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# Northwest ISD

A Learner-Centered Environment



## Annual Report

January 2010

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## *Beliefs, Vision, and Mission*

### *We believe that...*

1. kids come first.
2. continuous improvement is critical for success of the Northwest Independent School District.
3. the success of each student is the shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and communities.
4. environment influences learning.

### *Our Vision*

"The best and most sought-after school district in Texas"

### *Our Mission*

Northwest ISD, in partnership with parents and community, will provide all students a premier education, preparing them to be successful, productive citizens.



## *Strategic Goals*

### *Goal 1*

Northwest ISD will provide premier programs to ensure that all students are successful learners.

### *Goal 2*

Northwest ISD will recruit, develop, retain, and recognize an exceptional, highly motivated staff to optimize student engagement and learning.

### *Goal 3*

Northwest ISD will provide timely, open communication and positive parental and community partnership opportunities in our schools.

### *Goal 4*

Northwest ISD will provide premier facilities and support systems that enhance a positive learning environment and foster student and community pride.

### *Goal 5*

Northwest ISD will invest resources to ensure that students, parents, and the community receive optimal educational services.

## Leadership Team



**Jeannette Leong**  
President, Place 4  
Social Worker  
Elected 2001  
Term Ends 2010



**Mark Schluter**  
Vice President, Place 2  
Regional Transportation  
Director  
Elected 2006  
Term Ends 2012



**Mel Fuller**  
Secretary, Place 7  
Education Consultant  
Elected 2008  
Term Ends 2011



**Devonna Holland**  
Member, Place 5  
Banking Center Manager  
Elected 2008  
Term Ends 2011



**Daryl Laney, D.C.**  
Member, Place 3  
Chiropractor  
Elected 1998  
Term Ends 2010



**Davis Palmer**  
Member, Place 6  
Sales Management  
Elected 1998  
Term Ends 2011



**Josh Wright**  
Member, Place 1  
Operator  
Elected 2009  
Term Ends 2012



**Karen G. Rue, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent  
Appointed by Trustees  
in 2005

## Team of Eight

The Northwest ISD Board of Trustees and district superintendent participate in annual leadership training to focus on ways to move from effective to outstanding. They conduct self-studies, set goals, review board policies and procedures, and examine their roles and responsibilities. The team building helps enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the board-superintendent partnership and forges the "Team of Eight" into a cohesive group that serves the best interests of NISD students.

## Election Information

School board members are elected to a three-year term of office. On a 2-2-3 rotating basis, board seats are filled during the May elections. All board members are elected at large. While candidates run for specific places, they do not represent specific geographical areas; rather, each represents NISD at large.

Following the annual election, the board elects a president, vice-president, and secretary to serve for a one-year term. Candidates to the Board of Trustees must conform to the requirements of the Texas Education Code.



# District Information

## TEA Accountability Ratings 2008 - 2009

Northwest ISD received a **Recognized** rating from the Texas Education Agency.

### Exemplary

- Beck Elementary School
- Granger Elementary School
- Haslet Elementary School
- Hatfield Elementary School
- Hughes Elementary School
- Lakeview Elementary School
- Nance Elementary School
- Prairie View Elementary School
- Roanoke Elementary School
- Sendera Ranch Elementary School
- Seven Hills Elementary School
- Medlin Middle School

### Recognized

- Justin Elementary School
- Peterson Elementary School
- Northwest High School

### Acceptable

- Chisholm Trail Middle School
- Pike Middle School

### Opened August 2009

- Love Elementary
- Nelson High School

## Student Assessments

### Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

The state introduced TAKS in 2003. The TAKS is a rigorous test aligned with the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)*.

### 2009 TAKS Scores All Students Grades 3-11

	NISD	Texas
Reading/ELA	97	91
Writing	96	93
Social Studies	98	93
Mathematics	91	82
Science	89	78

### Northwest ISD Campus Accountability History

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Exemplary (E)	3	1	1	5	12
Recognized (R)	7	11	11	8	3
Acceptable (A)	2	2	2	2	2
District	R	A	A	R	R

### College Entrance Exams

Students who plan to attend college may take either the SAT or the ACT. The district also participates in the *Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)* and the *Duke Talent Search* at the seventh-grade level.

### 2008-2009 SAT Scores

	Critical Reading	Math	Writing
NISD	498	524	487
Texas	486	506	475

### 2008-2009 ACT Scores

	NISD	Texas
English	20.2	19.9
Math	22.9	21.3
Reading	22.5	20.9
Science	21.9	20.6
Composite	22.0	20.8

**Student Enrollment**  
(as of December 14, 2009)

**Elementary**

Beck Elementary (K - 5)	516
Granger Elementary (K - 5)	638
Haslet Elementary (K - 5)	496
Hatfield Elementary (K - 5)	307
Hughes Elementary (PreK - 5)	553
Justin Elementary (PreK - 5)	582
Lakeview Elementary (K - 5)	316
Love Elementary (K - 5)	620
Nance Elementary (K - 5)	724
Peterson Elementary (K - 5)	322
Prairie View Elementary (PreK - 5)	409
Roanoke Elementary (PreK - 5)	662
Sendera Ranch Elementary (K - 5)	709
Seven Hills Elementary (PreK - 5)	503
<b>Total Elementary</b>	<b>7,357</b>

**Middle**

Chisholm Trail Middle (6 - 8)	1,071
Medlin Middle (6 - 8)	1,162
Pike Middle (6 - 8)	973
Special Programs Center MS	7
<b>Total Middle</b>	<b>3,213</b>

**High School**

Nelson High School (9 - 10)	830
Northwest High School (9 - 12)	2,694
Denton Creek	33
Special Programs Center HS	31
<b>Total High School</b>	<b>3,588</b>

**District Total Enrollment**..... **14,158**



**Students Per Teacher**  
2008-2009

Districtwide..... 15.5

**Student Ethnicity**  
2008-2009

White	72.9%
Hispanic	17.1%
African American	6.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.8%
Native American	0.8%

# Successful Learners

## Strengths

Northwest ISD has made steady academic achievement growth as demonstrated on various state and federal accountability measures.

### Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

The *AEIS* reports pull together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year. NISD results for 2008-2009 are:

- The district received a *Recognized* rating.
- Twelve campuses earned an *Exemplary* rating, an increase from five campuses in 2007-2008.
- Three campuses achieved a *Recognized* rating.
- Two campuses were rated *Academically Acceptable*.



## Gold Performance Acknowledgements (GPA)

The *GPA* system acknowledges districts and campuses for high performance on indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings. Northwest ISD and its campuses were acknowledged for 67 indicators — an increase from 51 indicators in 2008. The identified district *GPA*s included the following:

**College Ready Graduates** - 35 percent or more of graduates scoring at or above the college-ready criteria on both ELA and mathematics, divided by the number of graduates with results in both subjects to evaluate.

**Recommended High School Program** - 60 percent of graduates meeting or exceeding requirements for the *Recommended High School Program* or the *Distinguished Achievement Program*.

**Commended for Social Studies** - 20 percent of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard.

## Student Success Initiative

The *Texas Student Success Initiative* requires the following:

- Third-grade students must pass the *TAKS* reading test for promotion.
- Fifth-grade students must pass the *TAKS* reading and math tests for promotion.
- Eighth-grade students must pass the *TAKS* reading and math tests for promotion.
- Eleventh-grade students must pass the Exit Level *TAKS* tests in order to graduate.

In 2008, NISD students demonstrated tremendous success in meeting these expectations.

## Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Under the accountability provisions in the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, the district and the campuses are evaluated for *Adequate Yearly Progress*. Districts and campuses are required to meet *AYP* criteria on three measures: reading/language arts, mathematics, and either graduation rate (for high schools and districts) or attendance rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools). Northwest ISD and all campuses met *AYP*.

## Areas of Focus for 2009-2010

### *The 21st Century Learner*

#### Curriculum and Instruction (C&I)

A primary focus of the division of curriculum and instruction is to plan and provide engaging opportunities for students so the learning experience is positive, productive, and relevant. To assist in accomplishing this, C&I staff provide support in the core content areas, gifted and talented education, career and technical education, special education, bilingual and English as a second language, instructional technology, health, physical education and athletics, and fine arts.

#### Preparing Lifelong Learners

Northwest ISD graduates are stepping into the conceptual age of the 21st Century. NISD graduates need to be inquisitive, innovative, and collaborative critical thinkers throughout their lives. They need to transfer their knowledge, understanding, and skills to new situations in new forms throughout their lives. With each significant change in a global society, high school graduates will need to adapt, learn, and relearn. Northwest ISD engages students in rigorous and relevant curriculum, instruction, assessment, and technology applications to prepare them to be lifelong learners.

Elementary and secondary mathematics students are investigating math concepts in concrete form, then pictorial form, and finally in abstract form. Science instruction is inquiry-based, engaging students in notebooking as they hypothesize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize laboratory experiences. NISD students engage language, literature, and writing on many levels as they compare and contrast texts with each other, with their own life experiences, and with the world of experiences. They are engaged as a community of writers and a community of readers. Their in-depth understanding of world experiences is supported by a deep and complex social studies curriculum. Complement these core curriculum experiences with opportunities in technology, career academies, the arts, and athletics, and NISD graduates are optimally prepared for lifelong learning.

#### Counseling

NISD is committed to providing a balanced guidance and counseling program for students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Counselors are state certified professionals with a master's degree in counseling, and they have had at least two years of classroom teaching experience. Each elementary campus is staffed with one full-time certified counselor. Middle schools and high schools are staffed according to enrollment. The average counselor-to-student ratio for secondary schools is 1:400.

The NISD belief is that a premier guidance and counseling program is student centered, based upon healthy relationships (both established and taught), and is a collaboration between students, families, schools, and communities. A comprehensive guidance and counseling program includes:

**Classroom Guidance** - Elementary students receive lessons that address basic lifelong skills as identified for academic success. Secondary students are provided content guidance in a systematic way that includes information from the educational, career, and social environments to help students form an understanding of their relationship to these areas.

**Individual Planning** - Elementary students are helped with goal setting for school, family and peer issues, decision-making skills, and awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Secondary students are provided assistance in planning, monitoring, and managing their personal, social, educational, and career development through a variety of resources and partnerships.

**Responsive Services** - Counselors respond to students with an immediate personal concern, a crisis, or a problem that may be affecting their achievement in school.

**System Support** - Counselors facilitate guidance program development, provide parent education and information sessions, and communicate with teachers, administrators, and parents.

# Successful Learners

## Fine Arts

The vision of the Northwest ISD fine arts program is to be the premier school district in the state of Texas for the visual and performing arts. This vision is currently being realized through studies in the areas of art, band, cheer, choir, dance, debate, music, music theory, orchestra, speech, and theatre. In addition, advanced placement courses are available to high school students in the areas of music theory, art history, drawing, and sculpture.

Northwest ISD is proud to be one of the "Best Communities for Music Education" in America. The international NAMM foundation selected NISD to be included on this prestigious list of school districts based on the number of programs offered to students, school district and community support, performing arts facilities, program achievements, program budgets, and numbers of performing arts students and teachers. NISD was one of only 10 school districts in Texas to receive this honor in 2009.

