“Should I buy my home in NISD?”
“Should I send my kids to Northside
Schools?” “Is NISD a good place in
which to locate my business?”

The answers are easy because Northside ISD truly is the “Destination
District” in Bexar County. NISD
earned this descriptor because more
than half of all the new home sales in
Bexar County are in Northside ISD
where neighborhood schools serve
families. That alone tells you that people want to live in NISD
where there are communities for every family: from modest
starter homes to multi-million-dollar properties and everything
in between.

Northside Schools are rated among the best because of the
wide range of rigorous course offerings and a large variety of
extracurricular activities available to meet any interest. We
know that if we can make school interesting for children they
will enjoy the experience and do well in school.

Also, NISD is an “open” school district. We accept and
educate all children who live in the District and who walk
through our doors no matter who they are or the needs they
have. That’s not something that for-profit schools can say. That
concept does not fit into their business plans.

In addition, 100 percent of Northside teachers are rated
“Highly Qualified” by the state. That means they are experts in
their fields and are fully certified to teach the subject or grade
level they are teaching.

NISD has a proven track record in this 355-square mile
community. Our word to the voters, taxpayers, and citizens
of Northside is a commitment to do what we say. This is
particularly true when it comes to levying taxes to support
the schools. NISD has not raised taxes in five years in spite of
continuous increasing enrollment and opening 14 schools in
the last five years. The business climate in NISD is favorable to
small and big business owners alike.

The other factor that makes NISD the “premier” school
district is a professional Board of Trustees which acts in the
best interests of students, families, and patrons. The seven
elected Trustees serve with a sense of community service,
not ego or self-serving agendas. Trustees represent seven
geographic areas in this large school system but act as one
group when making decisions. They live among us and hold
open meetings once a month.

So if you or others are searching for outstanding schools,
well you’ve found us and I welcome you to the “premier” school
district in Bexar County. See nisd.net for more information.
Being ‘Northside Proud’ is deep in our hearts

"Northside Proud" is the 2015-2016 school year theme for our school district and all our schools. The slogan reminds us as students, families, staff, and community members that we should be proud of the many programs, services, and achievements of NISD and our individual schools. These are the things that separate us from others.

Too many times, we go about our daily business as community members and school staff without really appreciating the accomplishments that we, (you), make each day.

We should share with our neighbors, friends, and family members what the things are that make us the “premier” school district in Bexar County.

Trustees recently posted a video on the NISD YouTube channel entitled “Tips for Success.” In it, we shared tips to parents that hopefully will translate into a more successful year for children. We are encouraging parents to become involved in their children’s education because parents ARE a child’s first teacher and should continue in this role.

In fact,” says Superintendent Brian Woods, we remain well below the projections we made when planning for School Bonds 2010 and 2014.”

For the current year, NISD’s total tax rate is $1.3755 per $100 valuation. That rate is more than 10 cents below what was projected in 2010. This is significant as it shows NISD holding the line on the tax rate while at the same time opening new schools, increasing operational expenses, and increasing enrollment.

Woods adds, “One reason we are able to maintain our tax rate in spite of our growth and the need to build and renovate schools is our debt management program. One of our top priorities is to be good stewards of our patrons’ tax money and I certainly feel that we are performing well.”

NISD Budget tops $1.24 billion with no tax increase – again

Tax rate is well below projections

Northisde ISD Trustees approved a record budget for 2015-2016 that tops $1.24 billion. It funds the education for 104,539 students, maintains current standards, funds growth, and provides a compensation increase for all 14,000 employees.

And Trustees did this with no tax increase for the fifth year in a row.

“Northside ISD has an outstanding reputation, and a huge reason for that is because we hold ethics in high regard,” Board President Katie Reed said. “We sign the Code of Ethics annually, reaffirming their commitment to adhere to educational and ethical standards.

According to Superintendent Brian Woods, NISD is probably one of very few Districts where the Board and Superintendent (on behalf of the staff) sign a code of ethics.

“Northside ISD has an outstanding reputation, and a huge reason for that is because we hold ethics in high regard,” Board President Katie Reed said. “We sign the Code of Ethics annually to remind each of us to always put the needs of our students first.”

The Code of Ethics is available online on the Board of Trustees website.

