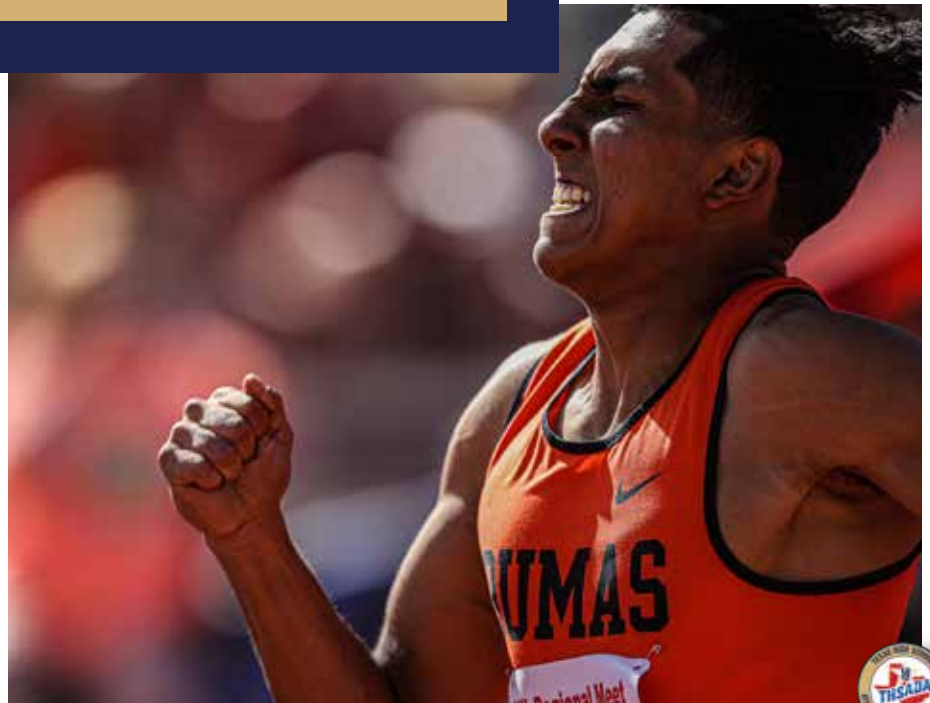
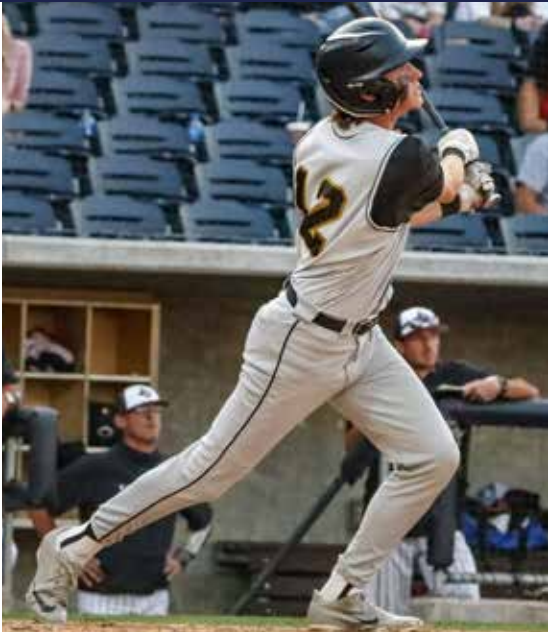


# TEXAS

High School Athletic Directors  
Association

JUNE 2022



# Executive Director's Report — Rusty Dowling

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all attendees to the 51st annual THSADA State Conference and Tradeshow. This is our 2nd year at the Kalahari Resort, and we are looking for another great State Conference that will feature outstanding professional development and TAAC sessions, a sold-out tradeshow floor, the Hellas Construction-Benny Carter Memorial Golf Tournament and a significant involvement of school Superintendents in this year's event. With the addition of a new THSADA program, the Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy, we are looking at preparing the next generation of athletic administrators in the State of Texas. THSADA will also recognize a major landmark event as we celebrate the 50th year of TITLE IX. We will feature an outstanding panel to discuss this landmark legislation.

