



Navarro ISD

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Academic Services

December 2024

Season's Greetings from the Academic Services Department,

As we close our first semester, we would like to celebrate the many great things our teachers, staff and students have accomplished this year.

ESL Department

This semester, the ESL Department was awarded a grant from the Navarro Education Foundation for the project "The Gift of Communication" which will provide each campus with 5 Pocketalk two-way translator communicators in hopes of enabling more accessibility between families and our school community. We appreciate the generous support of our Education Foundation.

In conjunction with our Chief Academic Officer, Assistant Superintendent, and elementary principal, the ESL department is developing a strong plan to initiate an excellent Bilingual Program at the Pre-K level to meet the needs of a growing emergent bilingual population. In Texas, school districts with at least 20 emergent bilingual students in a grade level are required to offer a bilingual education program. The program must include:

- Dual-language instruction in English and the student's primary language
- One of the four bilingual program models described in §89.1210 of the Texas Administrative Code

The bilingual education program should be designed to help students develop proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in both English and their primary language. Teachers working with emergent bilingual students in bilingual education programs must be certified. They must have a Texas teaching certificate for the grade level and content area that they are assigned, in addition to a bilingual education certification. We are currently preparing a full presentation for this initiative which will be presented to the Board next semester.

This year, another one of the ESL Department's initiatives is to collaborate with the Special Education department to better serve dually identified students. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Arlaus attended a new training session at Region 20 with the ESL paraprofessionals from the Intermediate and Elementary school to learn how to properly translate student information during ARD meetings. Specific scenarios were discussed during this training, including vocabulary needed to correctly explain specific special education services. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Arlaus also collaborated with Shannon Voigt, our Special



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Education Director, and Maryela Nandin to create streamlined statements to effectively identify students in need of different TELPAS reclassification criteria, which must also be discussed during annual ARD meetings.

This month, the ESL Specialists hosted the second annual ESL Family Potluck Holiday celebration to close out the semester. Families enjoyed great food, lotería, and prizes. They are looking forward to the upcoming monthly family engagement events that will be held in the spring semester.

Instructional Technology

Mrs. Gissendanner has been actively supporting a variety of Eduphoria needs during our fall testing season. She has worked with campuses and the Academic Services team to ensure that all benchmark testing is created utilizing a set of normed test settings in order to provide a consistent testing experience for all students. Additionally, she has helped navigate unique campus situations to ensure teachers have the appropriate account settings and training to maximize their use of student data in Eduphoria.

This month's professional development flyer will focus on how to use digital photos/media as an engagement lever for students. Mrs. Gissendanner will be demonstrating how teachers can fine tune technology tools they are utilizing in class with a small twist. Additionally, she is beginning to expand the flyers to include instructional examples for all major content areas so all teachers feel represented in their learning. There is clear evidence that the variety of professional development formats are engaging a greater number of teachers. Currently, Mrs. Gissendanner has received requests to support interactive escape rooms, project based learning activities, and guided notes to name a few integration projects.

Additionally, Mrs. Gissendanner is meeting with Creative Learning Systems, whom she met at Region 20's Techtober. This meeting is to discuss potential ways this vendor can support Navarro ISD in creating SmartLab spaces for students to engage in STEM learning opportunities as part of our advanced academics programming.

Instructional Coaching

The Instructional Coaches continue to attend and facilitate grade level PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings at all campuses. These meetings support teachers in planning for Tier 1 instruction and targeted small group instruction, along with disaggregating data and conducting student work analysis. PLC meetings in December will focus on disaggregating fall benchmark, interim, and TTAP data in order to develop a plan to adjust and target instruction to continue to increase student achievement.

As the Academic Services team continues to collaborate with Region 20 ESC consultants to support the implementation of High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) across the district, Mrs. Coppedge and



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Mrs. Landrum continue to develop their expertise and knowledge of these products to effectively support teachers with the implementation of Amplify K-8 and Carnegie Math 6-12. They have been conducting instructional walks and visiting classrooms with Region 20 educational consultants to gather teacher feedback, observe instruction, and identify needed training. The teachers are doing an exceptional job of implementing these new state curriculum products and internalizing the essential concepts that must be taught as outlined in the NISD Curriculum Pacing Guides, which the instructional coaches adapt and modify with additional resources to provide further support. The Instructional Coaches are also attending the Strong Foundations Implementation (SFI) LASO grant support meetings.