Enrollment in the NISD fine arts programs continues to grow. More than 10,000 students, or 75 percent of the NISD student population, receive instruction in the fine arts each week. NISD is proud to offer one of the strongest and most comprehensive fine arts programs in the state.



## NISD Academies

In President Obama's inaugural address to Congress, he spoke about the critical role that workforce and education systems will play in preparing students to succeed in today's global market.

New to NISD this year are *Career Academies* which combine components of both education and industry training. *Career Academies* include a comprehensive four-year plan of study that help students develop the core skills needed for postsecondary success, while exposing them to a diversity of careers in high-growth, high-paying areas.

This year Northwest ISD launched three academies: the *Academy of Media Arts and Technology (AMAT)*, the *Academy of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)*, and the *Academy of Medical Professions (AMP)*. In August 2010, a fourth academy, the *Academy of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Services*, will open. AMAT and STEM are located at Northwest High School, while AMP and the new culinary arts and hospitality program are located at Byron Nelson High School.

Students interested in establishing a career pathway, with a less comprehensive plan of study than available through an academy, may choose from more than 60 career and technical education courses.

## Health, Physical Education, and Athletics

The NISD health, physical education, and athletics department provides a comprehensive and balanced activities program that is an essential complement to the basic program of instruction.

**Health and Physical Education** - The purpose of the health and physical education program in Northwest ISD is to promote participation in physical activities and health-conscious behaviors that will contribute to positive attitudes toward exercise and a healthy lifestyle. The vision is to empower all students to sustain regular lifelong physical activity as a foundation for a healthy, productive, and fulfilling life.

Health and physical education programs of Northwest ISD are developed in compliance with the *Texas Essential*

*Knowledge and Skills* components as required by the Texas Education Agency. Physical education is offered as a sequential educational program based on physical activities undertaken in an active and supportive atmosphere in which every student is challenged and successful. The goal of the health programs offered at NISD is to enhance the ability for students to better manage their own health to improve productivity and quality of life. Through comparative analysis of other state and local P.E. and health programs, NISD will be vigilant in discovering innovative and effective ways to administer programs to the students of Northwest ISD.

**Athletics** - The NISD athletic programs enhance the school district mission by providing a platform from which students are able to develop their highest potential. Participation in athletics at NISD challenges students to grow intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

Athletics is offered at all three middle school campuses and both high schools. Sports offered include football, volleyball, basketball, cross country, tennis, wrestling, swim/dive, soccer, softball, baseball, golf, track, and athletic training.

Through constant vigilance of the athletic programs, Northwest ISD works to ensure that the district is comparable to other districts with the number of teacher/coaches, types of facilities, and programs offered. The goal is to maintain quality programs offered to both boys and girls that preserve high expectations of students and staff. Plans to improve current offerings include looking for opportunities to enhance the athletic programs at Byron Nelson High and to develop NISD programs through the vertical alignment of the athletic curriculum. Athletes will learn independently through classroom and competition experience and will excel in both areas. The department goal is to graduate student athletes who are critical thinkers, inspirational leaders, and are able to recognize the value of commitment and strong work ethic.

### Instructional Technology

Northwest ISD is unmatched in the metroplex for providing 21st Century tools for students and teachers. Technology in classrooms and libraries allow differentiated, interactive, and collaborative learning experiences for every student.

Every classroom is equipped with a ceiling-mounted projector, document camera, wireless chalkboard, and teacher laptop with a docking station. *Classroom Performance Systems* are available on every campus and provide for effective, immediate formative assessment. In addition to computer labs, mobile labs are available to check out for student projects. Additionally, iPods, Flip video cameras, and digital cameras are available for teacher use.

This year each high school student received a netbook for use at both school and home. The netbook extends learning beyond the classroom with 24/7 connectivity to digital learning resources. The netbook is changing the way teachers teach and students learn, with many teachers using Web sites as well as wikis to post assignments, supporting documents, and resources for both student and parent access.

A new learning management system (LMS), Moodle, was implemented this year. Academy teachers use the LMS as their virtual classrooms. The LMS provides 21st Century tools such as blogging, wikis, and chat (all monitored by the teacher) for students to develop collaboration, creativity, and information literacy skills.

Distance learning programming is frequently presented in NISD classrooms. Distance learning provides students learning opportunities beyond the classroom that they might otherwise never experience. Elementary students have participated in a variety of programs including "Who Wants to be an Astronaut," "Where the Buffalo Roam," and "Museum Math." Middle school students have participated in "Forces and Motion," "Simply Marvelous Machines," and "Kitchen Cabinet Science." High school students have witnessed live open heart surgeries, knee replacements, and autopsies.

# Quality Staff

## Strengths

### Hiring and Recruiting

The teacher, working with the school staff, parents, and administration, is the key to the student's success. Northwest ISD strives to recruit and keep the best. With a great area in which to live, one of the top starting salaries for teachers in the state of Texas, and the most thorough and rigorous teacher training program, NISD has its pick of the top. Applicants for all district positions apply online with teachers completing a screening process through the Gallup Organization, TeacherInsight™. Those applicants selected for interview at the campus level are screened by principals who have been trained in the interview process and who are aware of what makes teachers great. District growth continues to increase the NISD student population, and the corresponding growth in teaching and support staff. Fortunately, NISD attracts an abundance of applicants for all positions. The application and selection process is technologically driven so that principals may sort and select the top candidates for interview. The district is committed to search for and place the greatest educators and staff members in all NISD schools.



## Salary Increases

Northwest ISD pays one of the top starting salaries in Texas for the first-year teacher with a bachelor's degree. Teachers who remain with the district are provided annual raises to recognize the increased cost of living and the value that they bring to their positions. Over the last 10 years, salaries have risen from a beginning salary of \$31,200 in 1999-2000 to today's first-year teacher salary of \$47,500.

The story does not stop with beginning teachers, however. The salary of a teacher who began with NISD (zero years experience and a bachelor's degree) and continues with the district today has increased dramatically:

First Year in NISD	Starting Salary	Current Salary (09-10)	Salary Increase
2008-2009	\$47,000	\$48,479	3.1% in 1 year
2004-2005	\$38,561	\$51,873	34.52% in 5 years
1999-2000	\$31,200	\$52,477	68.19% in 10 years
1994-1995	\$23,520	\$53,986	129.53% in 15 years
1989-1990	\$19,000	\$61,497	233.67% in 20 years

***It pays to stay with Northwest ISD!***

## Teacher Retention

The retention of teachers is an important topic for human resources. A new employment model called *The Northwest Experience* was implemented this year. Working with other departments in the

district, HR staff provides training for specific needs. One of the new endeavors includes an *HR Ambassadors Program* which builds capacity with campus and departmental office staff. To provide feedback about employee needs, surveys are conducted with new employees twice per year. Human resources perform salary and benefit comparisons with surrounding districts to ensure that the NISD compensation plan is highly competitive throughout Texas. Staff members are currently reviewing information collected from districts within the area job market concerning attendance incentives; portion payment for unused local sick days for retirees; and stipends for positions which are sometimes harder to fill such as math, science, foreign language, and bilingual. To prepare new staff, HR hosts informative employee orientation sessions. Human resources provides a Web site where staff can locate an array of important information. This includes an Employee Access Center where each employee can view his or her personal information related to contact information, payroll, and W-4 elections. Human resources strives to find new ways to recruit and retain exceptional, highly motivated employees for all positions. Human resources personnel continue to visit employees on each campus to be sure that NISD provides staff with the services they need.

### Benefits and Wellness Programs

NISD maintains a competitive benefit plan for its employees. The self-funded medical plan administered by United Healthcare includes two plans from which to choose. The district also subscribes to an Employee Assistance Program through Care24 that is offered at no cost to all employees and members of their households. The district provides \$15,000 life insurance to all employees on the health plan and \$50,000 life insurance from MetLife Insurance to employees who choose the hospital indemnity or alternate plan. Other voluntary benefits include self-funded dental plans administered by TML as well as a reduced fee for service plan from QCD; a long-term disability plan offered by UNUM; a vision plan by Spectera; and personal sickness indemnity, personal accident/disability, income protection, cancer, intensive care, hospital confinement,

and recovery plans offered by AFLAC. Employees have the option to participate in an unreimbursed medical account, as well as a dependent care account using pre-tax contributions.

Monthly health tips and topics are published in *The Source* staff newsletter. Employees and family members have access to health-related screening for prostate and breast cancer, and the district provides seasonal flu shots for all employees annually.

In June of 2009, the online benefit enrollment system was implemented. Current staff members received log-in information at their homes the first week of June and were given the remainder of the month to complete the process. As a result, staff members were able to enroll at home or anywhere there was an Internet connection. Newly hired employees received information regarding the enrollment process at orientation and were given through August 15 to complete the process.

### Accomplishments

#### Increased Staffing

This year, Northwest ISD was proud to open both Clara Love Elementary and Byron Nelson High with a complete staff ready to serve the students. NISD maintains a class-size cap of 22:1 for kindergarten through fourth grade and a general guideline of 25:1 for grades five and above. Some exceptions occur such as Algebra I classes which are often at a 15:1 ratio. All elementary campuses with student populations above 550 have an assistant principal. Middle schools have two to three assistants depending on campus size. As the enrollment increases within the middle schools, the district continues to analyze the number of counselors needed per student, which may necessitate hiring an additional middle school counselor. Northwest High School, with a student population of approximately 2,700, continues to have two associate principals and five grade level/support assistant principals. Byron Nelson High School opened with a student population of approximately 800 students with one associate principal and an assistant principal.

## Quality Staff

The *Academy of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics* and the *Academy of Media Arts and Technology* at Northwest High School, as well as the *Academy of Medical Professions* at Byron Nelson High School, have been staffed with specially-trained teachers. Special education staff grows proportionately with the district as well as support positions such as diagnosticians, speech pathologists, and school psychologists.

Increased student interest generated the need for additional coaches this year. Athletics added eight coaching positions to accommodate additional "C" teams and middle school soccer programs. Due to the high student participation within the athletics program, an assistant volleyball coach, assistant girls soccer coach, head wrestling coach, and an athletic trainer were added.

More interest in participating in fine arts created the placement of two additional orchestra teachers, thus providing one orchestra teacher for each middle school campus. An assistant choir director for each middle school was added as well as an additional assistant band director for Chisholm Trail Middle School.

The recruiting coordinator position assumed the new title of human resources coordinator to assist with the hiring of paraprofessionals, coordinate the substitute program to ensure that NISD has an adequate number of qualified substitutes, student teacher placement and student observer placements, in addition to district recruiting. In preparation for the opening of James M. Steele Accelerated High School, the principal has been named, and the new school will be completely staffed and ready to serve students for the 2010-2011 school year.

### Highly Qualified Teachers

Northwest ISD continues to meet the standard established by the federal government that every school must have 100 percent "Highly Qualified" teachers in core subject areas by the 2007-2008 school year. Northwest ISD exceeded the national standard having 100 percent "Highly Qualified" teachers annually since the 2004-2005 school year. The district has achieved this standard again for the 2009-2010 school year.

