

March Board FYIs

Van Alstyne High School

The past several months have been extremely busy and successful for our band program. A total of 52 students auditioned for the 4A All-Region Band, and 38 earned placements in the ensemble. Of those 38 students, 13 advanced to the Area North auditions. From that group, two students earned a place in the 4A ATSSB All-State Band: Luca Raner, a two time All-Stater in percussion, and Preston Cox, a first year All-Stater on bass trombone. In addition, Micah Danielson made school history as our first student to earn a spot on the drum set in the ATSSB All-State Jazz Band. These students proudly represented the VA Band in San Antonio. Only the top 3% of musicians who begin the audition process achieve All-State status. This also marks the twelfth consecutive year that the Van Alstyne Band has been represented in an All-State ensemble. This past weekend, the band participated in the UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest with outstanding results. We had 54 soloists and 5 ensembles earn First Division ratings. As a result, 18 soloists and 24 ensemble members qualified to compete at the UIL State Solo & Ensemble Contest in May. Our Indoor Winter Guard and Indoor Drumline are currently in the heart of their competitive seasons and continue to put in tremendous time and effort. Most recently, both our Varsity and Non-Varsity Color Guard teams competed at the Azle contest. Varsity placed 1st overall, finishing ahead of Anna and Highland Park, while the Non-Varsity Guard earned 2nd place in their division. We are incredibly proud of the dedication and accomplishments of all our band students!

VAHS Theatre competes at the District One Act Play contest on March 6, 9:00 am at Panther Creek High School.

The Van Alstyne FFA has had a great start to the Spring. At Fort Worth, Senior Ainsley Williams had the Polled Hereford Champion Spring Yearling heifer. John Wells' heifer was named the Shorthorn Junior Champion Heifer, and Beth Wells placed 2nd in a very competitive Shorthorn Heifer class. In the Ag Mech contest, Lane Henneman was 2nd in a very competitive class with the 24-foot hydraulic trailer. We had a very good group of blue and red ribbon projects at Fort Worth. Senior Lane Henneman earned a \$10,000 scholarship in the TEXAS MADE contest as well.

We had 4 exhibitors take agricultural mechanic projects to the San Angelo Stock Show & Rodeo. Senior, Lane Henneman and Junior, Easton Marquez placed 1st in their class with the 24-foot hydraulic tilt deck trailer. 7th grader Charlie Perkins placed 5th with the hydraulic bucking chute. Senior Luke Harrelson and 7th grader Levi Lamar had a strong blue-ribbon project in a very competitive wildlife division. Additionally, Lane Henneman finished in the Top 8 at the cutting contest out of 128 contestants at Angelo.

At the San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo, we had three heifer exhibitors. Senior Ainsley Williams won her class and was named Champion ORB heifer and was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship. Beth Wells and John Wells placed 1st and 2nd, respectively. Ainsley also has a market steer she is showing down this week and we wish her the best of luck.

We have started traveling with judging teams to some practice contests and had a great day of learning and improvement at the Northwest Invitational. March 1-6 is the Texoma Exposition and Livestock Show. Van Alstyne FFA and Junior FFA are being represented by 74 exhibitors.

Van Alstyne Junior High School

We are amazed at how quickly this semester is moving at the junior high. Students have recently completed their third-quarter assessments and benchmark testing. These assessments provide our teachers with valuable data to determine where students are academically and to identify the specific interventions needed to help them succeed. Based on these results, we have begun targeted small-group intervention support to prepare students for the upcoming STAAR tests. Many students have already shared that this dedicated time has been helpful and encouraging as they continue to build their skills and confidence.

Upcoming Events

- UIL Pizza Party for UIL Participants
- House Games – March 13 from 1:15–3:30 PM
- 7th Grade Field Trip to the Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary – March 21, April 1, and April 2
- 8th Grade Field Trip to an Allen Americans hockey game – April 2

Van Alstyne Middle School

Van Alstyne Middle School is proud to report that our campus has been diligently focused on ensuring academic and behavioral success for all students while fostering enrichment opportunities that challenge and inspire our students. This commitment was clearly reflected in the outstanding performance of our 6th grade students at their very first University Interscholastic League (UIL) Academic Competition in Celina on Feb. 21. Our students embraced this challenge and represented Van Alstyne Middle School with excellence, earning multiple individual honors and team awards across a wide range of academic events.