As the Academic Services team prepares for the district professional development day in January, the Instructional Coaches have been meeting with campus principals to ensure all content areas are covered with specialized training to meet the various needs of each department. The Instructional Coaches will also attend the quarterly meeting of the Region 20 ESC Curriculum Forum in order to continue to stay up to date on curriculum changes now that the State Board of Education has officially approved instructional materials for the 2025-2026 school year. You can see a list of the approved materials at the following link: <https://tea.texas.gov/state-board-of-education/imra/imra24-list-of-sboe-approved-instructional-materials.pdf> Other professional development opportunities for the instructional coaches this semester include the TCMPC Leadership Collaborative and the NWEA MAP User Conference, as well as the Region 20 ELAR Advisory committee.

Instructional Programs

Mrs. Williams has been actively engaged in several key initiatives to enhance our instructional programs. Recently, she successfully completed the annual security and confidentiality training with all campus testing coordinators. This training is vital for ensuring that our staff is well-prepared to handle sensitive information and maintain the integrity of our testing processes. Additionally, Mrs. Williams developed a shared CTC (Campus Testing Coordinator) drive to facilitate collaboration and accessibility among campus testing coordinators. This drive houses all pertinent documents, making them easily accessible to key personnel and fosters transparency and efficiency in our assessment processes.

In November, we entered our first TTAP and Interim assessment window. The data collected from these assessments was carefully disaggregated and shared with campus administration, providing essential support for data reviews during PLCs at both the High School and Junior High campuses. To further enhance our analytical capabilities, teachers at the high school are receiving training on how to assess constructed responses across all content areas. This initiative enables us to conduct a comprehensive



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analysis of student data, fostering a deeper understanding of student performance and instructional effectiveness.

As part of her responsibilities, Mrs. Williams has been tasked with identifying instructional specialists and resources to enhance classroom instruction. In collaboration with Region 20, we will be implementing coaching cycles in Science and Social Studies across the Intermediate and Junior High campuses. Mrs. Williams will conduct walkthroughs in all classrooms with the curriculum specialist and then provide targeted support based on their observations. This support will include ongoing TCMPC and RBIS training as we integrate new TEKS, address the needs of teachers in new grade levels, and ensure the comprehensive implementation of state standards.

Mrs. Williams is scheduled to attend the upcoming Accountability Forum, an event that will provide her with valuable insights to refine our data collection processes, ensuring they meet the high standards we aim to uphold.

Since our Teacher Incentive Allotment application was accepted by the Education Agency, Mrs. Williams has been working closely with Mrs. McMullen and Dr. Kauffman to ensure the accuracy of our student performance data. We have also been working with campus principals to verify their lists of teachers that will be eligible for the Teacher Incentive Allotment funds. This data validation is a critical component of the TIA process, and helps us to ensure that we are meeting required standards for receiving allotment awards for designated teachers.

Lastly, Mrs. McMullen and Mrs. Williams have been diligently working with ESC 20 to prepare for the LASO 3 grant application that is due this month. Our efforts have been focused on gathering the necessary documentation to complete the application, and aligning our application with the required criteria and assurances for securing grant funding for our curriculum program initiatives. These collective initiatives reflect our unwavering commitment to providing high-quality educational experiences for our students and enhancing the overall effectiveness of our instructional programs.

PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System)

This semester has been unprecedentedly busy and complicated for all PEIMS staff across the state due to the TSDS Upgrade Project (Texas Student Data System). The TSDS Upgrade Project is an initiative to upgrade the Operational Data Store (ODS) and Texas Education Data Standards (TEDS) to a current version of Ed-Fi. The Ed-Fi Data Standard is a common language that allows education technology systems to securely exchange data from multiple sources. This upgrade includes:



- Transactional loading via an Application Programming Interface (API)
- Changes to the data standards
- New individual ODS to house Ed-Fi and TEA-compliant data
- A new Data Management Center (DMC) application to manage data in the individual ODSs

This upgrade has been quite a learning curve for PEIMS staff as TEA and Student Information System vendors (Ascender) are constantly finding errors and updating their systems to correct these errors. The Fall PEIMS submission was originally due on December 12; however, TEA announced an extension the week of November 22 due to the amount of errors still existing which affected district submissions across the state. The new data submission due date is January 16, 2025.

Mrs. Ballard has worked diligently to learn the new system and has been troubleshooting the errors. She regularly attends professional development training and webinars on updates to the TSDS Upgrade as they are released. She works closely with district and campus administrators and program coordinators/directors to ensure accurate student data. She also collaborates with Mr. Neuhoff as he manages the district's financial data which has also been affected by the TSDS upgrade project.

In addition to Fall PEIMS, Mrs. Ballard is currently working on the Early Childhood Data System (ECDS) submission to TEA. This is a mandatory submission required of all LEA's that serve Pre-K and Kindergarten students.

Gifted and Talented Program

Mrs. Adams is continuing her professional learning by attending the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented GiftED conference this month. In order to continue to widen her network of support, she is also taking advantage of volunteer opportunities within the conference. She will be helping with registration, and leading a rural districts meeting as well. The goal for attending this conference is to learn about best practices, work with field experts, and further align our gifted identification practices to serve a more diverse student population in the Gifted and Talented program.

This month, our Intermediate students worked on solving a real world problem that their campus faces every year during the annual Turkey Bowl. Teachers bowl frozen turkeys as the culminating activity of the food drive for the Christian Cupboard. This is no easy task, and often the frozen turkeys do not fare well during the bowling activity. This year our GT students stepped in to devise a solution to the annual turkey problem. First, they brainstormed about bowling, researched sizes of bowling balls, and discussed what characteristics a bowling ball has to help the bowler be more successful. Then their thinking was shifted to frozen turkeys. They predicted the average size of a frozen turkey and discussed the differences between a bowling ball and a frozen turkey. Finally, they brainstormed possible actions they could take to help the teachers be successful as they bowled their frozen turkeys. Bowling a frozen turkey is not an activity many people get to practice. The students quickly recognized that the teachers might be more successful if they designed a special bag for the turkey. The students began identifying materials bags can



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be made from. In groups, they then made their own bag prototype. After the design phase, the students tested their designs, made necessary adjustments or improvements, and then produced a final product for the competition. The end goal was for the bag to have handles, to be able to hold a turkey that weighs about 20 pounds without breaking, and be durable enough to be bowled multiple times. The teachers could then choose one of these bags to bowl their turkey in and the students were thrilled to see their designs in action.

Counselors

The following is a synopsis of counseling activities that have taken place on each campus this semester.

Navarro Elementary - Jayna Dahl, Counselor (jayna.dahl@nisd.us)

Ongoing - Mrs. Dahl organizes, plans, and implements school-wide lessons using our Core Essentials curriculum and the monthly Big Ideas. Detailed lessons are taught to every class, every week, during their teacher's scheduled PLC time, in addition to a monthly guidance lesson with every class. Mrs. Dahl also does individual guidance counseling sessions weekly with students as they are referred by parents and/or teachers. Other activities include crisis intervention, threat assessments, conflict resolution, Special Education referrals, and small group counseling.

Panthers Feeding Panthers is also another resource provided to families in need through our counseling support services. In addition, Connections counselors come to the elementary campus every week for small group lunch bunch sessions, which serves over 30 students.

When new families enroll, Mrs. Dahl provides tours of the school and is available to answer questions about our programs.

September - Small groups/lunch bunches began and continued throughout the semester, with new ones beginning in January. Mrs. Dahl has approximately 8 lunch bunch/small groups running each semester, based on needs within classrooms, and from teacher/parent referrals. She also helped to plan and organize a Grandparent's Day Luncheon for family involvement. Grandparents were given bookmarks as a token of appreciation.