Core subject areas include all elementary classes pre-k through 5th, plus math, science, social studies, English, foreign languages, and the arts.

Northwest ISD's hiring process ensures that the teacher applicant's credentials have been thoroughly checked to verify their teaching certification and highly qualified status before an offer of employment is made. By following this process, Northwest ISD will continue to hire only "Highly Qualified" teachers and maintain the 100 percent status.

### Employment Process – Background Checks

Legislative action created Senate Bill 9 which mandated that all non-certified employees, substitutes, and employees of contracted services (transportation, food, custodial) be fingerprinted beginning January 1, 2008. NISD installed a *Live Scan* fingerprint system in January of 2008, and was the first district in the state to purchase this system after SB 9 was implemented. All NISD employees have had full background checks, including the fingerprint process, and every service provider who works directly with students has passed a thorough background check. Additionally, an annual update confirms the continued 'clear' status to work with NISD students.

More than 6,000 volunteers have completed a name-based background check prior to providing services at campuses in Northwest ISD for 2009-2010.

### New Hire Orientation

New staff members were able to go online and select an orientation session. A Web site for new employees has been created with information regarding the district, helpful contact information, and district initiatives. Newly hired employees were provided technology training ranging from how to log into the network, e-mail, Employee Access Center, Eduphoria, Schoolwires, and AESOP. All professional staff are issued a laptop, which the new employees receive at orientation. By incorporating the technology training into orientation, the new staff were able to focus on integrating technology into learning during the New Teacher Academy.

## Areas of Focus for 2009-2010

### New Initiatives

Updates to the current applicant system include expanded search features that allow NISD principals to spend less time searching for qualified applicants, automated reference checks, and online substitute applications. Through position control methods and an employment verification process, HR staff ensures that each campus and department is correctly staffed with the appropriate number of educators and support personnel.

The risk management department is administering a self-funded insurance program for the student netbooks.

The *Northwest Experience* employment model was implemented with assistance from other departments. The focus for this program is capacity building for staff members and communication, from and between staff, throughout the district. Campus forums conducted by the executive director of HR and the HR coordinator — and data analysis, opinion surveys, and user-specific training — are part of the experience model in use at NISD.

The *HR Ambassador Program* provides office employees throughout the district the opportunity to learn more about HR operations and to form a network of colleagues who contribute to each others' success through sharing and active dialogue.

### Technology Advancements

By reallocating existing bond funds, NISD was able to provide all high school students a Dell Latitude 2100 netbook in September 2009. During a three-day deployment process, the students received their netbooks during language arts classes. A \$35 usage fee was assessed to all students. Parents have the option to purchase insurance that covers the netbook. The district plans to issue netbooks to all middle school students in the fall of 2010. NISD will continue the Computers4Students program, which allows the district to place equipment no longer of use to NISD into the hands of students who do not have the resources to provide their own.

In partnership with the curriculum and instruction department, all student netbooks are equipped with a student response system (vclicker) and a TI™ Inspire Scientific Calculator. Technology staff supports the hardware, and the curriculum department works side-by-side with teachers to integrate the technology into the day-to-day lessons of the students.

The network server room is being upgraded to allow technology applications to run in a virtual environment. Once this project is complete, the student netbook users and the staff will have the ability to connect to the NISD network utilizing an Internet connection.

A mini classroom has been established in the technology department with all of the equipment that is located in a classroom. This provides the staff with the ability to create mini-training sessions and also assists with troubleshooting. This classroom is available for groups to visit when attending meetings at the district's central office.



# Communication/Community Involvement

## Strengths

Northwest ISD is the common thread that unites 14 communities spanning parts of Denton, Wise, and Tarrant counties. Given this expanse, effective communication and community involvement are critical to student success. The district strives to provide internal and external communication that is expedient, consistent, and honest.

## Effective Communication

As the district grows, it is vital that each individual campus be fully engaged in the communication and marketing of student and school achievements to its public. To continue this effort, the communications department staff works closely with campus officials and conducts periodic training to improve communication skills and customer service.

Communication between staff, parents, and the community is vital to student success and the district's public presence. Northwest ISD will continue its efforts to provide honest, consistent, and expedient communications, while encouraging individual campuses to improve communication and marketing efforts. To guide NISD's communication and marketing efforts, a district-wide *Communications Plan* includes expectations for school and district communications. The *Communications Plan* includes responsibilities of the communications department, the district's beliefs and desired behaviors and attitudes, and sections on the following: community relations, media relations, informed decision-making and training, marketing, public and employee engagement, crisis communications, and student and staff relations.

In addition, the communications department publishes the *NISD Communications Handbook and Style Guide*. This comprehensive booklet includes public relations tips for administrators and teachers, guides to writing style, acronyms, punctuation, and how to properly use the district's logos to maintain the artistic integrity of the Northwest ISD brand.

## Document Vault

District schools take pride in providing timely communication to parents about sensitive matters, including those related to student health issues. The communications department operates an online tool for principals and other administrators to access various letters and documents that can be modified when needed. Now in its second year, the *Document Vault* stores documents that have been uploaded to the online Principal/Campus Toolkit. With convenient access to letters related to health issues and required public notices, campus staff members can quickly download a letter and prepare it for dissemination. The health-related letters are a valuable resource for campus personnel when there is an immediate need to inform parents about a health-related situation on their campus or in a particular classroom. Documents are available in English and Spanish and can be edited and modified at the campus level to fit specific needs.



# Communication/Community Involvement

## Publications

District publications provide information to students, staff, parents, newcomers, and the extended community. An electronic community newsletter, *The Northwest News*, is the newest addition to the district's regular publications. Making its debut in the 2009-2010 school year, the bi-weekly *Northwest News* e-newsletter features district initiatives and events, as well as campus recognitions. Other regular district publications include:

**Northwest Vision** - district newsletter that is published five times a year and mailed to every household in the NISD boundaries.

**The Source** - staff newsletter that is published monthly and available to all employees in an electronic format.

**School Notes and Calendar of Events** - news tips and summaries used to pitch NISD stories to the local media, along with a listing of events throughout the district.

**NISD Update** - an overview of time-sensitive initiatives and programs that is provided to local community groups.

**Annual Report** - comprehensive publication that outlines the work and programs that meet the district's five goals and the areas of focus for the upcoming year.

**Dedication Booklets** - printed programs used to inform stakeholders about new schools and created as a piece that can be a keepsake for students, staff, and the community.

The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) has recognized many of NISD's publications, awarding them honors for quality, creativity, and purpose in providing resourceful information.

These publications include the following:

- *Northwest ISD Quick Facts Guide*
- *Northwest ISD Student Handbook and Code of Conduct*
- *Northwest Vision*
- *The Source*
- *NISD Budget Manual*
- *District Snapshot* (Annual Report)
- District "Code of Northwest" Calendar
- District Video
- District Web Site

In the past two years, three publications have won the TSPRA "Best of Category" award, the organization's highest honor. In 2007, the NISD communications department was recognized with a "Best of Category" award for the *2007 District Snapshot*, and in 2008, *The Source* and the "Code of Northwest" calendar each earned the top award for their respective categories. Several other Northwest ISD publications, videos, and marketing campaigns have been nominated for recognition in 2010 as well.

In addition to state accolades, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) recognized the *Northwest Vision* newsletter, *The Source* e-newsletter, the *2008 District Snapshot*, and the 2007-2008 "Code of Northwest" calendar as top publications when compared with other materials from school districts across the United States.

The communications department continually works with other departments to create quality and informative marketing materials. The following documents were new projects in the 2008-2009 school year:

- Back-to-School forms packet
- Communications department training materials for principals
- *Intradistrict Transfer Q & A*
- *Northwest ISD Communications Handbook and Style Guide* (Communications Plan)
- Parent Survey (electronic document)
- *Partners in Education Handbook*
- Partners in Education marketing brochure
- *Student Handbook and Code of Conduct* (electronic document)

## Technology and Multimedia

The district utilizes a variety of media to communicate with its stakeholders and values technology as an important tool for districtwide communication efforts.

The district's Web site provides easy access to information, including an online option for parents to view student grades and

## Communication/Community Involvement

attendance. For families moving into the area, the Web site offers a feature to determine which attendance zone is applicable and the corresponding transportation information. Since the 2007-2008 school year, 100 percent of teachers have a Web page and use their Web presence as an opportunity to improve parental and student communications.

District and school administrators use *School Messenger*®, an automated phone messaging system, to notify parents of absences and school events. The calling system also serves as a critical facet of the district's emergency communication efforts, with the capability of processing 30,000 phone calls in 30 minutes for emergency notifications and/or school closings.

*The NET* (Northwest Educational Television) made its debut on the district Web site in the spring of 2009 as a video-on-demand component that broadcasts video features that share the successful stories of Northwest ISD students and staff. Regular video features capture the essence of Northwest ISD and showcase talent and accomplishments throughout the district. *The NET* brings video news broadcasts to the district's Web site so parents and other community members may view feature stories about Northwest ISD students and schools without having to rely on local TV news broadcasts. *The NET* includes the following video series:

- *Northwest Vision*, the superintendent's monthly message and report to the community.
- *Kids Come First*, a news program featuring timely reports

from students in the *Academy of Media Arts and Technology* at Northwest High School.

- *In the Spotlight*, features relevant stories that focus on an NISD individual whom exemplifies the Northwest mission, vision, and core beliefs.
- *The Next Step*, a segment that highlights programs and initiatives designed to prepare students for their future.
- *iChoose*, a series of human interest stories that promotes volunteerism and community involvement.
- *Got Growth?*, a series of videos and podcasts that provides construction updates for the school district.

In the fall of 2009, Northwest ISD launched its "triple play" of cutting edge communications, which included *iNet*, *Facebook*, and *Twitter* communications.

- *iNet*, district podcasts that allow listeners to download and save messages to their audio aggregator like an iPod or MP3 player.
- *Facebook*, social networking site that allows Northwest ISD to reach millions of users worldwide and share announcements and news.
- *Twitter*, social networking tool that sends Northwest ISD updates to subscribers via text message.

Northwest ISD was one of the first school districts in the state to create a district *Facebook* page and encourage a forum for open dialogue on the popular social networking site. Research indicates that Northwest ISD was the first district in the area to communicate



## Communication/Community Involvement

district messages with *Twiddeo*, a video disseminated through *Twitter* updates.

Other electronic communications include a subscription-based e-mail message (*NISD News*), an e-newsletter (*Northwest News*), campus newsletters, *School Notes*, and a multitude of publications and announcements that are available on the district's Web site. The district also operates a central roadside marquee that includes brief district announcements. Campus marquees are located in front of schools and share school-related news and updates.