Pictured after signing the poster-sized Code of Ethics (which hangs in the Central Office Board Room) are (from l-r) Dr. Carol Harle, Board Secretary; Dr. Brian Woods, Superintendent; Bobby Blount, Trustee; Katie Reed, Board President, Gerald Lopez, Trustee, M’Lissa Chumbley, Board Vice President, Joseph Medina, Trustee; and Karen Freeman, Trustee.
Thousands of children eat free; parents appreciate benefit

Felicia Pennock, PTA President at Driggers Elementary School and the mother of five, can well understand the benefit of providing a free nutritious breakfast and lunch to students at school thanks to universal feeding programs like the federally-supported Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) currently offered at a number of NISD schools.

“It is important to make sure no kid goes hungry,” Pennock said. “And parents really like it because it saves them money, time, and stress.”

Thirty-eight thousand students at 49 Northside ISD schools received free breakfast and lunch this past school year thanks to the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act which provided the financial support needed. CEP allows high-poverty schools to offer both breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students, eliminating the traditional school meal application process.

In its inaugural year, NISD Child Nutrition Services served approximately one million total meals more than in the previous school year.

Driggers Elementary is one of the schools which provides the free meals to their students, regardless of socio-economic need. Students still have the choice to participate or not.

“I only eat on Wednesdays,” said second grader Kat VanDyke. “My favorite is the mini-chicken burgers and the chili cheese bowl which are only served on Wednesdays.”

“Studies have shown that these types of programs increase attendance and academic performance,” says Thomas Wherry, Child Nutrition director.

“The program really helps parents who might have limited funds,” said parent Angela VanDyke, who also serves as the school’s PTA vice president of fundraising. “We all know that it is the little things that add up, so if you don’t have to worry about feeding your child five days a week, then you can spend that money on other items like school supplies and clothes.”

For more information about the CEP, call 210-397-4501.

Brennan athletes team up for domestic violence prevention campaign

They might be competitors on the football field, but players and coaches from Brennan and Steele high schools teamed up to promote an important message to the San Antonio community – domestic violence prevention.

The group came together to unveil a digital billboard created by the Ad Council and Clear Channel Outdoor as part of the national “Teach Early” initiative.

Domestic violence affects one in three teenage girls each year, and the nation-wide campaign focuses on educating young people about the serious nature of the problem. It includes a curriculum, “Coaching Boys into Men,” specifically created for coaches and players.

Players also signed a pledge that read in part – “I commit to take a stand against relationship abuse and I believe that violence is neither a solution nor a sign of strength. I understand that by treating everyone with respect, I am a role model to others. By taking this pledge, I publicly denounce violence against women and girls.”

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Students, staff pledge to respect others

Northside held its fourth annual Declaration of Respect Signing Day on Friday, October 9, with students and staff across the District signing certificates pledging to demonstrate respect for themselves and others through their interactions at school.

Students at Rayburn Middle School created a respect poster that defined what the word meant to each of them including having a sense of self-worth, using manners, following the Golden Rule, and listening to others.

October is National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month and Respect Signing Day is a reminder to the community that the District is committed to providing students and staff a safe and respectful environment.

“We take bullying very seriously in Northside ISD,” said Superintendent Dr. Brian Woods, who signed a similar pledge with all seven Board members at their Sept. 22 Board meeting. “This District-wide effort is our attempt to make everyone aware of the seriousness of bullying, and the damage that can occur.”

NISD has implemented many programs to address the needs of students, including classroom guidance lessons delivered by the school counselor, anti-bullying classroom presentations, campus-wide initiatives such as the “No Bully Zone, Project ABC (antibullying communities) at the secondary level, and community involvement activities.

At the District level, the phone and texting Safeline program (397-SAFE and safe@nisd.net) offers a safe way for students (and the community) to report potential incidents. Also the Parent 411 online training module for preventing bullying, cyber-bullying, and dating violence is available for parents and educators.

To educate yourself and help in the prevention of bullying on our campuses, go to the NISD’s Parent 411 website at parent411.nisd.net.
NISD Announces 2015 Pillars of Character

In Sept. 16, almost 700 NISD business partners, community members, and educators celebrated the 2015 Pillars of Character at the Northside Education Foundation (NEF) Pillar Recognition & Banquet at Valero Energy Corp. Overlooking the beautiful Hill Country night sky from Valero’s Vista Room, the view was just as star-studded inside as guests celebrated NEF’s 20th anniversary in style with a fun zoot suit theme. The stars of the evening were the Pillars and each was showcased with their own video story. Students dressed in 1940s vintage attire were a hit with guests as they roamed the silent auction area and VIP Lounge.

Thanks to generous sponsors and donors, and live and silent auction sales, the event raised a record-setting $225,000. These funds are awarded to faculty and staff in the form of NEF Resource, Innovation, and Team Grants throughout the school year.