October - We did weekly orange days for bullying prevention as well as Red Ribbon Week. During this time, we provided lessons that focused on making healthy choices. We also celebrated Hispanic Heritage month through the use of an interactive bulletin board by the cafeteria which students were able to use. Mrs. Dahl also attended Headstart's Health Services Advisory Committee as a mental health advocate and representative of Navarro ISD. At this meeting she learned about many great resources available to our community and she has been sharing this information with our families in need.

November - In the month of November, the campus focused on generosity. Our Student Council sponsored a food drive to support our Panthers Feeding Panthers program and our local food bank. We



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hosted a staff potluck luncheon to celebrate fall birthdays and our teachers. Through the PAWS (Positive Actions With Staff) Committee, we assembled and delivered treats on a treat trolley to all staff to show our appreciation. We have also implemented the Xello program with all 1st and 2nd grade students and will implement the program with our Kindergarten classes this month. The Xello program provides our students with opportunities to explore college and career opportunities that they might be interested in.

December - December is always a fun and busy month at the elementary school. There are many activities planned, including the 12 Days of Christmas theme days for staff and students. Core Essential lessons this month will focus on service and volunteerism. Students will learn about what it means to be a volunteer and how they can serve and give back to the community. Our Angel Tree is also up and running with over 30 students being served and Blue Santa applications rolling in.

Coming up - In January, Mrs. Dahl will be hosting a teambuilding activity along with a mindfulness session, providing resources to the campus for Holocaust Awareness Week. She will also be assisting the Junior High campus with their 8th grade personal graduation planning meetings as the students begin making selections for their course pathways in high school.

Navarro Intermediate-Darby Clardy, Counselor (darby.clardy@nisd.us)

September- Mrs. Clardy organized and implemented Hello month with weekly activities that encouraged students to include all students. Her guidance lessons focused on “if you see someone alone, reach out, and say hello.” She started lunch bunch groups for students who were struggling with being new to the campus. She also assisted with student council elections as a co-sponsor.

October- Mrs. Clardy focused on “Don’t be a booly.” She teamed up with the Guadalupe Children’s Advocacy Center to present a one time anti-bullying presentation to the 4th and 5th grade students, and part 1 of a 3 part series of Child Safety Matters with the 3rd grade students that covers a wide range of state mandated topics. All students wrote on a paper ghost how they could help our campus be a bully free campus, and these ghosts were displayed in our cafeteria for all to see. It was nice to hear their discussion during lunch on how to make our campus welcoming and bully free as they read the notes on each posted ghost.

During this month, Mrs. Clardy also sent out a “temperature check” to all students to check on how they were feeling emotionally. She has been meeting with students based on needs identified through this temperature check.

Mrs. Clardy took the student council to a leadership conference where they learned leadership skills to make the student council a student-centered organization.

The counseling department, as a whole, set up Red Ribbon Week and started a district wide initiative to wear orange on Wednesdays to unite together against bullying for the month of October. The campus wide Red Ribbon Lesson was focused on how to make good choices. Students were given guidance on



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how to say “no” to peer pressure. During this time, the Kindness Club also started biweekly meetings and came up with a pledge for the entire student body to sign. The Student council collected money at our Trunk or Treat event to help support victims of the devastating hurricanes that took place in the fall.

November - November’s guidance lessons focused on Gratitude to use as a coping mechanism. Students decorated Turkey feathers to display how all of our differences make us stronger together. Mrs. Clardy set- up the Angel Tree and has been able to help 12 families and 40 children. She was also able to coordinate a full Thanksgiving meal for 3 families in need. The Student Council completed a food drive raising \$1000.00 for Panthers Feeding Panthers. Mrs. Clardy also coordinated the 9th annual Turkey Bowling competition for all of our Intermediate staff to participate.

December- This month we will “Light it up for Kindness” and celebrate all the kind acts around campus by writing them on a light bulb and displaying them in the cafeteria. Mrs. Clardy has also organized a fun 12 days of Christmas activity which will provide goodies for the staff.

