day
  - meeting the best people ever
  - participating in athletics
  - student council
  - having very supportive teachers

- My next step is...
  - 37% Four-year college
  - 34% Community college
  - 16% Technical college
  - 7% Still deciding

- My goal is to...
  - pursue a career in business consulting.
  - make a difference in the world, possibly through music.
  - be an English professor.
  - become a nurse.
  - become a registered nurse.
  - become a runner in the Olympics and become a great coach.
  - live a healthy, happy life.

- “I plan to become a nurse.”
- “I want to be a certified radiologist.”
- “I want to be a runner in the Olympics and become a great coach.”
- “My dream is to make a difference in the world, possibly through music.”
- “My goal is to pursue a career in business consulting.”
- “Living a healthy, happy life is my goal.”

2017 Senior Walk

CONGRATS CLASS OF 2017
FIELD FUN DAYS!