Art Smart

- 1st Place – Elaina Cortes
- 6th Place – Hannah McAlister
- Overall: 2nd Place Team

Chess Puzzles

- 2nd Place – Drake Schrage
- 6th Place – Asher Pope
- Overall: 2nd Place Team

Listening Skills

- 1st Place – Addison Adair
- 2nd Place – Claire Gilliland
- Overall: 1st Place Team

Dictionary Skills

- 2nd Place – Piper Nabors
- 3rd Place – Taryn Schoener
- Overall: 2nd Place Team

Oral Reading

- 5th Place – Marylin Lemons

Number Sense

- 1st Place – Sayo Ashafa
- 5th Place – Carson Liu
- Overall: 1st Place Team

Social Studies

- 3rd Place (Tie) – Claire Gilliland, Fareed Kinda, and Luke Bland
- Overall: 1st Place Team

Science

- 3rd Place – Raylan Quick
- 5th Place – Carson Liu
- Overall: 2nd Place Team

Mathematics

- 3rd Place – Sayo Ashafa

Spelling

- 3rd Place – Elaina Cortes
- 5th Place – Emerson Foster
- Overall: 2nd Place Team

These results reflect not only individual talent but also the strength of our instructional programs and the dedication of our teachers who invest time in coaching and preparing students beyond the regular school day. We are grateful for coaches Christina Garris, Devin Hill, Adam Collins, Lindsey Greenberg, Maghen Mulieri, Kristin Reed, Monica Enlow, and Sage Beck! These teachers and students will be treated to a Pizza Party for their hard work! Let's go VAMS!

Sanford Elementary School

Since mid-February, we have been reviewing Q3 assessment data. Our reading and math data showed both strengths and weaknesses, but nothing was unexpected. In comparison to last year, our math has shown improvements. We are partnering with our curriculum department to implement a focused plan to improve the areas where we still have work to do. We will be targeting these skills over the next few weeks.

Partin, Sanford, and Williams Elementary Schools will host Kindergarten Round-Up on April 7, 2026, and May 26, 2026. We have changed it up this year and will be hosting an enrollment support-only event in April and hosting our big family event in May. This annual event is an important part of our staffing process and a wonderful opportunity to welcome our newest Panthers and their families. We will also continue our Kindergarten Readiness Parent Information Sessions, providing families with practical tools and resources to help ensure their children are fully prepared for a successful start in August.

Our Structured Teach classes have been participating in a few different Special Olympics events and will have one more this spring. In addition, they are continuing to run our snack cart and created a special coffee cart just before spring break. Our students are learning valuable communication, money, and social skills through these programs!

Partin Elementary School

We have recently completed the Q3 benchmark testing, and our teachers have been diligently analyzing the results. This data is crucial as it highlights areas where our students may be struggling, enabling us to implement targeted interventions as we prepare for the STAAR test. Our teachers are collaborating with instructional coaches to ensure that they use the most effective teaching strategies during lessons and in intervention groups.

Our students in the STC program recently attended the Special Olympics Basketball event at the High School. Before they left, we held a clap-out for them. It was a special moment for the entire campus. All students walked away with a medal.

Williams Elementary School

Williams Elementary is nearing completion!

We have been intentionally and thoughtfully staffing our campus, and the early start has allowed us to attract several outstanding educators and staff members. We are excited about the strong team coming together and look forward to providing future opportunities for parents and students to meet our Williams staff.

Williams Elementary is also in the process of establishing our parent-elected PTO. The nominating committee has been formed and will soon meet to finalize a fair, transparent election process for board positions. Our Williams PTO will serve as an invaluable partner in supporting students, staff, and school community.

Pre-K registration will be held at the administration building on April 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In addition, families may receive assistance with Kindergarten registration on April 7 and May 26. On the evening of May 26, parents and incoming Kindergarten students will have the opportunity to participate in a special “Sneak Peek” experience, offering a glimpse into a day in the life of a Williams Kindergarten student as well as meet teachers and tour the building.

Additional dates and engagement opportunities are to be determined and coming soon!

#thewilliamsweeveryday

Curriculum Director

Telpas, Telpas Alt, and STAAR Alt 2 have all begun. Each of these tests have a long window and will take many weeks to wrap up. With the numbers of students taking these tests increasing, we moved away from our ESL teachers coordinating the TELPAS and TELPAS Alt to our campus testing coordinators taking on this task and they’ve all done very well thus far with these tests. Craig Dennis has done a great job at helping coordinate this as the district EB coordinator while working with our DTC, Annie Smith.