The Spring Sponsor Showcase—Presented by Ticket Spicket, that was just concluded back on March 1-2 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, proved to be a very well attended event and was also the kickoff event for our new Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy program which was attended by almost 100 aspiring athletic administrators. With much appreciation for



our THSADA Officials Committee that met early on that Tuesday to discuss and workout significant issues that athletic administrators are facing, we opened the Spring Sponsor Showcase with another unique address by Dr. Charles Breithaupt. The title of his presentation was “Dr. Breithaupt-Un-



**Mike Motheral-Chair-State Executive Committee at Spring Sponsor Showcase**

plugged” and of course he never disappoints as he addressed many issues and concerns facing athletic administrators and high school athletics in general. After Dr. Breithaupt address, a social event was held out on the Embassy

## New THSADA Athletic Administrators

**Chris Feris** – Director of Athletics-Birdville ISD to Director of Athletics-Conroe ISD

**Rodney Webb** – Head Football Coach Denton Guyer to Director of Athletics-Highland Park ISD

**Jay Zeller** – Director of Athletics-Robinson ISD to Director of Athletics-Brazosport ISD

**Todd Raymond** – Director of Athletics Pflugerville ISD to Director of Athletics-Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

**Deana Eubanks** – Head Softball Coach Splendora HS to Director of Athletics-Splendora ISD

**Didi Pierce** – JH Athletic Coordinator-Copperas Cove ISD to Director of Athletics-Castleberry ISD

**Kirby Killingsworth** – Head Girls Basketball Coach Clear Lake HS to Director of Athletics-Clear Creek ISD

**Leland Surovik** – Athletic Director/Head Football Coach-Texas City to Director of Athletics-Texas City

**Jim Garfield** – Assistant Director of Athletics-Lubbock ISD to Director of Athletics-Abilene ISD

**Lance Moffett** – Head Football Coach/Athletic Director Fredericksburg HS to Hays ISD Athletic Director

**Eliot Allen** – Athletic Director/Head Football Coach Brenham ISD to Director of Athletics-Bastrop ISD

**Michael McEachern** – Athletic Director/Head Football Coach Huffman Hargrave to Director of Athletics- Pflugerville ISD

**Callen Nokes** – Assistant Director of Athletics Eanes ISD to Director of Athletics-Eanes ISD

**Kevin Starnes** – Assistant Director of Athletics-Grapevine Colleyville ISD to Director of Athletics-College Station ISD

## THSADA Committee Chairs 2022-2023

**Membership:** Tom Lee-Sharyland ISD

**Awards:** Russ Reeves-Rockwall ISD

**Policy (UIL):** Ray Zepeda-Cy Fair ISD

**Publications:** Andrea Fluhman-Amarillo ISD

**Athletic (UIL):** Stan Leech-Boerne ISD

**Officials (SOC):** Mike Bass-Alvin ISD

**TAAC:** Johanna Denson -THSADA

**NIAAA:** Brenda Marshall-Corpus Christi ISD





**Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy session-Debbie Fuchs-President-elect-THSADA**

Suites veranda that was extremely well attended and proved an enjoyable time for everyone.

Wednesday opened with concurrent sessions. Our first class of the Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy met along with a great presentation by Andre Walker-Houston ISD-on Crisis Management. Mike Motheral-Chair of the State Executive Committee gave an excellent presentation on athletic leadership from his perspective as SEC Chair and former Superintendent. The morning sessions finished with another outstanding budget presentation for attendees by Derek Anderson with the Equalis Group while on the other side for the Aspiring Athletic Administrators, Mike Bass-Alvin ISD gave an introductory budget presentation. A tradeshow-luncheon followed that again was well-attended. Dr. Elza of

### **THSADA State Conference Staff**

- Executive Director – **Rusty Dowling***
- Assistant Executive Director – **Bob DeJonge***
- Executive Assistant – **Diane McKay***
- Director of Programs – **Bill Daws***
- Director of Strategic Partnerships – **Dave Stephenson***
- Director of Convention Services – **Lisa Stephenson***
- Director of Administrative Services – **Ellissa Unger***
- Director of TAAC – **Johanna Denson***
- Director of Event Operations – **Stuart Raty***
- Event Speaker Coordinator – **Keith Kilgore***
- Retired Member/Assistant Exhibits Coordinator – **Joe Barnett***
- Technology Coordinator – **Jeff Lillibridge***
- Golf Coordinator – **Greg Priest**, Tyler ISD*
- Golf Coordinator – **Dwayne Weirich**, Round Rock ISD*
- Intern – **Jake Johnson***

the UIL finishing out the 2nd annual Spring Sponsor Showcase. Again, a major event and thank you to all who attended.

