

# Paw Prints

AUGUST 2024



## ELGIN ISD RETURNS

In a whirlwind of activity, Elgin ISD students and staff filled hallways once again last week, with warm welcomes and smiles all around during Meet the Teacher events and continuing through First Day 2024.

We thank all our parents for their work leading up to First Day, and we look to all our students with open arms for great things to come. Welcome back, Wildcats.

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# From Dr. Rueter



Welcome back to school to all of our Elgin Wildcats! I am so excited to start this new school year with our new theme, "Something To Cheer About!!!" This is a perfect theme for us, because we truly do have so many things to cheer about in Elgin ISD.

August has been full of great events to celebrate our district and community growth, including the ribbon cutting and grand opening of our newest elementary school, Harvest Ridge Elementary! WOW!!!! What a beautiful campus with incredible staff who are welcoming our HRE students with smiles and excitement every single day. We also celebrated our Topping Out Ceremony at the site of our future Trinity Ranch Elementary School, which will open in August 2025. The construction is moving along nicely, and our ceremony was a wonderful time to recognize those who are supporting the planning and construction of this newest addition to our district. We welcomed 133 new staff to Elgin ISD during our Wildcat Academy, with a bus tour of our great community, a luncheon sponsored by our partners from the Chamber of Commerce, and a wonderful student panel who shared why Elgin ISD is so special to them. Our Convocation event was full of energy and FUN – truly something to cheer about with lots of staff and student involvement from our band, choir, Purple Diamonds, student athletes, and young students who joined us for a group rendition of We Are the World, which absolutely made me so very proud. Our Stuff the Bus event at Millie's on Main, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce was a big success, and Meet the Wildcats was a great opportunity for our community to recognize our student athletes and student groups who bring so much pride and joy to our district. It was especially exciting to see our girls' powerlifting state championship team receive their rings in the ring ceremony! What a great evening of celebration and recognition.

Our first week of school has been a great success, and our enrollment has increased by 361 students since the first day of school! Wow! Our enrollment today is 5,839, and we are adding new Wildcats every day. Our growth is definitely something to cheer about, since that means we have so many new students joining our district and experiencing the incredible things Elgin ISD has to offer.

In Elgin ISD, we believe that every student deserves access to engaging, innovative learning experiences so that they have choice and opportunity for their future. I can't wait to see what this school year brings for each and every one of you!

**DR. JANA RUETER,  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
ELGIN ISD**



## WILDCATS RECEIVE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS

Elgin Independent School District hosted its annual Meet the Wildcats event at Elgin High School on Thursday, Aug. 15. Athletes in fall sports were introduced, and this year we had the opportunity to present our state champion 2023-24 EHS Girls State Powerlifting Team members with their championship rings. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jana Rueter and Elgin Chamber of Commerce President Veronica Seever addressed the audience on-hand, and the event also included performances by the EHS Wildcat Band, Purple Diamonds Dance and EHS Cheer.



Harvest Ridge Elementary School

# School District Debuts New Campus



Elgin Independent School District on Monday, Aug. 12 celebrated the grand opening of Harvest Ridge Elementary School, its fourth elementary campus, located within the Harvest Ridge master planned community.

School district board members and administrators gathered with campus leaders, city and chamber officials, students, and community members in the school cafeteria that afternoon to mark the milestone. Elgin ISD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jana Rueter and School Board President Beth Walterscheidt addressed the crowd on hand before a ceremonial ribbon-cutting. A group of HRES students followed by cutting a smaller ceremonial ribbon of their own.

The event brings to fruition a capstone project in the voter-approved 2021 Elgin ISD Bond Referendum. The bond package included funds for two new elementary schools, improvements to Elgin High School, district-wide renovations, a new transportation facility and a multi-purpose facility.

"We're excited to welcome our young Wildcats to Harvest Ridge Elementary," said Dr. Rueter. "In Elgin ISD, we believe that every student deserves access to engaging, innovative educational experiences so that they have choice and opportunity for their future. This new campus will be a major part of that, while also fostering a sense of community and collaboration."



Harvest Ridge Elementary is located at 338 Harvest Ridge Blvd., just northeast of Elgin High School. The new school is designed to accommodate between 800–900 students and was built on the principles of creating a caring space, a sense of community, collaboration at the center, and a connection to the outdoors.

It includes a centrally located library, classrooms, a maker space with a Lego wall, an interconnected gym and cafeteria, and more. It will serve students in Pre-K through fourth grade this school year.

Former Elgin Elementary School Principal Megan Wehrle has been selected as principal for Harvest Ridge Elementary.