Benchmark testing and quarter 3 testing was conducted and that data analyzed to pinpoint any holes or areas of concern before state testing this spring. All data has been analyzed and we are working with teachers and campuses to shore up any weak spots. With this being our first full implementation year, a dip is expected as both teachers and students are learning the new program; this is a normal phenomenon. For us, we saw improvement in three of the tested areas for math, 3 other areas were within 10 percentage points from this time last year, and 1 area is off by more than 10 percentage points (this is a grade level with multiple struggles this year and the two teachers who started teaching this grade level are no longer teaching this grade level). Our instructional coaches have met with teachers and campus principals to implement interventions to improve student outcomes where needed and to maintain and further growth in the areas that are already ahead.

Middle of the year required dyslexia screenings were done and discussed at our elementary campuses with parental notifications going home.

Our LPAC committees are meeting to ensure that all testing accommodations necessary were put into place with our EL students before state testing this spring. These committees gather teacher input and review student work thus far to ensure that each one has what they need to be most successful on state tests.

Athletic Director:

Congratulations to our boys and girls basketball teams on BOTH winning Bi-District playoff games. Both teams finished 3rd in our district. Our girls season ended in the Area round of playoffs and our boys are playing in the Area Championship this Friday (2/27).

Our powerlifters are heading to their regional meets. There are 2 divisions of powerlifting this year. One division is “equipped” which means the athletes can wear powerlifting suits, wraps, bench press shirts etc. The other division is “unequipped” which means they basically wear shorts and a t-shirt with no other equipment to “assist” them. We have a lot of our male and female athletes competing in both divisions and several that are ranked very high going into their regional meets.

This week is our GCEC Panther Classic baseball and softball tournament. We are very blessed to have GCEC sponsor and provide an unbelievable hospitality room for our guests. We were able to get some really solid teams to come enjoy our new facilities.

We also hosted our first tennis tournament at our new complex on Thursday 2/26. We had great crowds and lots of compliments on our new facilities.

Our boys and girls golf teams have each had a few tournaments to get their season started and our track teams are starting their meets this week as well.

Depending on construction we are hoping to be able to host our track meets at our new track/soccer stadium at VAHS.

We have hosted 4 playoff basketball games at our VAHS Panther Arena so far and they all went very well. Once again a great opportunity to show off our community and facilities. Kudos to our coaches and workers who make these events special and make our arena a hotspot for hosting playoff games for these other school districts.

We hosted 3 days worth of basketball events for Unstoppable Athletes (Special Olympics). We had 2 days of “skills” competitions and a one day basketball tournament for team competitions. We had over 1500 guests and around 100 VA student volunteers over the course of these 3 days. Our booster club sponsored lunches for every guest and our culinary class at VAHS cooked and put together the lunches. Truly a “team” effort for this event. We are very grateful for our administration allowing us to host these large events and utilize so many different groups like our culinary classes to make these events so special.

Chief Financial Officer

Federal Funding updates:

The president is currently proposing increases to some federal programs, and the elimination of others as he is in the process of shutting down the Department of Education. The following programs affect our district:

Title 1, Part A - Proposing a level budget for FY2026
(Our district currently receives \$59,280)

IDEA-B Part B Formula - (Special Education Funding) Proposing significant increases of this funding. (Our district currently receives \$525,482)

IDEA-B Part B Preschool - (Special Education Funding for Pre-K) Proposing significant increases of this funding. (Our district receives \$11,755)

Title II - Proposing elimination of this program. (Our district currently receives \$21,203)

Title III - Proposing elimination of this program. (Our district currently receives \$11,569)

Title IV - Proposing elimination of this program. (Our district currently receives \$10,000)

Vouchers - Over 130,000 applications have been submitted for the new Texas Education Freedom Account (EFA) program for the 2026-2027 school year. Around 100,000 applications were expected. The number of students accepted into the program will depend on the amount of legislative funding, and application approvals. The deadline for submitting an application is March 17, 2026. I'm assuming many more applications will be submitted between now, and that deadline.

Texas school districts are concerned about how vouchers, along with the rise of students being homeschooled, will affect future funding in public schools and are making plans to adjust budgets due to loss of enrollment. We will be monitoring this as well.