

**Board Recognition**  
**March 2, 2021**

**CREST Awards**

Denton Independent School District's Rodriguez Middle School Counseling Department was recently named as recipients of the CREST Award, which annually recognizes the top counseling staff in the state, by the Texas School Counselor Association. This marks the seventh consecutive year that at least one Denton ISD campus has received a CREST Award.

The Rodriguez Middle School counseling staff consists of lead Counselor Stephani Mohon, counselor Michael Rooney, and Jennifer Cheek, student assistance counselor. Each of the recipients will be honored during the TSCA virtual conference in February.

The CREST Award was introduced by the Texas School Counselor Association in 2005 to recognize excellence in school counseling.

CREST (Counselors Reinforcing Excellence for Students in Texas) is a program focusing on ten areas where school counselors have the greatest impact on the achievements, career aspirations, personal gains, and social aspects of students' lives. The program helps counselors evaluate their current counseling guidelines and techniques, while also promoting their services to students and parents.

**Rodriguez Middle School**

Stephani Mohn, Lead Counselor

Michael Rooney, Counselor

Jennifer Cheek, Student Assistance Counselor

*The principal of Rodriguez Middle School is Carly Rogers.*

**TSCA names Shannon Wickstrom Elementary Counselor of the Year**

Pecan Creek Elementary counselor, Shannon Wickstrom, was recently awarded The Rhosine Fleming Award as Elementary School Counselor of the Year by the Texas School Counselor Association (TSCA). Ms. Wickstrom, along with eight other award winners in the state of Texas, was recognized virtually at the annual TSCA Professional School Counselor Conference in February.

An educator since 2002, Wickstrom joined the Denton ISD family in 2015 as a member of the Pecan Creek Elementary staff. During her time with the district, Wickstrom has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to her staff mates, colleagues, and her community. She embodies the aspects of her role as the Professional School Counselor at Pecan Creek Elementary both professionally and personally.

Ms. Wickstrom provides exceptional academic, social, and emotional support to all the stakeholders of Pecan Creek. She has diligently developed a school counseling program that targets the specific needs of her population. Her guidance calendar aligns with the district-identified "Essential 8" and mandated topics, but she has taken it one step further by creating campus-wide experiences with each topic. For example, in the month of September, she organized a campus-wide "Bucket Fillers" activity.

Ms. Wickstrom's relationships with the staff, her colleagues, and the community are unique and far-reaching. When the school had to close its doors in March of 2020, Wickstrom wasted no time in learning how to virtually connect with her population. She developed a "bitmoji" office for her parents and students to engage with. She consistently discovered and shared new and innovative resources with her colleagues. To remain connected with the Elementary Counseling Team, she had each counselor send her a video of them participating in their favorite self-care activity during COVID. She put this together and sent this out to the team as a reminder of how we carry each other through difficult times.

*The principal of Pecan Creek Elementary is Amanda Bomar.*

## **Seven students selected for TMEA All State Band, Choir, Orchestra**

Seven Denton ISD musicians have been honored as the recipients of All-State honors for the 2020-2021 school year by the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA). TMEA is an organization of more than 12,000 school music educators dedicated to promoting excellence in music education.

In previous years, the process for selecting All-State performers would consist of an in-person audition where TMEA members select the best musicians in their respective groups: band, choir, orchestra and jazz ensemble.

This year, students did not perform live in front of other competitors or the judges due to the pandemic. Instead, students had to record and submit their auditions online for each of the three rounds: Region, Area, and State. Auditions were judged and scored by a panel of judges.

To prepare for the online competition, students had to take private lessons virtually rather than in person with their private lesson teachers. Those earning the recognition, made the most of the challenges this year. However, an unfortunate byproduct of the pandemic is that students making TMEA All-State and All-Region, unfortunately, will not have the opportunity to perform in a concert with those groups as is the custom in years past.

The Denton ISD students named to the highest musical honor in Texas:

### **Denton High Jazz Ensemble**

Matthew Garcia, All-State Jazz Ensemble, Tenor Saxophone

*Jesse Woolery, Lab Band Director*

*Emilio Mesa, Denton ISD Saxophone Private Instructor*

### **Guyer High Choir**

Aiden Daniels, All-State Tenor/Bass Choir, Tenor

Luke Knittle, All-State Mixed Choir, Bass

Jasmine Labelle, All-State Treble Choir, Alto

*Katherine Engle, Director*

*Tyler Fox, Assistant Director*

### **Guyer High Orchestra**

Christian Luevano, All-State Symphony Orchestra, String Bass

*Michelle Hanlon, Director*

*Jeremy Atkins, Assistant Director*

### **Ryan High Band**

Alex Howell, 5A All-State Band, Percussionist

*Dr. Akira Robles, Percussion Director*  
Gabriel Williams, 5A All-State Band, Bass Trombonist  
*Mary Brown, Director*  
*Juan Nunez, Assistant Director*