

Heart at Work Employee of the Month

Keller ISD's Heart at Work Employee of the Month for October 2026 is Beth Pyell, the Campus Registrar at Bear Creek Intermediate School. Beth was nominated by BCIS Choir Director Sarah Holland for her exceptional support during school musical auditions. Beth volunteered countless hours to help organize and facilitate auditions, generously sharing her time, energy, and expertise. Beyond her practical support, she made a meaningful difference in students' emotional well-being. She comforted nervous students, encouraged those lacking confidence, and provided compassion and reassurance to students who became overwhelmed or upset. Her kindness helped students feel safe, supported, and valued throughout the audition process, exemplifying the caring and supportive presence every school community needs.

Substitute Teacher Spotlight

KISD's Substitute Spotlight program recognizes the important role substitute teachers play in keeping learning on track. The award celebrates substitutes who demonstrate dependability, flexibility and dedication, helping maintain continuity in learning while fostering a positive school environment. The district's first honoree of the 2026-27 school year is Johnny Richardson, who brings more than 20 years of experience in education. Johnny joined Keller ISD in 2018 as a paraprofessional and, after retiring in 2024, returned to the district as a substitute teacher. He was nominated by Alyssa Alanis of Vista Ridge Middle School, who praised his positive attitude and the impact he makes on campus: "Johnny is such a vital member of our campus... he always shows up with a smile and a ready-to-go attitude! Our staff and students all love him, and we appreciate everything he does to help make our campus a great place to be!"

Star Educator Award Recognition

Alan Cotten, a biology teacher at Timber Creek High School, has been selected as Keller ISD's next Star Educator Award recipient for the 2026-27 school year. He was nominated by KISD Science Coordinator Rebecca DeBusk, who shared that Alan is a deeply loved and generous educator, known for his quirky sense of humor, dedication to his students, and willingness to support fellow teachers. As an Honors and AP Biology teacher, he supports new biology teachers across KISD and neighboring districts, models effective instruction for colleagues, and freely shares his lessons and daily recorded lectures. He has a gift for beautifully connecting ideas and brings a teaching style that is uniquely his own. His kindness, expertise, and generosity with his time make a lasting impact – not only on his students, but on the educators fortunate enough to learn alongside him.