The TAAC (Texas Athletic Administrators Certification) Committee and the STAC (Superintendent TAAC Advisory Committee) have worked diligently the past 6 months to review and revise the TAAC program course offerings to best support the athletic administrators in the STATE.

The STAC Committee provided input and offered recommendations to enhance the TAAC program course offerings, that will assist in growing quality and qualified athletic administrators for their districts. With these recommendations, the TAAC Com-

### **THSADA Publications Committee**

- Andrea Fluhman**  
*Chair-Amarillo ISD*
- Grace McDowell**  
*Frisco ISD*
- Michael Mackeben**  
*Clint ISD*
- Dena Scott**  
*Fort Bend ISD*
- Armando Jacinto**  
*Spring ISD*
- Henry Cantu**  
*Rio Grande City ISD*
- Deena Bosier**  
*Pflugerville ISD*
- Sonia Almanza**  
*Northside ISD*
- Scott Campbell**  
*Frenship ISD*

mittee generated course descriptions for the new TAAC course offerings and revised and updated the original TAAC Course descriptions. Regional Directors solicited recommendations from their members for TAAC course topics that encourage continued growth and meet the needs of athletic administrators throughout the State.

Many new TAAC courses will be

*Continued on page 5*

### **Retiring Athletic Administrators**

- Danny Long** – *Director of Athletics-Conroe ISD*
- Johnny Ringo** – *Director of Athletics-Highland Park ISD*
- Vince Sebo** – *Director of Athletics-Tomball ISD*
- Walter Fortune** – *Director of Athletics-Galveston ISD*
- Todd Howey** – *Director of Athletics-San Antonio ISD*
- Ernest Reed** – *Director of Athletics-College Station ISD*
- Phil Blue** – *Director of Athletics-Abilene ISD*
- John Crawford** – *Assistant Director of Athletics-Midlothian ISD*
- Mike Carew** – *Assistant Director of Athletics-Northside ISD*
- Dyanne Martinez-Munoz** – *Assistant Director of Athletics-South San Antonio ISD*
- Tim Martin** – *Associate Director of Athletics-Aliief ISD*
- Darryl Hemphill** – *Assistant Director of Athletics-Northside ISD*
- Charles Lincoln** – *Director of Athletics-Crowley ISD*



# Assistant Executive Director's Update — Bob DeJonge

Well, it's THSADA State Conference season again! This is the 51st time we have celebrated this professional development opportunity together. This year, June 12-15 we'll gather at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Round Rock Tx. Sunday afternoon we'll kick off the conference with our PBK Sports – THSADA Hall of Honor Celebration. This is the ultimate opportunity to recognize some of our All-Star Athletic Administrators. This year's award winners include:

Our State Conference is built on the concept of providing exceptional professional opportunities for our 1500 members. This year's course offerings include 30 classes and learning opportunities throughout the course of the 4-day conference. Some of the topics that will be



addresses are Legal guidance, Title IX, UIL Compliance, dealing with stress, facility renewal and bond preparation, social media, and our newest offerings for Aspiring Athletic Administrators. Members will also benefit from a general session on the state of our association. For those of you interested in a round of

golf we'll host the Hellas / Benny Carter Memorial Golf tournament on Tuesday morning.

Remember to enjoy all the amenities that the Kalahari Resort has to offer – Tom Foolery's arcade and rides, indoor and outdoor water park, and several great restaurants. Don't forget to visit our three tradeshow opportunities on Monday and Tuesday. Our Sponsors and Exhibitors do a fantastic job supporting your schools and our organiza-

tion. Tradeshow opportunities include Monday evening, Tuesday Mid-day, and Tuesday Afternoon. Make sure to visit the over 100 tradeshow booths, sample the F & B around the tradeshow and be sure to watch your conference APP for prize drawings!

## On the Horizon

In addition to our annual State Conference, THSADA offers two additional professional development opportunities. October 11-12 we'll offer our Annual Fall Forum in San Antonio at the Estancia Del Norte with sessions being held at Northeast ISD facilities. On March 1-2 we'll host our annual Spring Sponsor Showcase at the Waco Convention Center.