### Committees

In addition to print and electronic media, the district relies on communication provided by the community. Parents, business members, students, and staff collaborate on various committees:

- Attendance Boundaries
- Campus Improvement
- Community Service Task Force
- Data Information Systems
- District Education Improvement Council (DEIC)
- District Leadership Team
- Faculty Advisory Committee
- Long-Range Planning (Facilities and Technology)
- NISD Education Foundation Board of Directors
- Partners in Education Advisory Committee
- Principal Selection Committee
- School Finance Task Force
- Strategic Planning Task Force
- Superintendent's Roundtable
- Youth Protection Team



### Events and Programs

Northwest ISD is actively involved in supporting, recognizing, and unifying students, staff, and members of the community. The district hosts and plans numerous events and programs, including the following:

- Community Night at the NISD Stadium
- Convocation
- Employee recognition
- Gold Card
- Leadership NISD
- Northwest Reads
- Realtor events
- Retirement celebration for NISD staff
- School dedication ceremonies
- Texas Scholars Day
- Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

# Communication/Community Involvement

## Community/Government Relations

The district is proactive in collaborating with civic organizations and government agencies to promote development and growth in the community. NISD provides information on academic achievement, demographics, and growth-related issues. District tours are conducted for local government agencies, media, parents, and other community members.

District administrators continue to meet with local, county, and state-elected officials to discuss issues that impact education and the quality of education in Northwest ISD. Following legislative briefings, information is disseminated to the community through newsletters, e-mails, and committees.

## Partners in Education

With 6,500 volunteers and more than 25 official partners, Northwest ISD has expanded its structured districtwide Partners in Education (PIE) program. The partnerships formed through PIE are cooperative relationships in which schools, families, communities, faith-based organizations, government agencies, and businesses work together to ensure that all youth grow in a safe and supportive environment.

Through partnerships with businesses, communities, individuals, and parents, Northwest ISD students benefit from the talents and resources of district partners. These relationships enrich learning experiences for students, and the district looks to partners for mentoring, tutoring, speaking, donations of school supplies, and sponsorship of activities.

The PIE program prides itself on initiatives such as volunteerism, mentors, Adopt-a-School, business partners, Employee Perks, student incentive programs, Junior Achievement, and a speaker's bureau.

## Northwest ISD Education Foundation (NEF)

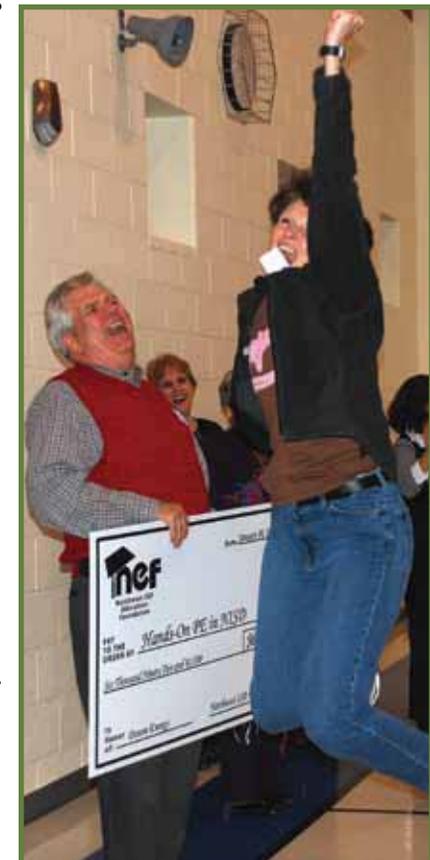
The Northwest ISD Education Foundation generates and distributes resources to Northwest ISD to enrich, maintain, and expand programs that meet the district's stated mission. NEF is

a 501(c)3 – tax exempt organization that strives to be a national leader in foundation innovation. Each year, innovative teaching grants are awarded to teachers throughout the district. The grant program transforms creative ideas into reality, which positively impacts student learning.

At the beginning of each school year, the foundation welcomes teachers and other staff at the annual New Teacher Luncheon. The NEF also sponsors the annual golf classic in the fall to provide scholarship funds for graduating seniors and funds for teacher grants. Each spring, the foundation recognizes distinguished scholars, distinguished achievers, and outstanding educators at the Shining Stars Gala.

Since 1999, the Northwest ISD Education Foundation has provided the following for teachers and students:

- 262 grants totaling \$673,412.33 to 938 NISD teachers.
- \$147,977.00 in designated gifts to specific programs.
- Recognition of more than 414 students, 414 educators, and 69 Teachers of the Year at the annual Shining Stars Gala.
- \$296,000 in scholarships to Northwest High School graduating seniors.
- \$45,828 for the AP and SAT initiatives.
- Opportunities for staff and student recognition.
- Professional development in grant writing.



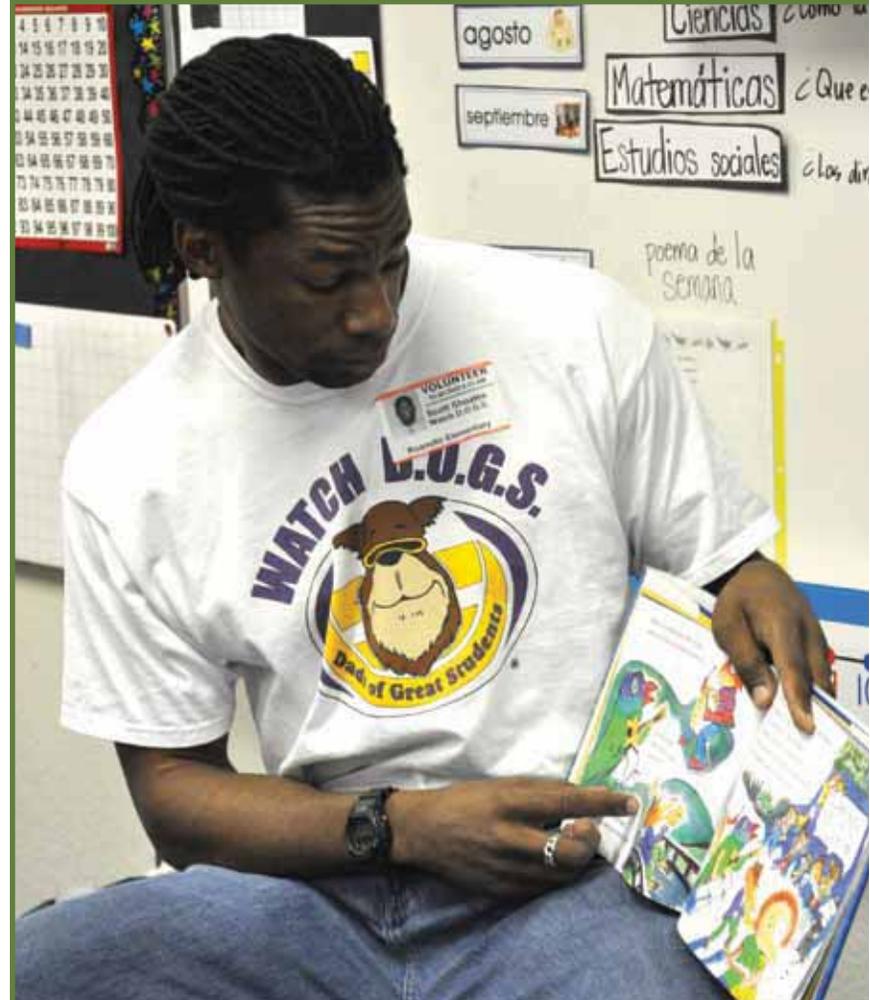
## Communication/Community Involvement

### Community Involvement

Community involvement is a key element to student success. Northwest ISD provides numerous opportunities to engage parents and the community in the education of children. Whether it is the gift of time or the gift of money, NISD values the outstanding support of the Northwest community.

#### Community Involvement Opportunities

- Attendance Boundary Committee
- Booster Clubs
- Campus Improvement Committee
- Career Day
- Community Service Task Force
- District Education Improvement Council (DEIC)
- Gifted/Talented Parent Organization
- Junior Achievement
- Leadership NISD
- Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee
- Long-Range Technology Plan Team
- Mentor
- Multicultural Awareness Committee
- Northwest ISD Education Foundation (NEF)
- Northwest Retired School Employees Association
- Partners in Education (PIE)
- Partners in Education Advisory Committee
- PTA/PTO
- School Finance Task Force
- Speaker's Bureau
- Strategic Planning Summit
- Superintendent Student Chat Groups
- Superintendent's Roundtable
- Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students)
- Youth Protection Team



## Communication/Community Involvement

### Areas of Focus for 2009 - 2010

#### Effective Communication

Northwest ISD believes that effective communication requires sharing information in a variety of ways to capably reach all audiences and stakeholders. To improve communication to parents and the community, the district communications office will strategically share district news and pre-written and pre-recorded messages with campus staff. School personnel can then disseminate the district information via campus newsletters and other means of school communications. An increased district presence on individual campus Web sites also will allow for residents of all 14 communities and 19 schools to feel connected to the district as a whole. Communicating a consistent message to all audiences will be a priority for district and campus staff.

Staff of the NISD communications department will continue its work to share positive stories about the district, its schools, programs, staff, and students by working with local reporters and several media outlets. To better share the news and initiatives of Northwest ISD, the communications staff will take additional steps to work with state and national media. In addition to pitching positive stories about programs and events, the communications department will work with the media to create an understanding of the 21st Century learner and the steps Northwest ISD staff take to create a learner-centered environment. Successful media relations is vital to fulfilling the goal of timely, open school district and campus communications.

#### Document Vault

The *Document Vault* was created with a focus on health-related letters, but is expanding to include a number of documents that campus personnel can use with ease and convenience. Sample letters and documents related to school events and district meetings will be added to the online resource for campus administrators. District and school photos also are shared with campus staff which allows for approved, professional-looking artwork to enhance school



# Communication/Community Involvement

publications. By sharing these resources from the district level, campus leaders are able to effectively manage time and focus on student learning and safety. This convenient online access authorizes campus staff members to effortlessly download a letter and prepare it for dissemination. The *Document Vault* and shared photo files allows individual schools to use district resources with ease.

## Publications

The communications department continually evaluates the effectiveness of district publications and marketing materials. Working in cooperation with other departments, the communications staff lends its expertise to assist other staff members as they create quality and informative materials that focus on a particular area of the district. To help promote two very important initiatives, the *Mentor Program* brochure and the *Texas Scholars* brochure were recently created as new marketing pieces. And the following documents were evaluated and revised during the 2008-2009 school year for use in the 2009-2010 school year:

- *Administrative Regulations for Policy*
- *Annual Report*
- Back-to-School forms
- *Booster Club and School Support Organizations Guidelines*
- Board policy updates
- Board of Trustees publication
- *Board Operating Procedures*
- District marketing materials
- Leadership NISD program and recruiting materials
- *Netbook Guidelines*
- *NISD Budget Manual*
- NISD Education Foundation marketing brochure
- NISD stadium playoff brochure
- Staff recruitment materials
- *Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct*
- *Student - Parent Netbook Use Agreement*
- Teacher communication tip sheets
- *Northwest Vision*

## Technology and Multimedia

Since making its debut in the spring of 2009, *The NET* (Northwest Educational Television) has established a positive presence and created excitement through video-on-demand that broadcasts success stories of Northwest ISD. In addition to growing the regular video series (*Northwest Vision, Kids Come First, In the Spotlight, The Next Step, iChoose, and Got Growth?*), staff will focus on marketing the multimedia programming and enhancing the “triple play” areas. The triple play launched in the fall of 2009 and includes *iNet, Facebook, and Twitter* communications. *iNet* features district podcasts that allows listeners to download and save messages to their audio aggregator like an iPod or MP3 player.