Coming up - In January we will implement the XELLO program with all of our students to aid in CCMR (College Career and Military Readiness) exploration.

Navarro Junior High - Susie Bee Lutz, Counselor/Sara Pittman, CIS Site Coordinator
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As this is her first year at Navarro Junior High, Ms. Lutz started the year with an introduction presentation for each student so they could get to know her. Since it is also Miss Pittman’s first year at the campus as our new CIS coordinator, she also participated in these introductory presentations. They went into every classroom and communicated how to reach a counselor when needed. They implemented a referral system so that each student can learn to advocate for themselves. The referral process sends the counseling staff the student name and grade which allows them to quickly find the student's schedule and call them in for guidance and assistance when needed or requested. They also taught the students the difference between a student referral and a crisis. In their presentation, they further shared information about the services that CIS provides.

Each day, the counselors do morning minute meetings for any student that might need one. They also do small activities such as “Take One or Give One,” which allows the students to pick a post-it note with a positive affirmation or make one to give to someone else.

One of the main goals of the Junior High counseling department this year is to be visible and get to know all students. Both counselors serve on the campus Safety Committee and they help review StopIt reports, Aristotle reports, and student reports of bullying so they can effectively address these concerns in a timely manner. Ms. Lutz is also coordinating campus counseling activities with Christine Jaecks from the Guadalupe Children's Advocacy Center to bring Teen Safety Matters lessons to the campus. This program addresses emotional, physical and digital safety and meets state requirements for bullying, child safety, and child abuse prevention.



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In January we will hold a Future Freshman Parent night to review the above presentations and to begin discussions about the high school course catalog and upcoming PGP (Personal Graduation Plan) meetings. The counseling staff will hold individual meetings with all 8th grade students and their parents to begin formulating their four-year high school course plan. There are many choices that students have and we want to ensure that all students and parents are well-informed of these choices as they enter their high school years.

The Communities in Schools program is new to Navarro Junior High this year, and it has been a great success. Miss Pittman is providing social-emotional supports, reviewing grades, offering attendance incentives and assisting students with basic needs.. Currently, we have 60 students participating in weekly social skills lunch groups. Miss Pittman has also assisted with suicide risk assessments and coordinates with outside agencies to provide care for students in crisis. With the upcoming holiday season, we were able to provide 17 families with Thanksgiving food baskets and HEB gift cards. For Christmas, we have 20 students who will receive Christmas gifts sponsored by teachers and Navarro families. The CIS school-wide goal for this year is to help increase STAAR scores for all grade levels. A huge focus point has been addressing each students' mental wellbeing to ensure they are better able to focus and cope in the classroom.

Navarro High School - Margi Handrick, Counselor Grades 11-12 (margi.handrick@nisd.us)

This semester, Mrs. Handrick has been holding individual personal graduation plan (PGP) meetings with all juniors and their parents to help them review course selections and prepare for a successful senior year. Transcripts are reviewed during these meetings and students are given updated copies. These meetings will continue through the end of December. If a parent was not able to attend a conference, paperwork will be sent home with their student before the Christmas break. Parents are asked to sign the personal graduation plan (PGP) and return it to Mrs. Handrick so she can begin creating student schedules for the 2025-2026 school year. Senior conferences will be held next semester to ensure all students have completed graduation requirements and are on track to graduate in May.

Please mark your calendar. Our annual FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) night will be held at the high school on Thursday, January 9, 2025. This meeting is scheduled for all parents of Senior students. Please reach out to Mrs. Handrick if you have questions or would like more information.

Navarro High School - Shari Barta, Counselor Grades 9-10 (shari.barta@nisd.us)

This semester, Ms. Barta has been meeting with the 10th grade students individually about their personal graduation plan (PGP) and course selections for the 2025-2026 school year. During these meetings, students are given personal copies and explanations of their transcripts. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings as well. If a parent is unable to attend a conference, paperwork will be sent home with their student. Parents are asked to sign the personal graduation plan (PGP) and return the signed copy to their child's assigned counselor.



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Individual PGP student/parent meetings for current freshmen will be held in January.