We hope to see you at our three annual events and at region meetings around the state!

## National Awards

NFHS Citation – **Rusty Dowling**, Executive Director of THSADA

NIAAA Bruce Whitehead Distinguished Service Award – **Brenda Marshall**, Corpus Christi ISD

NIAAA Frank Kovalski Professional Development Award – **Sandra Mader**, Aldine ISD

NIAAA State Award of Merit – **Debbie Decker**, Katy ISD

NIAAA Hall of Fame – **Bob DeJonge**, Assistant Executive Director of THSADA

## THSADA Awards

Region 1 **Joe Sexton**, Lubbock Cooper ISD

Region 2 **Del Van Cox**, Abilene ISD

Region 3 **Jennifer Frazier**, McKinney ISD

Region 4 **Carlos Puertas**, El Paso Cathedral

Region 5 **Ray Zepeda**, Cy Fair ISD

Region 6 **Todd Raymond**, Pflugerville ISD

Region 7 **Robert Davies**, Harlingen CISD

Region 8 **Stan Leech**, Boerne ISD

THSADA-PBK Sports Athletic Director of the Year – **David Kuykendall**, Retired Frisco ISD

Joe Bill Fox Distinguished Service Award – **Harold Leverett**, Balfour Awards

## THSADA Hall of Honor

**Rodney Saveat**, Beaumont ISD

**Don Murphy**, Grand Prairie ISD Retired

**Debbie Decker**, Katy ISD

**Chris Feris**, Birdville ISD

## Region Directors

Our State Association is divided into 8 regions, each of which are great conduits of information coming from the State Office. Our elected Region Directors do an outstanding job leading their respective regions. We do have 4 outgoing Directors to recognize and thank for their service.

Region 2 **Phil Blue**

Region 4 **Maria Kennedy**

Region 5 **Ray Zepeda**

Region 8 **Melanie Hinson**

For the next two years our Region Director roster includes

Region 1 **Max Kattwinkel**

Region 2 **Jerod Womack**

Region 3 **Leslie Slovak**

Region 4 **J.J. Calderon**

Region 5 **Andre Walker**

Region 6 **Lynn Pool**

Region 7 **Rey Ramirez**

Region 8 **Melanie Hinson** (re-elected)



# President's Message — David Kuykendall

As we near the end of the school year and my presidency with THSADA, memories of how this term started and how it ended come to mind. When my term started, COVID was in full swing, and the state and its hundreds of athletic programs were in a quandary. How do we proceed with so many new guidelines and mandates, all being different from each school district? Ultimately, all of these factors led to a two-year term instead of one.

Serving as president is certainly not a one-person job. I cannot tell you how valuable the guidance and teamwork of Rusty Dowling and Bob DeJonge have been in helping me down the leadership path. The diligence at how they and their office staff work to make THSADA successful is both amazing and admirable. Membership is rising, excitement about the association is increasing, and athletic directors across the state are looking to us for guidance more than ever before. On the UIL front, I would be remiss if I didn't include Dr. Susan Elza and her staff for being accessible and willing to help at any time.

If I had to brag on one concept that was realized during my tenure, it would have to be the inception of the Aspiring Athletic Administrator's Academy. Debbie Fuchs and I have worked to create a faction to which young coaches can



turn for advice, encouragement, and information. The AD's presenting these sessions are excited about the opportunity to share their successes and failures with the upcoming administrative hopefuls of our state. Using rock star administrators as mentors brings experience and validity to the information they share. I'm sure you will encourage your prospective AD's to attend.

The future of THSADA is full of exciting conferences and programming! At the summer conference, you will notice that we have added classes to make the conference experience more valuable to your staff. New ideas and concepts await your coaches and trying to benefit from all of them may be a challenge. Split those coaches up and take it all in! The Fall Forum and the Spring Showcase again will be exceptional, and you won't want to miss one minute of the fun and camaraderie they offer.

Our Board of Directors continues to run smoothly and effectively, leading the way for AD's and superintendents to stay cognizant of new developments and procedures. They have done an exceptional job communicating with regions the importance of staying in touch with the board and in contact with the THSADA officers. I hope AD's across the state will find the door is always open to them.