By providing internships, *The NET* also serves as a learning laboratory for high school students in the *Academy of Media Arts and Technology*. *The NET-AMAT* partnership will continue to grow in coming years and help students develop real world experience with an industry professional.

District announcements and news are shared on the popular social networking site *Facebook* where 1,100 “fans” follow the school district and post their comments and feedback on the Northwest ISD “wall.” The district also uses the social networking tool *Twitter* to send brief updates about Northwest ISD to subscribers via text message.

Already viewed as a leader among school district communications professionals, Northwest ISD will continue its efforts to be innovative and ahead of the curve in its means to reach all audiences through the latest technology and multimedia offerings. As one of the first school districts in the state to create a district *Facebook* page, Northwest ISD has served as a model for other districts. As the first public school district to communicate district messages with *Twiddeo*, a video disseminated through *Twitter* updates, Northwest ISD again excels as a leader in the school public relations community. Communications staff members will present at a state convention and share their insight about multimedia and social networking opportunities. With a continued interest in learning the capabilities of multimedia communications, the communications staff will stay current on research and in practice.

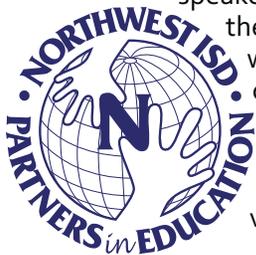
# Communication/Community Involvement

## Committees and Community Relations

To further the district's mission of partnering with the community to create successful learners, the communications department staff will create opportunities for increased awareness and understanding of district initiatives. Whether it's through marketing the district's new James M. Steele Accelerated High School or sharing Northwest ISD updates with homeowner's associations and community groups, the communications department will continue its outreach beyond school district buildings. New opportunities to serve on committees will include a new program to focus on global awareness and diversity in Northwest ISD, and to recognize community service efforts of students through the creation of a formalized *Green Cord* program at both high schools.

## Partners in Education

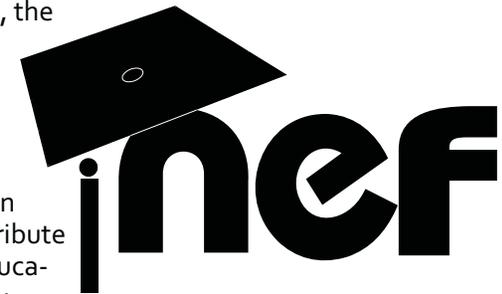
Since its formal beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the Partners in Education program has established business and community relationships that will, for years, influence student success in Northwest ISD. By increasing the number of volunteers in the schools and dedicated partners for one-on-one mentoring, the Partners in Education program provides valuable resources to students, as well as school communities. The creation of a tiered partnership program, the *Northwest Business Promise*, and formal partner recognition opportunities have generated increased interest from the business and volunteer communities. In addition to expanding the number of partnerships and developing meaningful, lasting relationships with school district partners, staff will focus on marketing the Texas Scholars program and developing a speaker's bureau to support the goal of increasing the number of Texas Scholars graduates. To assist with these tasks, several tools are being revised or developed that will assist in the PIE efforts. These include the standardization of PIE handbooks, the automation of volunteer background forms, and the creation of a centralized volunteer database. With a continued focus on



building strong community and business relationships, the Partners in Education program directly affects the Northwest ISD mission and goal of providing positive parental and community partnerships in its schools.

## Northwest ISD Education Foundation (NEF)

Over the past 10 years, the Northwest ISD Education Foundation has been pleased to support the excellence of Northwest ISD in a variety of ways. The foundation provides an avenue for donors to contribute to the enhancement of education while receiving the tax benefits of a 501 (c) 3 organization.



The 21-member board of directors serves as ambassadors to the community, and works to promote the fund-raising efforts of NEF. As funds continue to grow, it is the goal of NEF to increase the endowment fund so that future generations of students will continue to receive the benefit of enhanced learning. Because there are so many great opportunities and happenings in Northwest ISD, the NEF's priority this year is the resurrection of the *Northwest Alumni Association*. As the alumni association is re-organized, the organization will honor distinguished alumni and distinguished educators from past years. The nomination forms will be posted on the alumni Web page, and these honorees will be recognized at the NEF Annual Drive Kick-Off Luncheon each fall. It is always the goal of the NEF board of directors to continue building friends for Northwest ISD.

*Communication/Community Involvement*



# Learning Environment

## Strengths

Northwest ISD experienced an eight and one half percent increase in the number of students from September 2008 to September 2009. Funding from bond referendums allows the district to meet the demands generated by this phenomenal growth trend. The 2001 capital bond program focused on updating facilities throughout the district; the 2005 and 2008 capital bond programs have emphasized additional facility needs as the district expands. A Long-Range Facility Planning Committee works to develop and update the master facility plan. All projects specified in the 2001 and 2005 capital bond programs have been completed, or are in the final stages of completion. In May of 2008, voters approved a \$260,000,000 capital bond referendum which will fund the construction of seven elementary schools, one middle school, building additions, building renovations, HVAC replacements in four facilities, roof replacement in three facilities, flooring replacement in five facilities, and technology infrastructure and land purchases throughout the district. Northwest ISD is fortunate to have a growing commercial and residential tax base that funds the district's growth and capital project needs. In 2001, district officials set the I&S tax rate at \$.335. Since 2001, Northwest has not raised the I&S tax rate above \$.335 despite the voter approval of \$666,000,000 of capital bonds.

## Capital Bond Referendum

The \$260 million capital bond program approved in May 2008 was designed to meet student growth needs, as well as provide funds for the replacement of roofs and HVAC systems, purchase of future school sites, and technology infrastructure. Several projects included in the 2008 capital bond program have been completed: Clara Love Elementary School, flooring replacements at W.R. Hatfield, Samuel Beck, and Prairie View elementary schools, and the HVAC system at Lakeview Elementary. The replacement campus for Roanoke Elementary School is under construction and will be complete by August 2010. In addition, plans and specifications are

underway for Elementary School #15 (Sendera Ranch) and Elementary School #16 (Chadwick Farms/Seventeen Lakes area), which are scheduled to be complete by August 2011, and Middle School #5 which is scheduled for completion by August 2012. Plans and specifications are also being developed for the replacement of the roof and HVAC system at Justin Elementary School, Haslet Elementary School, and the DAEP building during the summer of 2010.

## Master Plan Development

The district developed a master plan that provides a schedule for the initiation of the projects included in the 2008 capital bond program. This schedule details the various phases of each project:

- Seven new elementary schools
- One new middle school
- Eight elementary school site purchases
- One middle school site purchase
- One major classroom addition project
- Three new roofs for existing buildings
- Four new HVAC systems for existing buildings
- Five floor replacement projects
- Renovation projects to support the *Career Academies*
- Middle school building additions to accommodate an orchestra room
- Technology infrastructure, replacements, and enhancements throughout the district

Northwest ISD will follow the schedule in the master plan to implement these projects. District staff continue to work with demographers, cities, and developers to identify areas where future sites will be needed. Several additional elementary sites are close to being placed under contract.

The following projects have been completed or initiated during the past year:

**Byron Nelson High School** - Construction of Byron Nelson High School was completed in August 2009. The 500,000 square-foot building houses the ninth- and tenth-grade classes. The third

floor and a portion of the second floor in the academic wing remain closed in preparation for the eleventh-grade class that will begin during the 2010-11 school year and the twelfth-grade class that will begin during the 2011-12 school year. While the entire building is not being occupied this year, it is complete, fully furnished, and ready when needed.

**Clara Love Elementary School** - Construction of Clara Love Elementary School also was completed in August 2009. This school is located in the Harriet Creek Ranch development near the intersection of Harriet Creek Boulevard and Highway 114 in far north Fort Worth.

**Chisholm Trail Middle School Addition** - A building addition of 10 classrooms was completed at Chisholm Trail Middle School. This increased the optimal building capacity to 1,100 students. In addition, an orchestra room was completed.

**Gene Pike Middle School Addition** - A gymnasium addition and an orchestra room addition were completed at Gene Pike Middle School. The new gymnasium was needed to provide equitable gym space, compared to the other middle schools. In addition, minor enhancements were completed in the kitchen and serving areas.

**Medlin Middle School Addition** - An orchestra room addition was completed at Medlin Middle School.

**John M. Tidwell Middle School** - Construction of John M. Tidwell Middle School is under construction and will be complete in August 2010. This school is located near the intersection of Highway 170 and Alta Vista in Fort Worth.

**Northwest High School Modifications** - During the summer of 2009, numerous construction and maintenance projects were completed in Northwest High School. All hallways were repainted, changing the color scheme. The west administrative office was reconfigured, providing a more welcoming environment. The *STEM* and *AMAT Academy* areas were constructed.

**Elementary School Floor Replacement Projects** - The tile and carpet at Samuel Beck, W.R. Hatfield, and Prairie View elementary schools were replaced in the summer of 2009. In addition, the wallpaper and laminate in the hallway was removed and replaced with colorful painted walls and new flooring.

**Portable Movement** - The opening of Clara Love Elementary School eliminated the need for portable classrooms at W.R. Hatfield Elementary School. Therefore, the portable classrooms were disassembled and moved. Two classrooms were moved to Roanoke Elementary School; six classrooms were moved to Sonny and Allegra Nance Elementary School; and six classrooms were moved to Sendera Ranch Elementary School. While only three of the classrooms are being occupied at Sendera Ranch and three are occupied at Nance, the remaining portable classrooms will be occupied as the enrollment grows at both schools.

### Attendance Boundaries

A citizens' committee developed attendance boundaries for Clara Love and W.R. Hatfield elementary schools. Their recommendation was presented to the NISD Board of Trustees and approved in March 2009. The lower enrollment at Hatfield Elementary School also provided an opportunity to redistribute some students from the Justin Elementary School attendance zone to Hatfield.

Boundaries were also developed for the John M. Tidwell Middle School. Tidwell's enrollment is primarily from the existing Medlin Middle School attendance zone. The new middle school attendance boundaries developed a feeder pattern to Byron Nelson High School.

### Demographics

Northwest ISD has continued to accurately forecast the student enrollment of the district. During the course of the month of September 2009, the demographic projection for 2009-2010 was exactly met.

# Learning Environment

## Safety and Security

Northwest ISD is 100 percent compliant with both the required and recommended school safety standards:

**Texas Unified School Safety Standards** - Northwest ISD meets 100 percent of the established standards.

**District Audit Report to TEA** - Northwest ISD meets all established mandates. Additionally, Northwest ISD meets all established best practice guidelines.