As the campus 504 coordinator, Mrs. Barta attended the Annual Fall Southwest Section 504 Conference in Austin. She will be sharing critical updates and resources with other campus Section 504 coordinators this month.

Within the last few weeks, both Ms. Barta and Mrs. Handrick organized attendance make-up sessions for their students that need attendance recovery credit to meet the compulsory attendance law requirement to earn credits. Four different sessions will be held this semester, giving students the opportunity to earn back 12 hours.

Ms. Barta and Mrs. Handrick have also been a part of monthly CCMR meetings to track and ensure our students are working toward earning their CCMR points. All actions are directed toward helping our students be college, career or military ready when they leave the high school campus.

Starting in January, presentations will be available for middle school parents and students as an introduction to our CTE courses and their upcoming personal graduation plan meetings

Wednesday, January 22 will be the Future Freshman Parent's night at the high school campus. All 8th grade students and their parents are invited to attend this event. Students will have the opportunity to explore course options at the high school and receive specific information about their upcoming personal graduation planning (PGP) meetings that will begin the following week.

Nurses

In the current academic year, the nursing staff at Navarro ISD has diligently completed state-mandated screenings across the district, ensuring compliance with health regulations. Following these screenings, referrals were sent home to students who did not pass their screenings. This information is meticulously updated annually and submitted to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) by Nurse Veronica Schnautz, RN.

The nurses have worked tirelessly to obtain updated immunization records, proactively following up with families of provisionally enrolled students and entering all data into our electronic health system. Through their commitment to adhering to state guidelines concerning required immunizations for enrollment, Navarro ISD proudly achieved a 100% compliance immunization report which was submitted to TDSHS.

As our district continues to grow, and the medical needs of our students increase, Nurse Veronica Schnautz, RN, has diligently ensured that all staff are trained in accordance with state directives. The ongoing training equips our educators and support staff with the necessary skills to address various health concerns promptly and effectively.



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In addition to maintaining up-to-date health records, providing crucial health information to appropriate staff, and fulfilling state screening requirements, the nurses manage daily clinic visits. This includes administering medications, performing skilled nursing procedures, Medicaid billing, maintaining effective communication with parents and teachers, and various other daily tasks.. They actively participate in 504 meetings and ARDs while educating students about their healthcare needs. Remarkably, the nursing staff has provided care and support to 9,566 students so far this school year, exemplifying their dedication to student health and well-being. Nurse Veronica Schnautz, RN submits a monthly student health visit report to the administrators to keep them abreast of the clinic traffic on their campuses.

Librarians

Navarro Elementary - Carly Rierson, Librarian

Mrs. Rierson kicked off the month of November with DINOVENBER, the Library transformed into a prehistoric jungle with inflatable dinosaurs and lush green vines. Students in Pre-K through Second Grade had the opportunity to wear their favorite dino outfit as they learned about a new dinosaur each week. After story time, students became paleontologists and dug for dinosaur bones in our stem bins. Additional Frog Street curriculum for our Pre-K program was cataloged and delivered to teachers. The Literacy Library continues to be utilized by all teachers.

Navarro Intermediate - Jenny Sindt, Librarian

The Intermediate library got off to a great start with a very successful September book fair. All semester, students have been diving into reading, with a focus on the Texas Bluebonnet list. Several classrooms have passed 2 million words read, and we currently have 4 Millionaire readers, with several more very close.

The Intermediate students have started a new “Name that Book” reading club. Students will wrap up the club in May with a friendly “Name that Book” competition. Additionally, Mrs. Sindt was awarded a \$10,000 NEF grant for a Nook Book Vending Machine. The book vending machine will be used to encourage reading in both avid and reluctant readers.

Navarro Junior High and High School - Kori Reininger, Librarian

Both the junior high and high school campus libraries have had busy starts to the school year, with circulation numbers increasing from years past. Teachers have also actively been utilizing the online databases and research tools that the district provides such as TexQuest and Discovery Education. The high school has also started a book club, with the librarian playing an active role in promoting and sponsoring the club.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy McMullen, Navarro ISD Chief Academic Officer