



January | 25 | 2021

District Recognizes Trustees for Commitment to District, Students



Trustee Ivory: Newest Trustees Focuses on Building Relationships and a Positive School Culture

Dr. LaSonja Ivory is a native of Dallas, Texas, and is proud to say she grew up in Oak Cliff. She credits her personal and professional success to the priority she places on building, nurturing and sustaining relationships.

As the newest member of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Ivory's desire is to use her more than 25 years of K-12 educational experience, along with the knowledge she obtained as an educational researcher to serve the Duncanville learning community. As the CEO of Ivory Educational Consulting, Dr. Ivory provides professional development to school districts. Her company's mission is to 'Transform the Educational Experiences of Minority Students' (TEEMS).

"I am a byproduct of caring teachers that created a culture of care," Dr. Ivory said. "They are the reasons I became an educator. I am the educator and woman I am today because of the teachers God placed in my path; many of them left their fingerprints on my life."

Read [more](#).

Trustee McNeely: The Key to Leadership is Listening

Phil McNeely retired from Duncanville ISD in 2010 and is still regularly called 'Coach.' As the longest-tenured Duncanville High School basketball coach with 25 years, he has more than earned the title.

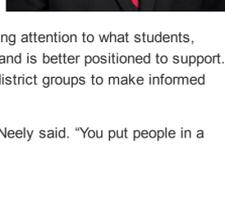
Mr. McNeely's support of the school district never ended, just shifted after his retirement. He successfully ran for the school board and has been a trustee ever since.

"In just about every job you can work, it's a people business and I think the [school] board is the same way," Mr. McNeely said.

Mr. McNeely believes the best way to lead is by listening. By paying attention to what students, teachers, parents and community members are saying, he learns and is better positioned to support. He listens to the likes, dislikes, concerns and more from various district groups to make informed decisions.

"We just have to hire good people and get out of the way," Mr. McNeely said. "You put people in a position to be successful, and you let them be successful."

Read [more](#).



Trustee Veracruz: Love of Service Builds a Legacy for Family and Community

Janet Veracruz believes in building a legacy of service for her family and others she meets. As the first Hispanic woman to serve on the Duncanville ISD school board, she represent servant leadership in action and continues to pave the way for Hispanic women.

"What legacy do you want to leave your kids?" Mrs. Veracruz asked. "The one thing that runs deep in my heart is to have a legacy of serving others before yourself. It's monumental so generations that follow can mirror it."

Mrs. Veracruz said she was inspired by other women who pushed her to try new career choices she may not have considered, and she's grateful to have been surrounded by encouraging women.

Mrs. Veracruz started her career in education as a paraprofessional at Hyman Elementary School. After watching her teach a class as a substitute, the principal at the time, Vicki Harper, encouraged Mrs. Veracruz to return to college and to earn her teaching certification.

During this time, her husband, Joe Veracruz, was deployed in Afghanistan as a member of the Air National Guard and she was raising their children. With her husband serving in the military, Mrs. Veracruz questioned whether she could handle school, work and motherhood all at once.

"So I signed up for the University of North Texas and did it semester by semester," Ms. Veracruz said. "I enjoyed taking courses, such as psychology and humanity, and wrapped with a 4.0 [grade point average]."

Read [more](#).

This is My Story: Collegiate Academy Senior to Study Computer Science



In just a few months, members of the first class from the Duncanville High School Collegiate Academy will walk across the graduation stage with both a high school diploma and an associate degree. Around 80 students in this inaugural class studied at both Duncanville High School and Mountain View College to accomplish this achievement over the past four years. They are the first cohort to achieve this milestone in the Collegiate Academy.

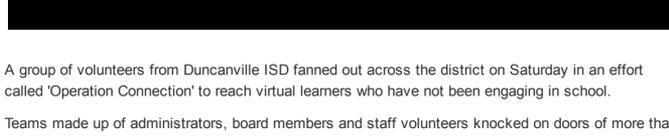
To give you a look inside what the Collegiate Academy offers, we have created a video series called, 'This is My Story.' We follow the path of four seniors who are completing their journey at Duncanville High School Collegiate Academy.

The first student featured in our 'This is My Story' series is Robert Valdez. Robert plans to pursue a degree in computer science and he hopes to travel the world once he completes his degree.

The Duncanville High School Collegiate Academy is currently accepting applications from incoming 9th grade students. The application window closes Wednesday, Jan. 27.

Click [here](#) to apply.

Operation Connection: District Volunteers Reconnect with Virtual Learners



A group of volunteers from Duncanville ISD fanned out across the district on Saturday in an effort called 'Operation Connection' to reach virtual learners who have not been engaging in school.

Teams made up of administrators, board members and staff volunteers knocked on doors of more than 100 students. They delivered care packages including instructions on how to log in to classes online, a Duncanville t-shirt, and for those who were home, encouragement to participate in classes and homework.

Claudia Jacobs has two daughters who are doing their schoolwork online. She said the biggest struggle she faces is motivating her children to do their classes while she's also working from home. Jacobs had heard about Operation Connection through an email from the district, but she was surprised to see one of her daughter's principals and the president of the Board of Trustees on her doorstep Saturday morning.