**TEC Sec. 37.108. Multihazard Emergency Operations Plan; Security Audit** - Northwest ISD is 100 percent compliant with legal requirements. Each campus has its own *Emergency Operations Plan* which is updated annually. The district *EOP* includes NISD as a whole and incorporates all support facilities. The district meets and exceeds all drill/practice requirements.

## Emergency Operations Plan

The comprehensive *Emergency Operations Plan* addresses emergency mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery procedures relevant to natural and human-caused disasters. The plan is updated annually and reviewed by staff, as well as emergency response personnel. The *EOP* is then shared with campus and department staff, and other individuals who may have a role in the event of an emergency. The plan prepares staff and students for action and establishes teams, chains of command, and specific steps to take in an emergency situation. Northwest ISD is prepared to provide for the safety and security of students and others if the need ever arises.

New employees are trained in safety procedures as part of their orientation process. Substitutes receive similar training when they receive their orientation to the district. The director of safety and security and the security coordinator review drills at the campuses, as well as provide annual update training to school staff members.

## 2009 Safe Schools Award Recipient

The **Safe Schools Award** is presented to a school district that has demonstrated exceptional safety planning, programs, processes, and improvements in school safety. It is presented to one school district annually by the Texas School Safety Center. Examples of practices and programs that are in place, functional, and routinely reviewed include:

- Campus and Departmental Training
- Coordination with 23 Emergency Responders in Three Counties and Various Municipalities
- Fire Drills (one each month)
- Shelter-in Place (once per semester)
- Drop, Cover, and Hold (once per semester)
- Reverse Evacuation (once per semester)
- Evacuation (once per semester)
- Lock Down (three times per school year)
- Anonymous E-Alert
- Northwest ISD Campus Crimestoppers
- Visitor Check-in Software
- Safety and Security Web Page
- *EOP* Manual
- Traffic Patterns
- SROs (School Resource Officers)
- Canine Detection
- Security Cameras on All Campuses and Buses
- Emergency Calling System
- District Emergency Number
- Numbered Doors and Campus Signage
- Radios
- ID Badges
- Lanyard Cards
- NIMS (National Incident Management System) Training

The district is proactive in its efforts to not become complacent or satisfied with school safety efforts, therefore continual improvement is routine for the staff of the safety and security department.

## Audit Team

Northwest ISD has a safety and security audit team that conducts audits of every campus and facility in the district on a rotating basis every three years. Audits include climate and culture of the campus, internal and external building inspections, staff and student surveys, communication, drills, and an intruder assessment.

## School Resource Officers

NISD contracts with four local law enforcement agencies to provide school resource officers (SROs) who are housed at Northwest High School, Chisholm Trail Middle School, Gene Pike Middle School, and Medlin Middle School/Byron Nelson High School. The district also receives services for Roanoke Elementary through the Roanoke Police Department. The police officers are in constant contact with their respective departments: Fort Worth Police Department, Denton County Sheriff's Office, Rhome Police Department, Trophy Club Police Department, and Roanoke Police Department.

## Community Support

Specific ways parents and others in the community help ensure campus safety at schools in Northwest ISD include:

- Entering and exiting the building through the main entrances.
- Always signing in at the front office to ensure that parents and other visitors are properly identified.
- Timely pick up of children at the end of a school day and after school functions.
- Maintaining up-to-date information on the home address, phone contacts for parents, and pertinent student data.
- Participating in any drills which occur while the parent is on campus and remaining outside for drills that may be occurring when the parent arrives at a school.

## Food Service

The *National School Lunch and Breakfast Program* at Northwest ISD is planned and managed by ARAMARK Food Services. The district takes pride in providing Northwest ISD students well-balanced, nutritious meals with an active promotion of good eating habits, proper nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. All foods meet the Texas Department of Agriculture Guidelines for schools.

A variety of food choices are offered at all campuses. High school offerings include: traditional, Asian Station, Tortilla Fresca, salads and wraps, Clux Delux, Grill Works, Java City, Subway, and Pizza Hut. There is also a minimum of four entrees daily at all elementary and middle schools.

Monthly and bi-monthly promotions encourage healthy participation in the food services program. ARAMARK has two programs that it operates nationwide. These are the *Fuel* and *Impact Jr* programs.

*Fuel* is focused on encouraging healthy eating and participation at the secondary level while *Impact Jr.* is at the elementary level. In addition to these, ARAMARK provides other miscellaneous promotions such as bicycle giveaways before winter break, Guess the Weight of the Pumpkin during autumn, coloring contests during National School Lunch Week, as well as many other promotional programs throughout the year.

NISD provides several easy payment methods, including cash, deduction from student accounts, and instant deposit to *Express-Pay Café* via credit card. Parents may view student accounts online to keep track of their student's current balance and what their student purchases. Parents may also set restrictions as to what their student can purchase and when he or she may do so.

The Northwest ISD/ARAMARK food service program employs a community dietician who provides culinary expertise and nutritional support to all NISD food service operations, as well as to promote nutrition education through the district.

Northwest ISD is pleased that school meal prices have not been increased since the 2000-2001 school year.



# Learning Environment

## Areas of Focus for 2009 - 2010

### Capital Bond Referendum

Passage of the 2008 capital bond program allows the district to continue to stay ahead of the growth that is being experienced within Northwest ISD. More than 92 percent of the 2008 capital bond program directly addresses growth. Once completed, the 2008 program will add nearly 6,000 student seats to Northwest ISD. It is important that Northwest ISD stay prepared for growth and keep facilities in good repair. With that in mind, the district's projects during the 2009-2010 school year include:

**Roanoke Replacement Elementary School Construction** - Construction of the relocated Roanoke Elementary School is underway. This school is located on the north side of Highway 114 within the Briarwyck development in the city of Roanoke. This school will open in August 2010 and will replace the current Roanoke Elementary School. Since construction of the current Roanoke Elementary School in 1992, the commercial area of the city of Roanoke has expanded into the area where the school is located. Therefore it was determined that the best location for Roanoke Elementary School is within a residential neighborhood and the original building be repurposed into the James M. Steele Accelerated High School. The new Roanoke Elementary School is funded from the 2008 capital bond program.

**James M. Steele Accelerated High School Renovation** - Plans are being developed to convert the current Roanoke Elementary School into a non-traditional high school. The building will receive a complete renovation, transforming it into a corporate-like environment. In addition, approximately 70 parking places will be added to the 91 that currently exist. Construction will begin in June 2010 and be complete by August 2010. The James M. Steele Accelerated High School renovation is funded from the 2008 capital bond program.

**Tidwell Middle School Construction** - Construction of John M. Tidwell Middle School began in August 2008 and will be complete by August 2010. Tidwell Middle School is located north of Highway 170 and east of I-35W, near the Lost Creek Development in Fort Worth. Funds to build Tidwell Middle School were included in the 2005 capital bond program.

**Justin Elementary, Roanoke Elementary, and the Special Programs Center Roof and HVAC System Replacement** - The roofs and HVAC systems at Justin Elementary School, Haslet Elementary School, and the Special Programs Center (DAEP/maintenance building) have exceeded their life expectancy. Because these buildings are served by rooftop HVAC systems, plans have been made to replace the roof and the HVAC system at the same time to ensure both systems are compatible. The replacement work will begin in June 2010 and be complete by August 2010. Both replacement projects are funded through the 2008 capital bond program.

**Elementary School #15 Construction (Sendera Ranch)** - Design and construction of Elementary School #15 in the Sendera Ranch community is scheduled to begin by July 2010. However, completion of Elementary #15 by August 2011 is contingent upon acquisition of an elementary school site. Site acquisition has become very difficult within the last two years due to the lack of development caused by the decline in the economy. Funds for Elementary School #15 were included in the 2008 capital bond program.

**Elementary School #16 Construction (Chadwick Farms/Seventeen Lakes area)** - Design and construction of Elementary School #16 in the Chadwick Farms/Seventeen Lakes area is scheduled to begin by July 2010. However, completion of Elementary #16 by August 2011 is contingent upon acquisition of an elementary school site. Site acquisition has become very difficult within the last two years due to the lack of development caused by the decline in the economy. Funds for Elementary School #16 were included in the 2008 capital bond program.

**Middle School #5 Construction (Sendera Ranch)** - Design and construction of Middle School #5 in Sendera Ranch is scheduled to begin by October 2010. Middle School #5 is scheduled for completion by August 2012. Funds for Middle School #5 were included in the 2008 capital bond program.

**Outdoor Learning Center** - Northwest ISD has purchased 193 acres of property in Northlake for the development of an Outdoor Learning Center. Plans are being developed to transform this area into an instructional environment similar to Camp Grady Spruce. Students will be able to receive the exposure to the environment without the overnight stay that is required when visiting Camp Grady Spruce. The floodplain area of this property offers an excellent opportunity to study nature.

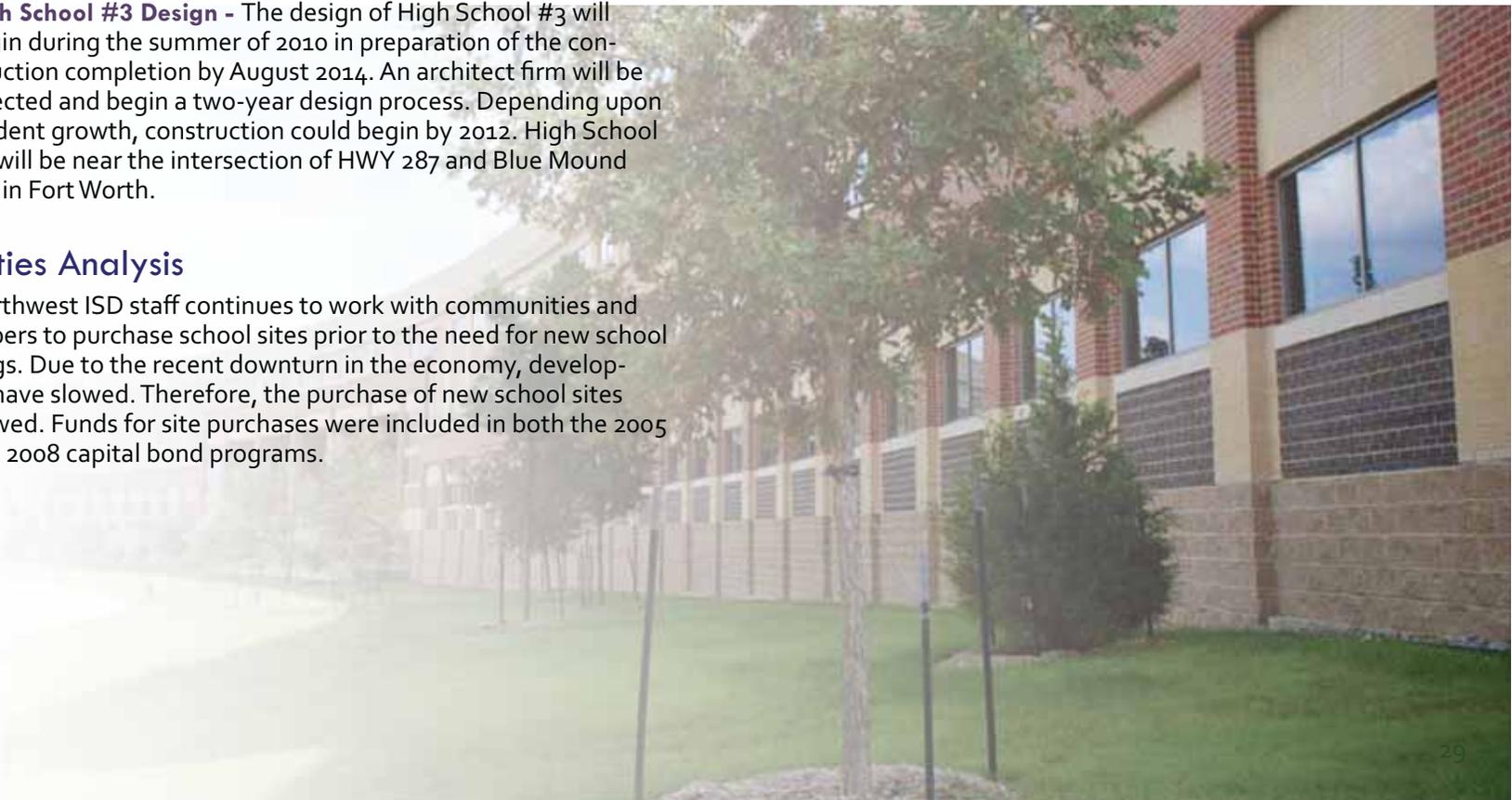
**High School #3 Design** - The design of High School #3 will begin during the summer of 2010 in preparation of the construction completion by August 2014. An architect firm will be selected and begin a two-year design process. Depending upon student growth, construction could begin by 2012. High School #3 will be near the intersection of HWY 287 and Blue Mound Rd. in Fort Worth.