## AT A GLANCE

- WILL SERVE STUDENTS IN PRE-K THROUGH FOURTH GRADE THIS SCHOOL YEAR
- CENTRALLY LOCATED LIBRARY
- MAKER SPACE WITH A LEGO WALL
- INTERCONNECTED GYM AND CAFETERIA
- PRINCIPAL: FORMER ELGIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MEGAN WEHRLE
- ADDRESS: 338 HARVEST RIDGE BLVD.
- PHONE: 512-281-9864



#UTD #WinThe24 #OURSTAN24RD

8/30 Hays Consolidated (Teacher Appreciation Night & Peanut Butter Bowl)

9/06 Austin Anderson (Military/LE Night)  
9/13 @ Montgomery

9/20 @ McCallum (House Park)  
9/27 Pflugerville (Youth/MS Night)

10/4 Open  
10/11 @ Liberty Hill

10/18 Crockett (Homecoming)  
10/25 @ Bastrop

11/01 Connally (Senior Night)  
11/08 @ Navarro (Nelson Field)

**MAKE THE CATCH**

SEASON TICKETS  
NOW ON SALE

2024 ELGIN HIGH SCHOOL  
WILDCATS FOOTBALL

Purchase your varsity reserve section season tickets today. All five home games are only \$40 total (\$8 per game). Use this link and find your pass under the section labeled "passes": [my.hometownticketing.com/](https://my.hometownticketing.com/)

## ELGIN ART EDUCATORS HONORED

Texas Art Education Association last month announced 94 winners of its District of Distinction Award, including Elgin ISD. The district and its visual arts instructors were honored for efforts to provide a well-rounded education that integrates visual arts curriculum that inspires creativity and builds a social emotional learning bond between students, their community and beyond.

Elgin ISD was selected from among 1,200 eligible school districts. Honorees will be recognized at the upcoming TAEA Conference in Galveston in November.

Visual Arts teachers honored with the TAEA District of Distinction Award were:

- Ashley Roderick (Booker T. Washington Elementary)
- Ashley Smith (Elgin Elementary)
- Jennifer Grames (Neidig Elementary)
- Amber Walsh, Philp Miranda and Tara Bonds (Elgin Intermediate)
- Rebecca Core (Elgin Middle School)
- Mandissa Martinez, Megan Burson and Mary Riera (Elgin High School)



Elgin ISD welcomed new employees to the district through Wildcat Academy, a two-day professional development session Aug. 1-2. Staff members heard from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jana Rueter, EISD school board members, campus principals, students and more as they learned all about Elgin.



### **WILDCAT ACADEMY**

Elgin ISD hosted its summer graduation ceremony for Elgin High School and Phoenix High School on Wednesday, July 31 at the Elgin ISD Administration Building. The ceremony was led by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jana Rueter and EISD Board President Beth Walterscheidt. We wish to congratulate all our graduates and wish them the very best in their future endeavors!



### **SUMMER GRADUATION**

The Elgin Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Back to School Party and School Supply Drive, benefiting Elgin ISD, on Thursday, Aug. 8 at Millie's on Main in downtown Elgin. The event included free haircuts for children by Heavenly Hair, a back-to-school fashion show, Wildcat apparel for sale, games, a raffle and more. Chamber members also collected school supplies for Elgin ISD students. Our sincere thanks to the Elgin Chamber of Commerce, and those who attended or provided supplies in the interest of our Wildcats.



### **CHAMBER BACK TO SCHOOL PARTY AND SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE**

# EDUCATORS RALLY AT CONVOCATION



Elgin ISD on Aug. 6 welcomed its faculty and staff back for the 2024-25 school year during its annual Convocation pep rally. Students took part in a panel discussion, and principals Jeffrey Martinez and Michelle Ruthven performed a skit aligned with the district's 2024-25 school year theme, "Something to Cheer About." Also, the Elgin High School Band, Choir, Cheer, football players and Purple Diamonds dance team joined EISD students and staff on stage for a closing montage, and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jana Rueter offered some words of encouragement and inspiration. Classes began Wednesday, Aug. 14.





## TRINITY RANCH TOPPING OUT

Elgin ISD on July 31 hosted a Topping Out ceremony for Trinity Ranch Elementary at the future site of the campus. The event marked the hoisting of the final structural beam in the construction of the school, set to open next year. Topping out ceremonies trace back to Scandinavian tradition, in which pine trees are placed atop buildings under construction. Superintendent Dr. Jana Rueter and Elgin ISD Board President Beth Walterscheidt addressed the crowd on hand at the event.

## NEW BUDGET AND TAX RATE ADOPTED

Elgin ISD on Monday, Aug. 19 formally adopted its 2024-25 budget and set its lowest tax rate in more than 20 years.

Elgin ISD Trustees adopted a total budget of \$87,061,660 in total revenue and \$87,393,360 in total expenditures across three funds, General Operating Fund, Child Nutrition Fund, and Debt Service Fund. Due to excess fund balance, the Child Nutrition Fund has a planned estimated spend down of \$331,700.

The 2024-25 Elgin ISD budget is based on a total tax rate of \$1.2234, a drop of \$0.0023 over last year's total tax rate of \$1.2257. It marked the sixth consecutive year Elgin ISD has decreased its tax rate for local residents.

The 2024-45 Elgin ISD fiscal year begins on Sept. 1, 2024, and will run through June 30, 2025, due to a planned fiscal year change.

### School Hours:

- 7:25 a.m. to 3 p.m. (EES/HRE)
- 7:30 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. (BTW/NES)
- 8:15 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. (EIS)
- 8:25 a.m. to 4 p.m. (EMS)
- 9 a.m. to 4:35 p.m. (EHS)
- 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (PHS)
- 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (DAEP)