Each year, Pillars are selected from the nearly 100,000 Northside ISD alumni who have graduated from NISD high schools since 1951. The Pillars represent the six character traits taught to NISD students that are part of the Josephson Institute's Character Counts program. The Pillars of Character are: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

The 2015 Pillars include a cardiologist, a clinician and professor, a military special advisor, a musician, and two philanthropist businessmen. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences and success stories exemplify how the District and the community take student success personally. With more than 104,000 students enrolled now and many more expected in the future, yesterday's and today's Pillars remind us of how far Northside and NEF have come and can go. Visit nisd.net/nef to learn more about the 2015 Pillars of Character.

NISD Announces 2016 Pillars of Character

Any graduate from any of Northside’s high schools is eligible to be nominated as a 2016 NISD Pillar of Character, a prestigious annual recognition. A committee of NISD and Northside Education Foundation (NEF) representatives selects the six Pillars. The honorees are celebrated at NEF’s annual fundraising gala. The nomination form and list of past and present Pillars, along with photos and biographical information, are located at www.nisd.net/nef.

Anyone can nominate a graduate and the nomination remains active for up to five years. New information can be provided at any time. The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2016. For more information, contact the Partnerships Office at 397-8599.
Lessons

Save the date! 2016 NEF 5K Run/Walk

The NEF 5K Run/Walk and Family Wellness Fair has become one of the largest, local non-profit 5Ks in San Antonio. In 2014 and 2015, almost 5,000 people participated each year. Similar to the San Antonio Spurs chasing a 6th championship, NEF has a “Race for Seis” of its own. The Foundation’s goal is to have 6,000 participants.

The 2016 NEF 5K Run/Walk is Saturday, May 7 at SeaWorld San Antonio. Help NEF be a champion for NISD students, faculty and staff.

On this day, competitive runners, NISD students, staff and their families, community and business partners will come together to support NEF’s mission to generate more resources needed for innovative educational programs for the District’s 105,000 plus students. After the race, the fun continues with lunch and a day at SeaWorld.

Save the date and stay tuned for more details about how to sign up for the 5K at www.nisd.net/nef/5K.

A New Age of NISD Partnerships

The NISD Partnerships Office brings together business and community organizations and Northside schools. Together, our District partners help us achieve these shared goals: supporting faculty and staff success and enriching student learning.

To help better enable mutual beneficial relationships, the NISD Partnerships Office has revamped its website with a new look and improved usability for employees and community and business partners.

The site features the new “Partner Portal.” Partners can use the Portal to set up and manage an account and share Northside employee discount offerings, or Partner Perks. It also serves as a one-stop-shop for NISD employees to browse a Partner Directory and Partner Perks. The site also includes access to volunteer and mentor resources and the Northside Education Foundation (NEF), the District's premiere partner.

If your organization is interested in applying to be a Partner, follow these three easy steps:

1. Visit www.nisd.net/partnerships
2. Click on “Partners” tab and then click on “Partnerships Information”
3. Follow the instructions and apply. (You can also submit an NISD Employee Perk.)

When applying, organizations can select ways to support NISD and NEF, including volunteering and mentoring, in-kind services and donations, sponsorships, and more.

For more information, please contact the NISD Partnerships Office at 397-8599.
New schools named for founding fathers of Northside Education Foundation

Trustees voted to name Northside’s newest elementary schools after two highly respected volunteers and the founding fathers of the Northside Education Foundation.

Randall H. Fields and Bennie L. Cole were instrumental in the creation of the Northside Education Foundation which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. NEF has distributed more than $2 million to teachers since 1995. Both also served as Northside Trustees.

Fields Elementary School, formerly known as “FM 471 N. area #3” elementary school, is located at 9570 FM 1560 North. It is funded by School Bond 2014.

Cole Elementary School, formerly known as “Village at WestPointe E. area” elementary school, is located at 2252 Talley Road. It is funded with savings from School Bond 2010.

Fields and Cole elementary schools will open in August 2016 and will house 800 students each.

Celebrations honor school opening and anniversaries

One new school joined the Northside family in 2015 and two older schools are celebrating major milestones this school year.

• Boldt Elementary School is the District’s 75th elementary school and will be officially dedicated on Oct. 21 at 6:30 p.m. The school’s address is 310 Hollimon Parkway.

• Brauchle Elementary School will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Nov. 18 at 6:30 p.m. The school’s address is 8555 Bowens Crossing.