### Facilities Analysis

Northwest ISD staff continues to work with communities and developers to purchase school sites prior to the need for new school buildings. Due to the recent downturn in the economy, developments have slowed. Therefore, the purchase of new school sites has slowed. Funds for site purchases were included in both the 2005 and the 2008 capital bond programs.

### Food Service

The roaming *Free Fruit and Vegetable Bar* that spends one month per year at each elementary school is a new initiative which began in the 2009-2010 school year. This program has a buffet style unit that is placed outside the normal food service area within the cafeteria. At the *Free Fruit and Vegetable Bar*, NISD offers children a choice of three to six different fresh fruits and veggies a day at no cost to the student. It does not matter whether the student purchases a lunch or brings their lunch from home, as they have access to these fruits and veggies at no cost. This program not only promotes healthy eating habits, but also exposes students to new fruits and vegetables.



# Accountability

## Strengths

### Schools FIRST Recognition

The Northwest Independent School District, for the seventh consecutive year, has received a rating of Superior Achievement under the State of Texas' Schools FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas). Superior Achievement rating is the state's highest rating, and it reflects the quality of NISD's financial management and reporting system.

The Schools FIRST rating shows that the district is making the most of the taxpayers' dollars and that Northwest ISD schools are accountable not only for student learning, but also for achieving these results cost-effectively and efficiently.

Additional professional recognitions including the following:

**Annual Budget Document** - The Meritorious Budget Award by the Association of School Business Officials International for the fiscal years 2001-2002 through 2008-2009.

The Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal years 2002-2003 through 2008-2009.

**Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)** - The Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Association of School Business Officials International for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2003 through 2008.

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2002 through 2008.

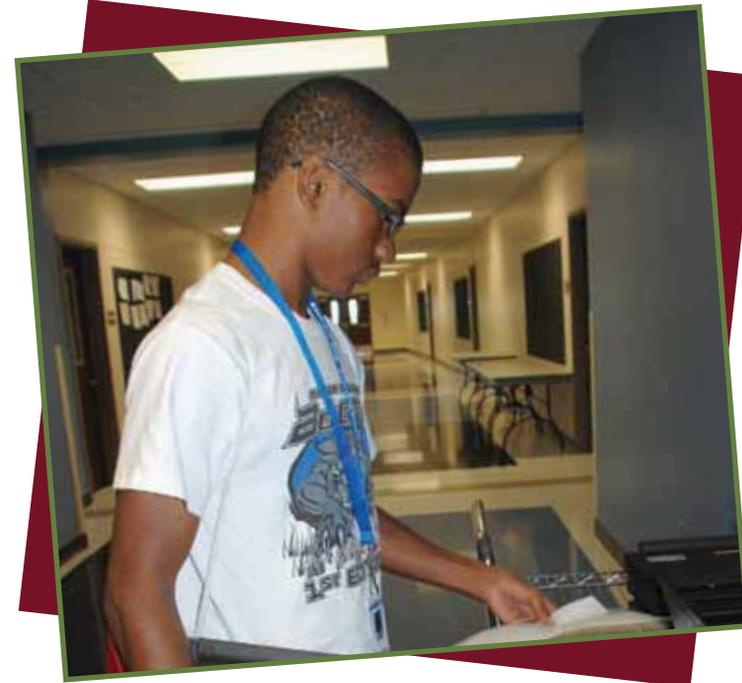
Preparing and presenting a CAFR validates the credibility of the school system's operations, measures the integrity and technical competence of the business staff, and assists in strengthening presentations for bond issuance statements.

**Bond Ratings** - The district's bonds are rated Aaa by Moody's and AAA by Fitch, by virtue of the Permanent School Fund of the State of Texas (PSF Guarantee). The underlying credit ratings of the district are Aa3 by Moody's and AA- by Fitch.

Moody's Investors Service, Inc. has upgraded the district's underlying bond rating three times over the past four years. On May 22, 2008, Moody's upgraded the district's underlying rating to Aa3 from A1.

"The upgrade to Aa3 reflects a rapidly expanding tax base and the district's established trend of notably strong General Fund reserves. Annual surpluses are the result of prudent fiscal planning, conservative budgeting of revenues, and tight expenditure controls."

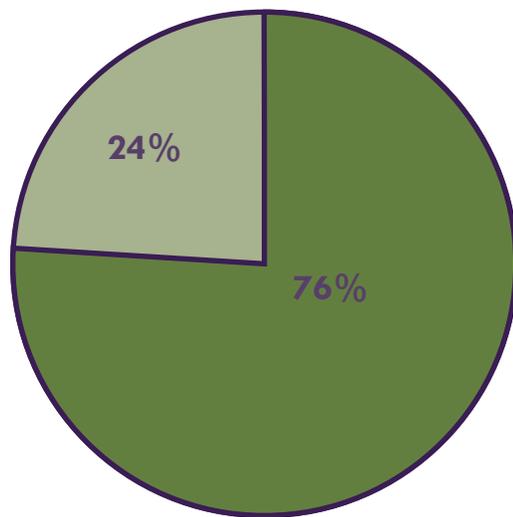
~ Moody's Investors Service, Inc.



## General Fund

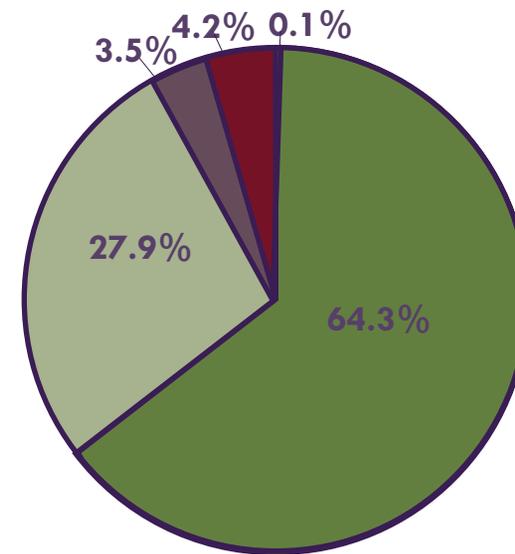
The primary operational fund for school districts is the General Fund, which makes up 76 percent of resources for all funds. The two main sources of revenue for the General Fund are state aid and local tax levies. All instructional resources, salaries, supplies, and transportation expenses come from this fund.

2009-2010  
General Fund Revenue



- **Local Revenue – 76 percent**  
Local real and personal property taxes  
Temporary deposits and investments earnings  
Property taxes collected for tax increment fund (TIF)  
Cocurricular, enterprise services, or activities (athletic receipts)
- **State of Texas Revenue – 24 percent**  
Available School Fund  
Foundation School Fund  
TRS (Texas Retirement System) On-Behalf Payments

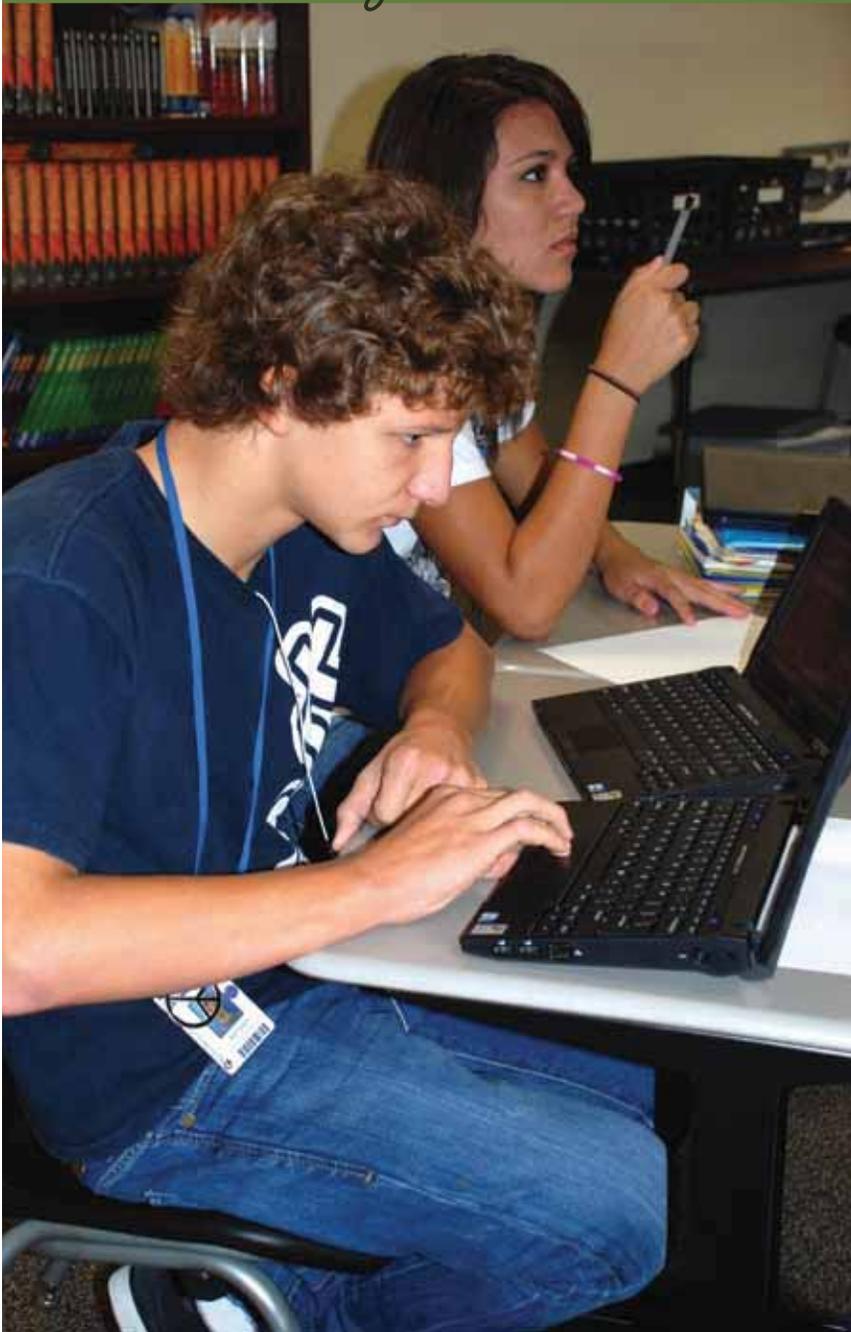
2009-2010  
General Fund Expenditures



- **Payroll Costs – 64.3 percent**  
All employee salaries and benefits
- **Professional and Contracted Services – 27.9 percent**  
Utilities and contracted services (legal services, maintenance, tax appraisal, and Chapter 41 recapture)
- **Supplies and Materials – 3.5 percent**  
General supplies and instructional materials
- **Other Operating Expenses – 4.2 percent**  
Insurance, travel, elections, and other expenses
- **Capital Outlay – 0.1 percent**  
Major equipment purchases