As many of you may have noticed, I'm completing my first year of retirement. What a different lifestyle! I've been asked what I miss most about not being an active AD and the answer is YOU! Interacting with good folks all across the state was one of the bright spots of my career. I thank each of you for filling my AD days with great memories and gentle reminders that sports are the great connectors of so many facets of life. I am proud of having served as the THSADA for the last two years, and I want each of you to know that retirement hasn't turned off my phone or cut off my email. Quite the opposite! I have more time than ever to stay in touch, so visit! My email is [Coachk1954@gmail.com](mailto:Coachk1954@gmail.com) and my phone number is 972-816-2428. I would absolutely love hearing from you.

Thanks again for making my presidency a terrific ride!

**Dowling** *Continued from page 3*

offered during the THSADA State Conference in June, at the Kalahari Resort in Round Rock, Texas. QR Codes will again be used to document members who attend each TAAC presentation at the Conference. In addition, videos of the TAAC courses presented at THSADA sanctioned events, will be available following the event to current members who registered for the event. The videos are available for a specified time and then will be removed from the website.

The THSADA State Conference will offer numerous learning and

growth opportunities for members. Do not hesitate to join colleagues and friends as you grow personally and professionally to meet the challenges as an athletic administrator in TEXAS.

I also want to recognize the tremendous growth of the THSADA over the past several years as we have surpassed 1,500 members which translates to a 600% growth of the THSADA over the past 10 years. Every region has grown significantly with a notable increase of the Director of Athletics/Head Football Coach

position. Another group that has seen an increase is that of Athletic Trainers. In many districts an Athletic Trainer carries athletic administrator duties as well as their normal sports medicine assignments.

The THSADA staff has remained consistent with the addition of Ellissa Unger this past January as the Director of Administrative Services and our new University of Houston intern, Jake Johnson.



# Message from the President-Elect — Debbie Fuchs

Welcome to the 2022 Texas High School Athletic Directors Conference at the beautiful Kalahari Resort in Round Rock, Texas. This is our 51st annual conference and we have come a long way these past few years as we are hosting over more 550 Athletic Administrators and Aspiring Athletic Administrators. Our growth and elevated profile continue to amaze me and I am so proud to be in the association, not only as a member, but also as one of your officers. It has been a blessing to serve you and I am so excited to begin my term as your President this upcoming year.

The theme of this year's conference is "Gather for Greatness" and our convention program is outstanding with excellent speakers who will make your time here extremely beneficial. We will have sessions with valuable information that whether you are a first-time attendee or you are a seasoned veteran, your next three days will be filled with opportunities of growth and fun!!!



With the help and creativity of current President David Kuykendall, we are excited to continue and grow our new project – **The Aspiring Athletic Administrator's Academy**

– We are offering sessions with exceptional speakers to share their experiences and knowledge with our future Athletic Directors.

Even though this current school

year was much closer to normalcy, I know you had difficult decisions and circumstances that you had to tackle, and as always, you rose up for your athletes, coaches, and sport programs.

I want to thank Rusty Dowling and Bob DeJonge for their leadership and guidance that they give our association each and every day as well as the THSADA staff. I would also like to thank the Board of Directors, Region Directors, and Committee members who work hard for our association to make it the best in the country. One final thank you goes to our outgoing President – David Kuykendall who has mentored and listened to me through these past two years. We made a great team and his leadership through the pandemic has not gone unnoticed. Once again, welcome to all of you and please take advantage of our agenda and if I can support or help any of you, please let me know. So, let's go and "GATHER FOR GREATNESS"!!!



# Leading with Resilience: Building a Program in the COVID-19 Era — Cirilo Ojeda, Sharpstown High School

My football story begins at Ingrand Park in Houston, TX where my Dad, Cirilo M. Ojeda, Sr., was coaching youth football for the Magnolia Park Sharks before I was born. That's where I learned about believing in myself, trusting my teammates, taking pride in our team, and playing with Corazón. I've been told from a very young age that my Dad and Uncle Victor had a dream to coach high school football and they could live their dream through me.

In 2005, I graduated from the University of Houston and was volunteering with my Dad coaching youth football. It was at that point that my wife, Angela, made a very convincing plea/demand that if I was going to coach football, then I should make it a career and there was no looking back. I started in junior high, moved my way up to high school coaching and teaching at my Alma Mater, and quickly earned an opportunity to be an Offensive Coordinator.

