



Community Connection

Wisdom works wonders.

May 2026

Dear Waco Neighbors, Partners, and Friends,

As we close out the 2025-2026 school year, I want to take a moment to connect with this incredible network who champion Waco ISD. Even if you don't have a child in our classrooms or work in our buildings, your belief in our students is the foundation of our success.

Navigating the challenges of public education takes a village, and there are days when the weight feels heavy for all of us. But what I love about the Waco community is that we keep walking. Even when times are tough, we hold our heads high and push forward.

A major part of that strength, however, comes from knowing when to give ourselves some grace. Finding joy in our messy, imperfect moments is how we stay resilient and keep striving for excellence.

To share a little piece of the joy we see in our district every day, and to prove that leadership is rarely as polished as it looks, I wanted to share a look behind the scenes. Behind every serious district announcement and community update this year was a mountain of missed cues, stumbled words, and completely unscripted moments.



A friendly reminder to our wonderful community that perfection is never the goal—growth, connection, and a little bit of humor are.

If I can laugh at my own stumbles, I hope it inspires you to smile at the beautifully imperfect moments in your own life and work, too.

Thank you for standing alongside Waco ISD. You may not be in our hallways every day, but your support changes lives here. As we head into the summer months, my wish for you is a season filled with deep rest, restorative peace, and an abundance of laughter.

With sincere gratitude,
Dr. Tiffany Spicer
Superintendent, Waco ISD



A purple banner with the word "Congratulations" in white cursive script. Below the banner are two student portraits. The left portrait is of Kimberly Moreno, a young woman with dark hair, wearing a pearl necklace. Below her portrait is a gold plaque with the text "VALEDICTORIAN" in black, flanked by two small white diamonds. The right portrait is of Melissa Cortez, a young woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a black top. Below her portrait is a gold plaque with the text "SALUTATORIAN" in black, flanked by two small white diamonds. On either side of the portraits are faint, stylized purple and white illustrations of a knight's helmet.

Kimberly Moreno
VALEDICTORIAN

Melissa Cortez
SALUTATORIAN



A red banner with the word "Congratulations" in white cursive script. Below the banner are two student portraits. The left portrait is of Eistley Lawson, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a black top and a necklace. Below her portrait is a gold plaque with the text "VALEDICTORIAN" in black, flanked by two small white diamonds. The right portrait is of Daniella Mercado, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a black top and a necklace. Below her portrait is a gold plaque with the text "SALUTATORIAN" in black, flanked by two small white diamonds. On either side of the portraits are faint, stylized red and white illustrations of a knight's helmet.

Eistley Lawson
VALEDICTORIAN

Daniella Mercado
SALUTATORIAN

Congratulations to the Class of 2026! More than 800 graduates received their high school diplomas during the University High School and Waco High School graduation ceremonies. Best of luck to the newest group of Waco ISD alumni!

Click each image to learn more information about the remarkable valedictorians and salutatorians from both high schools.

Click [HERE](#) for photos and [HERE](#) to view the video from **University High School's** graduation.

Click [HERE](#) for photos and [HERE](#) to view the video from **Waco High School's** graduation.

Waco ISD Board of Trustees Adds New and Familiar Faces



A new chapter begins for our district leadership! At the beginning of the May school board meeting, Waco ISD officially welcomed both newly elected and returning leaders to their roles.

Trustees Everett Phipps, Jose Vidana, Arash Abnoussi, and Angelo Ochoa were formally sworn into office, bringing a shared commitment to the success, growth, and support of all Waco ISD students and staff. The district thanks them for their dedication and service to our community!

Student and Staff Accolades



Prior to graduation, 16 Waco ISD seniors were awarded \$67,000 in scholarship funding. The scholarship presentations included those managed by the Waco ISD Education Foundation -- the Harper Elizabeth Miller Memorial Scholarship, Dorothy Crippen Hurd Scholarship, Kenneth B. Esterak Memorial Scholarships, Matthew Barrera Memorial Scholarship, and Carlos Padron-Martinez Scholarship.

This year, several new scholarships were added that included the Dr. Susan Kincannon Future Educators Scholarship, Waco High Class of 1968-1971 Social Club Scholarship, and the Rhonda Lynn Scholarship. The Waco Public Schools Alumni Association also awarded scholarships to students.

Congratulations to this outstanding group of graduates!

Click [HERE](#) to view a complete list of scholarship recipients, and [HERE](#) to view more photos from the scholarship presentations.



Waco ISD had 37 students graduate with associate degrees from McLennan Community College before receiving their high school diplomas, including five pioneers from the Future Educators Academy! This year marked the first graduating class for the academy. Click [HERE](#) to read the full story.

Mrs. Rebecca DeLeon, a teacher at Cesar Chavez Middle School, was named Whataburger's WhataTeacher during Teacher Appreciation Week! Mrs. DeLeon received a \$1,000 grant, which will be used to purchase new classroom supplies and equipment. Many thanks to Whataburger for their generous support of our incredible teachers!



Waco ISD is thrilled to extend a massive congratulations to over 100 of the district's teachers across 19 campuses who qualified for the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA)!

This highly prestigious designation is a direct reflection of their unwavering dedication to closing the achievement gap and ensuring students consistently meet or exceed rigorous grade-level standards.

We are incredibly proud to announce Waco ISD's 2025-2026 Principal of the Year: Courtney Whitaker of Provident Heights Elementary School!

This well-deserved honor recognizes Mrs. Whitaker's outstanding leadership, passion for education, and unwavering commitment to her students, staff, and school community. Under her guidance, Provident Heights continues to grow, thrive, and inspire excellence every single day.



Rachel Martinez

ELEMENTARY 2025-2026
Outstanding
Teacher of the Year

Wisdom works wonders.