• Fernandez Elementary School will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Feb. 16, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. The school’s address is 6843 Ridgebrook.

Mentors help ease ninth graders’ transition to high school

Adjusting to the demands of high school is easier for the freshman class at Marshall High School with guidance from their mentors in the senior class. A unique mentor program provides ninth graders with weekly support from their peers.

Every Friday, senior mentors meet with all freshmen during World Geography classes. It’s part of the “Citizenship in Action” curriculum, and together they tackle lessons on topics such as time management, learning styles, and friendships.

This year there are about 140 mentors and 650 freshmen. Students apply to be mentors during junior year and attend two trainings during the summer. Then they are matched with a group of five or six freshmen for the entire school year.

“The goal is to encourage academic success, citizenship, and leadership with the freshman class and establish great habits right away in high school,” says Sandra McKinzie, government teacher and program coordinator. “We also want to encourage interaction and help freshmen become connected and feel like they belong here at Marshall.”

The mentor program began three years ago as part of Marshall’s “Freshman House” initiative which provides ninth graders with enhanced academic support. It was created to help increase attendance, decrease discipline issues, and lead to higher grades and test scores.

Even though the program didn’t exist when they were in the ninth grade, the mentors understand the impact they can have as role models.

“We didn’t hear from anyone but our teachers, so I hope I can teach them what to do and learn from some of the mistakes I made along the way,” says senior Logan Mangold (pictured left). “I want them to be successful.”

Freshman Jada Coleman says her mentor Logan has already helped her become more confident. “He makes us come out of our shells and talk to him. I am a quiet person and don’t talk as much.”

Freshman Noah Hoglund agrees, “In the beginning our mentor was doing most of the talking but now we’ve all gotten to know each other. You feel like you can talk to them instead of just your teachers. We talk about stress, getting things done, finding your weaknesses, and ways to improve.”

Security lobbies help make elementary schools safer

In School Bond 2014, voters approved the design and installation of bullet-resistant outer security lobbies at 30 elementary schools. The first eight have come on board and the next eight are under construction.

The security lobbies were part of a bigger safety package that upgrades fire alarms, public address systems, campus perimeter fencing, communications system for Northside Police, and more secure door hardware at a cost of $8.28 million.

The bullet-resistant outer lobbies allow for credentials to be checked before a staff member buzzes in a school visitor.

The first wave of schools to get the security lobbies are Glass, Linton, McDermott, Meadow Village, Passmore, Rhodes and Valley Hi elementary schools.

“The outer security lobbies are part of a multi-pronged approach to help keep students and staff safe at schools,” says Superintendent Brian Woods, “but the best way is still for parents, staff, and community members to always be alert to anything that threatens the security of our schools.”

The Northside Safeline is an anonymous 24-hour tip line where information may be left. That number is 210-397-7233 (SAFE). Anyone may also text Safe@nisd.net.

A future bond package will propose adding security lobbies at the remaining 45 elementary schools.
NISD bonds adding more than 800 classrooms

In School Bond 2010 and School Bond 2014, voters approved the construction of 12 more schools and major renovations and classroom additions to older NISD schools. Those 2010 schools are completed and the Bond 2014 projects are well underway. This means that more than 800 classrooms are ready or will be ready to accommodate increasing enrollment.

Here is a construction update:

- **Harlan High School.** This project is about 39 percent complete. The $110,800,000 school is designed by Garza Bomberger & Associates and is being built by Joeris Construction for around 2,800 students. It is located in far west San Antonio at 14350 FM 471 W.

- **Cole Elementary School.** This school is about 23 percent complete. It will house around 800 students. The $25 million school is designed by Noonan Rittimann and being built by Bartlett Cocke General Contractors. It is located at 2252 Talley Rd.

- **Fields Elementary School.** This school is about 24 percent complete and will house 800 students. The $24.6 million project is O’Neill Conrad Oppelt and the school is being built by Joeris General Contractors. It is located at 9570 FM 1560 N in Helotes.

- **Northside Sports Gym.** The $26 million sports gym is under construction at the Farris Athletic Complex next to the stadium and swim complex. It is designed by Marmon Mok and being built by Bartlett Cocke General Contractors. It is about 9 percent complete and is funded through Bond 2010 savings.

- **Campus Security Management Systems.** This project is about 71 percent complete. It replaces all the windows at the school to be more energy efficient and provides upgrades to the school to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and also renovates some special education classrooms. The $3.5 million upgrade is designed by Garza Architects and is being built by D.L. Bandy.