Fifteen years later with 33 Head Football Coach Applications, 13 Panel Interviews, 6 Finalist Interviews and 1 Offer, I earned my first opportunity to realize my goal and dream to be the Head Football Coach at Sharpstown High School. It was just the beginning for my family. We changed from blue and white to green and gold and were ready to start working. I was on campus four days the week before spring break, and we started maxing out the players to start an off-season. Then within a blink of an eye, it all came to a screeching halt. We were told to take everything with us just in case we didn't come back from spring break so we could work from home. There was no



amount of experience or preparation for a global pandemic available for what was to come to build a new program. Established programs had a system for communication, call logs, and relationships already in place to keep going, but we had to figure out a

way to virtually field a team, install all 3 phases, and teach the principles of the program.

Every great program has a quality vision, mission, and goals. The plan was to establish this to the few student athletes that were just introduced to their new Head Coach. The key was utilizing the relationships established with the existing coaching staff. When we left campus indefinitely, we soon found ourselves on a very extended spring break where students were not acclimated to being logged in to their single sign on to check e-mails, check Microsoft Teams chat messages, check group messages, and having no established SportsYou or accurate contact list. It was a blank slate and an opportunity to really find out who truly wanted to build the foundation of the program. We quickly recognized our leaders, and we slowly grew over the summer from 8 football players to about 29. We tried doing things virtually with HUDL installation videos that were recorded in my driveway and virtual team meetings to cover character development and the new offense and defense. We made the best of the situation and ensured that, if and when the call was made to return, we would have a team and we were ready to compete.

September 8, 2020 became the start date where being a Head Football Coach felt real and will forever be a date to remember. Paperwork, partic-

ipation, and preparation became the focus, and it all started to come together with lots of COVID-19 protocols and procedures. We knew the season was going to happen, but it was hanging on by a thread with looming potential outbreaks, shutdowns, and forfeits. Protocols were above everything else, and we soon realized that the 2020 season was about safely playing football in the middle of a pandemic which meant winning and losing was a byproduct of being allowed in the locker room and on the field. Leadership with buy-in and some luck allowed us to play our whole season without having to skip a game because of strict protocols and a great job by our opponents. The dust settled on the 2020 COVID season and we made it through every game, broke the previous losing streak of 21 games, improved as a program, and were able to lay the foundation for the future.

The spring of 2021 has been a restart to off-season, we have been focused on finding our student athletes within our enrollment, and we are up to 42 football players who want to participate and be part of our growth. This group, along with our incoming freshmen, could be something special in the making. In a little over a year, we have been able to fundraise close to

\$40,000, and it shows the investment from our community, stakeholders, family, and friends. We will unveil new uniforms in 2021 and be able to purchase much needed equipment for the players and program. We are working hard, and our student athletes are believing in what we do. Principal Daniel DeLeon and our wonderful faculty and staff have been very supportive to help us build a high performing program. The future is bright at Sharpstown High School and we are only getting started. Go Apollos!!! #BTR

To be continued...



# A Focus on Retaining & Growing Coaches

— Grace McDowell, Frisco ISD Athletic Director

In a time when teaching and coaching has become increasingly difficult and the number of candidates to fill coaching positions is dwindling, it has become extremely important to retain the coaches we have in our districts. More importantly, we must do all that we can to keep our coaches in the profession! Several athletic directors are being proactive and taking action to battle this issue. Of course districts are doing what they can to provide salary increases. These raises are needed and appreciated, but we all know that money is not the “end all, be all” when it comes to keeping coaches in the profession. Coaches need to feel less overwhelmed, more supported, and appreciated. They need to feel like they matter and that they are making a difference!

Prosper ISD Athletic Director, Valerie Little, shared that “retaining our coaches by ensuring they feel loved, valued and appreciated were our main goals this year”. Prosper did this by moving forward with a number of new initiatives. They established a “District Coach of the Month” at both the high school and middle school levels. They delivered a certificate and a cake to the coach on the campus and recognized them in front of their student athletes. Coach Little said “making it a big deal for them and making them feel truly valued is our goal”. McKinney ISD also named a “District Coach of the Month” throughout the school year. McKinney ISD athletic director, Jennifer Frazier, shared that “we need to do a lot of little victories to keep the morale high” in a time when the morale of educators is at an all time low.