Ashley Spivey

SECONDARY 2025-2026
Outstanding
Teacher of the Year

Wisdom works wonders.



Waco ISD honored outstanding educators from across the district at the annual Outstanding Teacher of the Year ceremony. Campus winners were celebrated for their impact in the classroom, and two remarkable individuals were named District Teachers of the Year for elementary and secondary education.

Rachel Martinez and Ashley Spivey will represent Waco ISD at the Region 12 Teacher of the Year competition with the goal of advancing to the Texas Teacher of the Year contest. Click [HERE](#) to view photos from the event.



Congratulations to the 2025-2026 Virginia DuPuy First Year Teacher Award recipients, Olivia Focarile at Bell's Hill Elementary, and Daylen Sauls at Cesar Chavez Middle School!

This award is named in honor of former teacher, former mayor, and one of Waco's strongest and most well-known education advocates, Mrs. Virginia DuPuy. It was established by Waco ISD 15 years ago, and is given to two of the district's many "rising stars" in the teaching profession.



The Waco Education Foundation and its SurPRIZE Patrol recently visited 15 Waco ISD campuses. The group surprised 51 teachers with the exciting news their 45 grant applications were approved for funding for the 2026-2027 school year.

This year, the foundation is awarding **\$155,003** back to the district, bringing the total amount of grants funded over the past decade and a half to more than \$2.6 million.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the 2026-2027 grants.

Click [HERE](#) & [HERE](#) to view more photos from the grant presentations.

Board Meeting



Did you miss the May 14 Board of Trustees meeting? Click [HERE](#) to watch the full meeting.

The next regular meeting will be held on June 18, 2026, at 6 p.m. in the Waco ISD Conference Center, 115 S. 5th Street.

Outstanding Community Partner

Each month, Waco ISD recognizes a community partner making a difference for students and families with the Waco ISD Award for Outstanding Community Partners. May's Community Partner is GG's FlowerHut.

Over the past several years owner, Gil Collins-Heflin, has sponsored prom dress and suit giveaways, provided homecoming mum sponsorships, and donated beautiful corsage, boutonniere, and floral arrangements to WISD's prom and homecoming attendees. GG's FlowerHut has also offered engaging floral design classes for students of all ages, including members of the 4-H Club and students exploring STEAM projects.

Ms. Collins-Heflin and GG's FlowerHut have shown incredible generosity and commitment, making a significant impact across the district. Waco ISD is truly fortunate to have such a dedicated partner!



Notable District Events

Waco ISD is always busy celebrating and bringing together our students and staff. Click the photo(s) below to view more pictures from each event.





Mark your calendar!

wisd
WACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUMMER MEAL PROGRAM

May 26, 2026 - August 7, 2026
Closed June 19 and July 3

Free breakfast and lunch at various campuses, community and mobile sites.

Children ages 18 and younger, regardless of where they live or go to school.

No paperwork required.

[WACOISD.ORG/DEPARTMENTS/CHILD-NUTRITION-SERVICES/SUMMER-MEALS](https://wacoisd.org/departments/child-nutrition-services/summer-meals)

Please contact WISD Child Nutrition Services with any questions: 254-214-2479. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Scan Here



Summer 2026

EOC STAAR Prep Sessions

June 1-18

Waco HS

option 1: 8:30-10:05*

option 2: 10:05-12:20 (lunch provided)

option 3: 12:20-1:45

Waco ISD is offering Summer EOC Preparation Sessions for students from Waco High and University High who plan to retake the Algebra I or English I/II EOC assessments in June. Attendance is highly encouraged for those intending to retake these exams.



Students can register to attend the Summer EOC STAAR Prep Sessions by scanning the QR code. Students may attend more than one session. Contact your high school AP or counselor for more information.



Transportation will be available for students not enrolled in summer school during the Option 1 session, but only for those who register for the bus by May 27th during enrollment.



WACO ISD CAMP STORIES

WEEKS OF JUNE 1-JULY 17TH*

1:00-2:00 PM

LOCATIONS AND DAYS:

MONDAYS: BARRON BRANCH APT.

TUESDAYS: KENDRICK PARK

WEDNESDAYS: KATE ROSS APT.

THURSDAYS: ESTELLA MAXEY APT.

FRIDAYS: PARK LAKE CHURCH

ENJOY A DELIGHTFUL STORY, ENGAGING ACTIVITIES, COMPLIMENTARY BOOKS, AND FREE POPSICLES!

NO STORY TIME DURING THE WEEK OF JUNE 29 - JULY 3*





CAMP READALOT & MATH

Venture!



Camp Readalot

Students in grades 1-5 will receive a Scholastic summer reading pack that includes books, a journal, and a reading log. Aim to read, or have someone read to you, for 20 minutes each day!

MathVenture

Students in grades 1-5 will be provided with playing cards, dice, an activity sheet, and math log. Practice math facts for 15 minutes each day using these fun strategies!

Community Camp Story Time

Join us for an engaging storytime event where you can listen to a book while enjoying a popsicle. Plus, you'll get to take home a free book!

Dates: June 1 – July 17
Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Locations:

Mondays- Barron Branch Apt.
Tuesdays- Kendrick Park
Wednesdays- Kate Ross Apt.
Thursdays- Estella Maxey Apt.
Fridays- Park Lake Church



STUDENTS WHO SUBMIT THEIR LOGS TO 26-27 CAMPUS BY AUGUST 28 WILL RECEIVE PRIZES.

ICYMI



Waco ISD

May 14 · 🌐



CHAMPIONS OF INCLUSION: CELEBRATING AWESOMENESS ON THE COURT! 🏀 ✨ ... See more



👍 76

💬 3

➦ 11



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