The LONGHORN
DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Learning Together, Growing Stronger

Message from the Interim Superintendent, Dr. Randal O'Brien



What a wonderful start to the 2026-2027 school year! July, as usual, was a very hot month, but also a time when families spend more time together. Summer is also a time when our board of trustees works with school administrators to prepare for the upcoming year, including adopting the budget and tax rate and approving new staff. Each one of these team members contributes toward the quality educational experience of our students and their families. Our commitment is to ensure that every student is provided a high-quality education, while accepting their responsibility to strive toward becoming the best Longhorn student possible.

Each year following graduation, school board members begin reflecting on what went well and what may need improvement. They also reflect on the dialogue shared with stakeholders throughout the Tarkington ISD community. During these conversations, I heard their commitment to hiring the highest quality leaders across the district. I listened intently to conversations about ensuring that our administrators identify and support the needs of our students, by ensuring that teachers have the resources, technology and training that they will need to be successful in the coming school year. District administrators also shared financial, academic and demographic reports, along with facility needs such as HVAC, roofing and traffic patterns, reinforcing the board's investment in Tarkington ISD's future. I found the board is very invested in ensuring a bright future for Tarkington ISD.

One consideration is that our state legislators provide basic funding for our schools; however, they require our school districts to levy taxes on our residents to support the budget through combined or matching funds. Much conversation surrounded feedback from our stakeholders' desire to keep our taxes as low as possible.

This is of course understandable, as no one wants to feel like they are paying more than their fair share to support our education system, our highways and bridges, water provisions or any other benefits we may enjoy as a society. The good news for everyone is that our board listened and voted to retain one of the lowest tax rates in the state, since paying off all prior infrastructure indebtedness. This is a clear benefit to all land and homeowners. The only caveat is that the lower our tax rate, the lower the matching funds from our legislators, meaning that many schools, like ours, may struggle to expand or improve the course programs that we currently offer.

Speaking of our stakeholders, I have been fortunate to meet families on campuses, at the administration building and throughout our community. What I have heard consistently is a desire for us to provide something special for their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. To make them feel the way their teachers made them feel when they were in school. How reasonable is that? Very! I believe this will be a special year because we all want the same thing for our students: to feel heard, seen and valued. We can do that, and I know we will!

As August winds into September, we have been able to fill every vacancy that occurred over the summer due to retirements, relocations and career changes. Many of these teaching, auxiliary and administrative positions were filled since my arrival in July, with a few more added in August. If quality is what the board asked for, quality is what they've got, with an all-star lineup of principals and strong teams supporting our teachers. I have enjoyed visiting campuses and seeing veteran staff welcome new team members as everyone works to make this the best year yet! I have also enjoyed joining students at lunch and hearing about summer, travel, new shoes, activities and, of course, which sport is best! Whether I walk the hallways, visit classrooms or greet students at the entrance, I see the same positive energy, smiles and confidence setting a tone for success. It certainly makes me proud to see the heartbeat of our schools going strong well into the first few weeks. It makes me wonder.....what if..... what if we keep up this spirit of achievement? What could we possibly accomplish working together with this vibe? Let's find out!

Early Childhood & Elementary Schools

Lisa Stephens, Principal

Our teachers and staff have worked incredibly hard to create classrooms where students feel welcomed, loved, challenged, and excited to learn. We have had a great start, but this is only the beginning!

Teachers have begun weekly PLC Meetings where they internalize lesson plans, analyze student data, and improve their teaching methods. We will monitor the progress of each student through their mastery of each standard (TEKS) and teachers will provide explicit instruction for every academic need.

Beginning of the year **MAP assessments** have also begun. We will use MAP data to plan student interventions, identify student needs, and set growth goals. I am excited about what this year holds for our students and look forward to celebrating their growth and accomplishments along the way. It is truly a privilege to serve our students, families, and this community. Go Horns!

High School

Chris McClanahan, Principal

The beginning of the school year has been productive at Tarkington High School. Thank you to all of the parents and families who attended Meet the Teacher and other events to support our Longhorns! The first six weeks ends September 18. Students are encouraged to keep their strong start going by turning in assignments on time, completing any missing work, and attending tutorials when needed. During September, students will also take their first CBAs in Math (9/15), Science (9/16), Social Studies (9/15), and English (9/14). These assessments will help teachers identify areas where students may need additional support and adjust instruction accordingly.

Behind the scenes, THS staff have also been focused on strengthening instruction and creating a more effective learning environment. Teachers have received training on digital classroom resources and best instructional practices, while content areas have implemented dedicated PLC time to collaborate and plan. THS has also added targeted English and Math classes for EOC and TSIA preparation, formed an Instructional Leadership Team, and streamlined tardy and hall pass procedures so teachers can spend more class time focused on instruction.

Middle School

Dr. Mary Lariviere, Principal

Tarkington Middle School is off to a strong start, and this month we are continuing to focus on helping every student feel connected, supported, and motivated to make positive choices. Our new **TMS Ranch System**, **LiveSchool points**, and **School Store** work together to build belonging, recognize students for doing the right thing, and add a little friendly competition across campus. Students will represent one of four Ranches—Compass, Ember, Prairie, or Horizon—and can earn points through positive behavior, hard work, participation, school spirit, and supporting others. We are also excited about our growing **Positive Referral program**, which has already recognized more than 20 students for their leadership, kindness, effort, and great choices.