**Total General Fund Expenditures**  
\$139,814,940

## Accountability



## Areas of Focus for 2009 - 2010

### Bond Ratings

On May 10, 2008, voters passed a \$260 million bond election with 72 percent voter approval. The strong student and economic growth in the local area should allow the district to maintain the current bond ratings.

### Training

The financial services department has updated the district's *Financial Services* and *Activity Funds Procedures* manuals and continues to conduct twice-a-year paraprofessional training on procedures.

Additionally, the financial services department annually updates the *Booster Clubs and School Support Organizations Guidelines* and has initiated annual training for the organizations' officers.

### TESA

The chief financial officer serves as the sponsor of the North-west Educational Support Association (NESA) chapter of the Texas Educational Support Staff Association (TESA). Approximately 125 paraprofessionals attended the annual fall training session.

### Budget Development

The district's approach to coping with the combination of fast student growth in a restricted funding environment with increasing academic standards has been to ensure that the budget process is instructionally driven and guided by the strategic plan. The district budgeting process will include program budgeting procedures to ensure quality instructional budget decisions.

## Customer Satisfaction

The district routinely surveys the Northwest ISD school communities to determine the satisfaction level regarding the district's progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The data that was collected from the *Parent Survey* serves as benchmarks for measuring probable success of district programs and the stability of the system for future district surveys. In the 2007 and 2008 survey, parents responded to 46 questions including demographic data and satisfaction level with the district and their child's school. The questions were arranged in the following seven categories:

- Connecting with Parents
- Connecting with Students
- Academic Excellence
- Care and Safety
- School Information
- Facility and Service Quality
- District Information

The results from the questions indicate an overall positive and satisfaction level toward NISD.

Your Education Dollar	
Bus Ride To School .....	4¢
Chapter 41 Recapture .....	14¢
Cleaning/Utilities/Maintenance .....	11¢
Co-curricular/Extracurricular .....	3¢
Curriculum and Training .....	3¢
District-Level Support Staff .....	3¢
Guidance and Counseling .....	3¢
Health Services .....	1¢
Library .....	1¢
Payment to TIF .....	1¢
Principal/Campus Administration .....	4¢
Teachers, Aides, and Supplies .....	50¢
Technology .....	2¢
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>

## Financial Information 2009-2010 Budget Financial Statistics (All Funds)

Total Assessed Valuation .....	\$10,379,188,138
Current Tax Rate .....	\$1.35500

### Budget Expenditures (All Funds)

#### Current Expenditures:

Instruction and Related Services .....	\$80,397,528
Instructional and School Leadership .....	6,150,021
Support Services - Student (Pupil) .....	22,899,650
Administrative Support Services .....	4,125,033
Support Services - Non-Student .....	16,186,727
Ancillary Services .....	198,888
<b>Current Expenditures Total .....</b>	<b>\$129,957,846</b>

Debt Service .....	33,146,447
Capital Outlay .....	181,652,707
Intergovernmental Charges .....	23,360,240
<b>Total Expenditures .....</b>	<b>\$368,117,241</b>

### Budget Revenues

Local and Intermediate Sources .....	\$147,132,722
State Program Revenues .....	34,487,200
Federal Program Revenues .....	6,869,170
<b>Total Revenues .....</b>	<b>\$188,489,092</b>

## Accomplishments

### District/Campus Accomplishments:

Northwest ISD was presented the **2009 Safe Schools Award** by the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) in June. The Safe Schools Award is presented to a school district that has demonstrated exceptional safety planning, programs, processes, and improvements in school safety. Northwest ISD's safety and security program was honored and recognized as a model for other districts at the Texas School-Based Law Enforcement conference. One school district in Texas is presented with this award each year.

Northwest ISD joined an elite group of 124 districts from across the country recognized as '**Best Communities for Music Education.**' The honor recognizes the district for offering comprehensive, well-rounded music education.

Northwest ISD earned a '**recognized**' district rating, with 12 of the district's 17 schools receiving an '**exemplary**' rating and three schools receiving a 'recognized' rating, the two highest categories recognized by the state.

Northwest ISD and all district schools met all of the 2008 performance and participation standards for **Adequate Yearly Progress.**

Northwest ISD's TAKS (**Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills**) scores are notably higher than the average state scores.

Northwest High School received the **2009 College Readiness Award** from the Texas ACT Council. Less than 5 percent of all Texas high schools received the award designed to recognize schools for maintaining or increasing the number of students taking the ACT Assessment over the past five years and for significantly increasing their level of achievement and college readiness.

Northwest ISD met and exceeded the federal government's standards for having **100 percent "Highly Qualified"** teachers in core subject areas. Northwest ISD has maintained the 100 percent "Highly Qualified" standard since the 2004-2005 school year.

Northwest ISD's **Reading Recovery** program was recognized by the Reading Recovery Community in North America for having

a discontinuing rate that met or exceeded the national average in 2007-2008 and for using Reading Recovery as part of the districts comprehensive literacy plan.

Northwest ISD is one of the state's **highest paying** school districts, offering \$47,500 to first-year teachers with a bachelor's degree.

Northwest ISD received a rating of "Superior Achievement" under **Texas' Schools FIRST** financial accountability rating system for the sixth consecutive year. The "Superior Achievement" rating is the state's highest, demonstrating the quality of NISD's financial management and reporting system.

Northwest ISD received the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the sixth consecutive year. Northwest was one of only 68 districts in the nation to receive this award.

Northwest ISD's budget document has been awarded the **Meritorious Budget Award** by the Association of School Business Officials the last seven years.

Northwest ISD received "**Best of Category**" for the *District Snapshot*, *The Source*, and Code of Northwest calendar from the National School Public Relations Association in the 2007 and 2008 publications and electronic media contests.

With the September launch of the district's "**Communications Triple Play**" – featuring Twitter, Facebook, and podcasting – Northwest ISD was the first known district to post short video clips, or Twiddeos, on its Twitter page and was one of only three known districts in the area with a Facebook fan page.

Northwest ISD offers the only **free fruit and vegetable** bar in the state through the school district's food service provider ARA-MARK. The fruit and vegetable bar rotates to each elementary campus for one month, encouraging healthy habits.

Twenty-eight community members graduated from the 2008-2009 **Northwest ISD Leadership** program.

### Student Accomplishments:

The Medlin Middle School **Destination ImagiNation** team placed second in Global Finals, beating teams from around the United States and across the globe. Lakeview Elementary School's Destination ImagiNation team placed 24th out of 78 in the international competition. Destination ImagiNation is the world's largest creative problem solving program for students from kindergarten to university level.

Two Northwest High School students placed in the top 10 at the National HOSA (**Health Occupations Students of America**) competition for their Career Health Display on neurology.

A Northwest High School student placed 31st at the national debate competition, the highest level of competition for speech and debate in the country, in Dramatic Interpretation. Another student also talked her way to the top, winning in Student Congress at the **National Forensics League** national qualifier.

Five Northwest High School students received Letters of Commendation from the **National Merit Scholarship** program for obtaining high index scores on the PSAT.

Three Northwest High School students received recognition from the **College Boards National Hispanic Recognition Program** for top PSAT scores.

A Northwest High School junior placed third in the **UIL Poetry state competition**.

A Northwest High School student became the first student in the district to advance to the orchestra state solo and ensemble contest. In addition to receiving a division I rating at the state competition, the student was awarded the **Outstanding Musician award**, the highest UIL solo honor in the state.

The Northwest High School FFA is a **two-star winner** in the National FFA Chapter Award program, placing the organization in the top two to three percent of programs in the nation. The group received the award last year as well.



Northwest High School's engineering team blasted its way to the top in the national **Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC)**, placing 14th from among the nation's top 100 teams.

The Northwest High School FFA program received its **22nd National Chapter Award**. The award program is designed to reward FFA chapters that actively implement the FFA mission and provide educational experiences for their entire membership.

## Accomplishments



Two Northwest High School band members were selected to the **TMEA (Texas Music Educators Association) All-State Band**.

Two students from Sonny & Allegra Nance Elementary School earned a top place in the **Dana K. Barber writing contest**. They were among only 29 elementary-level entries to receive recognition in Texas.

Northwest ISD FFA members earned 47 top places at the **Denton County Youth Fair**, including the 2009 Grand Champion Market Swine, one Grand Champion and three Reserve Champion division awards, and the Champion Senior Showmanship award.

**Good grades and perfect attendance** earned one lucky Northwest High School student a new car and nine others a free laptop through a student incentive program sponsored by Moritz Chevrolet, Dell Computers, Northwest High School, and the Northwest ISD Partners in Education program.

271 NISD students received the **Trustee Award of Excellence** given by the Northwest ISD Board of Trustees for achieving regional, state, or national awards in various curricular and co-curricular competitions and events.

### Staff Accomplishments:

Roanoke Elementary School principal Deborah Merki was named **Principal of the Year** by Communities In Schools (CIS), the nation's largest dropout prevention program. She was one of 12 Best of Texas award recipients honored by CIS and state officials.

Linda Parker was named High School **Assistant Principal of the Year** and Susan Moore was named Middle School **Assistant Principal of the Year** by the Region XI Education Service Center and the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals.

Northwest ISD Superintendent Karen Rue, Ed.D., is immediate past chair of the **Fast Growth School Coalition**.

Northwest ISD Education Foundation awarded \$97,678.95 in **innovative teaching grants** to Northwest ISD teachers.

1,076 area children were served through the Northwest ISD **Angel Tree** program, supported by donations from NISD staff.



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