"I think that's awesome of them," Jacobs said. "They showed genuine support and care and I like that. I appreciate that."

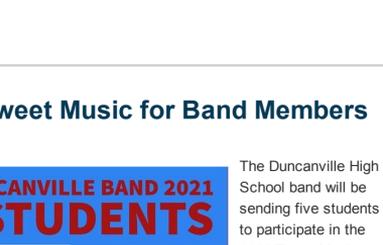
As a result of the outreach, so far, six families have requested a change to their child's learning pathway, and 10 families have requested a follow-up with their child's home campus.

To see photos from Operation Connection, click [here](#).

Choral Students Hit High Note with All-State Honors

Duncanville High School's choral department is continuing its tradition of excellence by sending six students to the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) All-State Clinic and Convention.

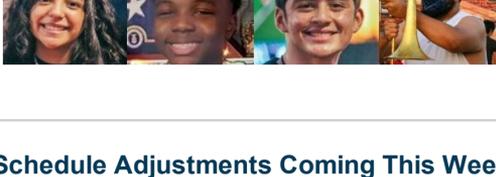
Each year more than 70,000 high school students from across the state of Texas begin the All-State audition process. Ultimately just 1,800 students, fewer than three percent, are chosen to rehearse and perform at the annual TMEA convention in various bands, orchestras and choirs.



Those attending the virtual convention this year from Duncanville High School are freshman Jeffrey Berry, junior Juan Rios, and seniors Haylee Jenkins, Daniela Pedraja and Jeroham Ortega.

Read [more](#).

All-State Honors are Sweet Music for Band Members

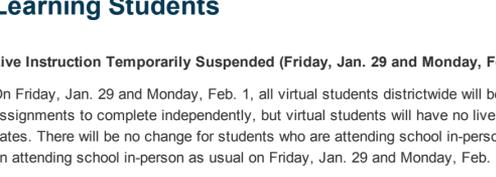


STEPHANIE GONZALEZ (1ST CHAIR PICCOLO)
ALISON TORRES (7TH CHAIR CLARINET)
ROBERT JONES (2ND CHAIR TRUMPET)
JAIME SALAS (1ST CHAIR TENOR TROMBONE)
YAHIR MENDEZ (1ST CHAIR BASS TROMBONE)



The Duncanville High School band will be sending five students to participate in the 2021 Texas Music Educators All-State Clinic and Convention.

The band had 17 students advance to Area, and five made it through the final audition process to be selected as All-State musicians. Those students are Stephanie Gonzalez (piccolo), Robert Jones (trumpet), Yahir Mendez (bass trombone), Jaime Salas (tenor trombone) and Alison Torres (clarinet).



CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERY DUNCANVILLE BAND STUDENT THAT ENTERED THE ALL-STATE AUDITION PROCESS STARTING AT ALL-REGION AND THE 17 WHO ADVANCED TO AREA! HAVING THE GRIT TO LEARN THE MUSIC AND BRAVERY TO PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE IN AN AUDITION IS WORTH JUST AS MUCH AS OUR ALL-STATE MUSICIANS. WE ALL START SOMEWHERE AND TRY TO BETTER OURSELVES EACH DAY.

Schedule Adjustments Coming This Week for Virtual Learning Students

Live Instruction Temporarily Suspended (Friday, Jan. 29 and Monday, Feb. 1)

On Friday, Jan. 29 and Monday, Feb. 1, all virtual students districtwide will be provided classwork assignments to complete independently, but virtual students will have no live instruction on these dates. There will be no change for students who are attending school in-person and they should plan on attending school in-person as usual on Friday, Jan. 29 and Monday, Feb. 1.

The purpose of this change for virtual students is to provide campuses with time to make classroom adjustments as we transition into the third nine week grading period. Over the past few weeks, parents were able to make learning preference change between in-person and virtual learning and now those changes are being put into place.

Duncanville High School Schedule Adjustment (Tuesday, Jan. 26)

For Duncanville High School students who are in virtual learning, there is an additional schedule adjustment next week. The PSAT/NMSQT is being administered at Duncanville High School on Tuesday, Jan. 26 for 10th and 11th grade students. On this day all virtual students at Duncanville High School will receive no live instruction and will be provided classwork assignments to complete independently. There will be no change for students who are attending school in-person, and they should plan on attending school in-person as usual.

If the districtwide virtual student change or high school testing date impacts your student, please note the date change in your calendar. If you have questions, please contact your student's teacher or counselor.

Upcoming Events:

District Professional Development, Monday, Feb. 15, no classes

Duncanville ISD Board of Trustees Meeting, begins at 6:30 p.m. and goes into executive session, on Monday, Feb. 22 at the Duncanville ISD Education Plaza, 710 S. Cedar Ridge Rd., Duncanville. The public portion of the meeting resumes around 7:00 p.m.



The Informer is distributed by the Communications Department at Duncanville ISD. The weekly newsletter, published each Monday, is intended to keep the community informed about important news and events happening within the district. Story ideas or questions can be directed to: [Lari Barager](#) - Director of External Communications

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