We appreciate our families partnering with us as we reinforce expectations for respectful behavior, appropriate language, hallway safety, and dress code. Attendance is another major priority: our goal is 97%, and we especially need help improving Friday attendance. Students who maintain 97% attendance can earn LiveSchool rewards throughout the year and qualify for our May Attendance Field Trip. Families will also find information in the TMS September campus newsletter about our new counselor, restorative practices, and ways to support math fluency and mathematical thinking at home.

There is a lot happening in September, including **Curriculum Night on September 15** from 6:00–7:30 p.m., progress reports, MAP testing, the rescheduled 7th Grade Field Trip, the Homecoming Dance, and fall makeup pictures. Thank you for staying connected and partnering with us as we continue building a campus where students work hard, make good choices, support one another, and grow. At TMS, We Rise by Lifting Others!

Stay Connected to TMS through our Tarkington Middle School Facebook page!

Parent Reminders

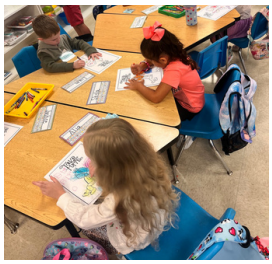
District Nurse, Tiffany Michalik, BSN, RN
All medications given at school require a parent signature and must be in the original container with a complete prescription label. Parent authorization is valid for 5 days for over-the-counter and short-term prescriptions. Medication orders are valid for the current school year only. Medications must be dropped off and picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized adult. Any medication left after the last day of school will be discarded.

Visit the TISD Health Services webpage for more information and medication forms.

Registrar, Dana Burt
If you have not completed returning student registration or submitted a new proof of residence, please do so by **Thursday, September 10.**

For Parent Portal help, email DBURT@TARKINGTONISD.NET and include your student's full name and grade level.

August Highlights



August brought new beginnings, smiling faces, family connections, and exciting learning opportunities across TISD.



Meet the Longhorns brought our community together to celebrate Tarkington athletes and kick off the season.



Staff development and new teacher training prepared educators to deliver engaging, purposeful learning experiences.



Senior Sunrise gave the Class of 2027 a memorable start to their final year together.

FAQs

Who do I send attendance notes to?
TECS: Rhonda Oliver
roliver@tarkingtonisd.net
TES: Staci Lambert
stlambert@tarkingtonisd.net
TMS: Shari Gilmore
sgilmore@tarkingtonisd.net
THS: Toye Dugat
tngrays@tarkingtonisd.net

How do I contact a campus?
TECS: 281-592-6134
TES: 281-592-7736
TMS: 281-592-7737
THS: 281-592-7739

Where can I find board agendas or minutes?
On the TISD website, School Board Tab.
https://www.tarkingtonisd.net/school-board

Where can I find the student handbook on the website?
On the TISD website, Families Tab:
https://www.tarkingtonisd.net/families/student-handbook

Get your Longhorn gear at the official Longhorns Store!



The store contains:

- T-Shirts
- Sweatshirts
- Drinkware
- Polos
- Bags
- Headwear
- Outerwear
- Bottoms
- Button-Downs



Visit the TISD Athletics webpage to access the shop.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 4
THS Varsity Football at Shepherd
THS Varsity Volleyball Tournament

SEPTEMBER 5
THS Varsity Volleyball Tournament

SEPTEMBER 8
THS Volleyball at Kountze
Band Booster Meeting, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 10
TMS Football vs. Liberty
TMS Volleyball vs. Mauriceville
THS JV Football vs. Trinity
THS JV Volleyball Tournament

SEPTEMBER 11
THS Volleyball at Orangefield
THS Varsity Football at Trinity

SEPTEMBER 12
THS JV Volleyball Tournament

SEPTEMBER 14
TECS/TES Games with Grams, 5:00–6:30 p.m.
TMS Volleyball vs. Warren

SEPTEMBER 15
THS Volleyball vs. Buna
TMS Curriculum Night, 6:00–7:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 16
TMS 7th/8th Grade Field Trip to Wolf Creek Park
THS HOSA Blood Drive, 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 17
TMS Football vs. Anahuac
THS JV Football at Liberty

SEPTEMBER 18
THS Volleyball vs. Hardin
THS Varsity Football vs. Liberty
TMS Volleyball Tournament begins

SEPTEMBER 19
TMS Volleyball Tournament

SEPTEMBER 21
TMS Volleyball at East Chambers
HOCO Dress Up theme: 80s

SEPTEMBER 22
THS Volleyball at East Chambers
HOCO Dress Up theme: Iconic Character

SEPTEMBER 23
BETA Induction, 6:00–7:15 p.m.
HOCO Dress Up theme: Longhorns Outdoors

SEPTEMBER 24
THS JV Football at Anahuac
HOCO Dress Up theme: 90s

SEPTEMBER 25
THS Volleyball vs. Anahuac
THS Varsity Football vs. Anahuac, Homecoming
HOCO Dress Up theme: Overalls & Maroon Out

SEPTEMBER 26
ATSSB Region Jazz Auditions, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
TMS Homecoming Dance, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 28
TMS Volleyball at Buna

SEPTEMBER 29
FFA Meeting, 6:00 p.m.
THS Volleyball vs. Kirbyville
Jr BETA Club Induction, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 30
TMS Fall Makeup Pictures

Events subject to change. To view the most up-to-date events, visit the TISD website.

Get Connected!

Don't miss out on news and events!
Subscribe to our TISD Facebook page.
https://www.facebook.com/tarkingtonisd

23rd Annual Round-Up



Tarkington Student Foundation is hosting the **23rd Annual Round-up on October 3, 2026, 10 am- 3 pm.** Come out and have some family fun at the many vendor booths, book fair, and much more.