- **Rudder Middle School addition.** This $4.7 million project adds a science classroom addition and other renovations. It is about 17 percent complete and will be completed in summer 2016. Alamo Architects is designing the project and D.L. Bandy is building it.

- **Luna Middle School addition.** A classroom addition designed by Garza Bomberger & Associates is under construction for $3.2 million. Guido Construction is the builder. It is about 13 percent complete and will be finished by summer 2016.

Other major projects in the bid or design phases include a major renovation and addition at Holmes High School which will upgrade the fine arts classrooms and build a new theater. This project is expected to begin in summer 2016 and be completed by summer 2017. An additional Child Nutrition Warehouse is also in the design phase.

Various upgrades are also planned for Allen, Esparza, Thornton, Glenoaks, Cody elementary schools, Pease and Zachry middle schools, and Clark and Jay high schools.

More information on these and other projects is available at [nisd.net/bond](http://nisd.net/bond).
New campus leaders named

Kathryn Hayes, formerly vice principal at Aue Elementary School, is now principal at Aue Elementary.

Talia Hernandez, formerly vice principal at Mireles Elementary School, is now principal at Evers Elementary.

Maria Elena Meza, formerly principal at Allen Elementary School, is now principal at Glenoaks Elementary.

Susan Cleveland, formerly principal in Boerne ISD, is now principal at Marshall High School.

Sharon Spencer, formerly principal at South Texas Academy, is now principal at Holmgreen Center.

Dana Gilbert-Perry, formerly vice principal at Pease Middle School, is now principal at Vale Middle School.

Chaisleigh Southworth, formerly vice principal at Michael Elementary School, is now principal at Fernandez Elementary.

Michelle Wheat, formerly principal at Fernandez Elementary School, is now principal at Jones Middle School.

Two Northside PTAs get national attention

Two Northside ISD PTAs have been named 2015-2017 National PTA Schools of Excellence. Murnin Elementary School and Pease Middle School are among 124 schools from across the country to receive this special designation, and are the only schools in San Antonio to receive it.

The awards are given to PTAs for their achievements in building strong family-school partnerships as part of the National PTAs ongoing efforts to increase family engagement in education.

“"We are extremely proud and excited that these schools have been recognized this way,” said Dr. Brian Woods, superintendent. “We know that students succeed when there is a commitment by the parent, a mentor, and/or a role-model to be involved in the life of a child.”

Last year, the PTAs at Leon Springs and Mireles elementary schools and Folks and Hobby middle schools were named Schools of Excellence.

For more information on the National PTA School of Excellence program, go to www.pta.org/excellence.

Northside’s Year of Swim brings 3 huge competitions

Three national and international competitions closed out the Year of Swim in Northside ISD. This summer, the state-of-the-art Northside Swim Center hosted 2,000 athletes, along with hundreds of coaches and officials, and thousands of spectators.

Among the competitors at the Phillips 66 National Championships in August was the most-decorated Olympian of all time, Michael Phelps. Phelps competed in four events, finishing with some of the fastest times in the world this year to the delight of sold-out crowds of spectators.

The Northside Swim Center opened in June 2013 and the outdoor facility is the only one of its kind in the central United States. At a press conference Phelps said about the facility, “It just blows me away to see a high school pool like this.” He could return to Northside in 2016.

Next summer the United States Olympic Swimming Team will train at the Northside Swim Center July 13-21 before the athletes leave to compete at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. During the training camp, area swimmers and sports fans will have the opportunity to meet the 2016 U.S. Olympic Swimming Team, as one practice will be open to spectators, followed by an autograph session.

Olympic superstar. On the final night of competition, NISD Aquatics Director Scott Zolinski presented the top meet awards to Michael Phelps.

The “Da Speed” team. Adams Hill ES (from l-r) Elijah Lepaglia, Patrick Mendez, Genesis Escamilla, and Anthony Ortiz.

Two decades of solar power

This coming year will mark the 20th year of the Texas Solar Car Races in Northside ISD. Northside School Board Trustee Bobby Blount is the long-time organizer of the event which started as a mentorship project at Rayburn Middle School to give students hands-on lessons in teamwork, renewable energy, problem-solving, and science and engineering.

Last spring more than 270 teams from 65 elementary schools competed with their solar car creations. The races are a culminating event for fourth and fifth grade students who spend weeks designing and building miniature solar-powered cars.

Save the date for the 2016 event – Saturday, April 30, 2016, at Gustafson Stadium.