Prosper also implemented their inaugural “Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy” this year, which is a program to educate and inspire future leaders. They met monthly and had guest speakers to help them grow and connect as leaders. The selection process

for this program involved an application process along with a rubric. Richardson’s AD, Leslie Slovak, has plans to implement a similar program next school year in her district.

There is a trend for other leadership development or mentoring programs being formed in districts in Texas. Northside ISD athletic director, Stan Laing, has established a “Northside Coaches Academy” that targets Northside coaches who have 0-4 years of experience and are new to the district. They used curriculum from “Coaching at its Core” and tackled topics such as philosophy of educational athletics, social media, and racism. Providing this type of support and mentorship for our young coaches is critical to keeping them in the profession.

It is also important for us to be preparing young coaches for future leadership or head coaching opportunities, which was a focus for Frisco ISD’s new “Head Coaches Academy”. A diverse group of 22 coaches across all sports, from various campuses, and including both genders, was selected from nominations from high school campus coordinators to take part in the first year of the “Frisco ISD Head Coaches Academy”. Some of the presentations included a panel of FISD head coaches, a panel of FISD central office administrators including the district’s superintendent, and a session with SMU Director of Sport Performance Leadership, Dr. David Bertrand. Other topics included resumes, interviewing, and qualities of a great head coach. Approximately half of the coaches have accepted head coaching positions within Frisco ISD for the upcoming fall. McKinney ISD also began a Head Coaches Academy, which was open to coaches who had goals of becoming a varsity assistant, head coach, or middle school coordinator. Coaches had to apply and obtain a recommendation from their campus coordinator or cam-

pus principal. McKinney ISD had more than 40 applicants for the program. As a result, 5 of their 19 chosen participants have secured head coaching positions.

Taking the time to celebrate the year’s accomplishments and show appreciation for our coaches at the end of the year is a great way to end the year on a positive note. McKinney ISD had an End of Year Celebration which was a casual event that included music, ice cream sundaes, and a celebration of everything from championships and state qualifiers to the McKinney ISD coaches of the year. They even took time to celebrate the coaches’ babies born over the past school year! McKinney ISD athletic director, Jennifer Frazier, said that she wanted to give coaches “a taste of why it will be fun to come back in the fall.” Prosper held a “Coaches Ball” this spring as a thank you to their coaches. The event consisted of a formal banquet that included several speakers, including the superintendent taking a few minutes to say “thank you”, and their Student Athletes of the Year to talk about the impact of athletics and coaches. In addition they recognized retirees and gave out several awards including, winning milestones, District Coach of the Year, District Champs, and State Champs. They even provided a babysitter for coaches! Valerie Little, AD, stated that they just wanted coaches to “enjoy themselves and be celebrated.”

Retaining and growing coaches in our own districts is a focus for most of us, but retaining coaches in the profession is also our responsibility. As athletic directors, we know our students today need coaches in their lives more than ever before and we understand the impact that coaches can have on student athletes. It is important that we share our ideas on better ways to support and grow our high school coaches in Texas, and that we work together to recruit and retain coaches in our profession to help build a better future.





# San Elizario High School Reveals 9th State Championship Monument

— Dr. Jeannie Meza-Chavez, Superintendent, San Elizario ISD

SAN ELIZARIO, TX – You have probably heard about San Elizario High School (SEHS) through the success of many of our student-athletes in cross country and soccer, as they have won numerous team state championships. Over the years, the San Elizario ISD has established itself as a true Community of Champions. The San Elizario Independent School District (SEISD) has taken purposeful focus on creating a place of pride and reflection by honoring student-athletes with the Pathway of Champions Plaza. The SEISD is on track to reveal the ninth Texas-shaped monument on the Pathway of Champions, better known to the community as the Paseo de Campiones, in honor of the SEHS Boys Cross Country team who brought another state title home in November 2021. The Pathway is located in the front of SEHS along Socorro Rd., where all can see it as they drive by. SEHS is located at 13981 Socorro Rd, San Elizario, TX.

The SEISD is composed of six schools located off Socorro Rd. Additionally, the district is in San Elizario, Texas, near the Juarez, Mexico border. As a school located along the international border, the consistent success proves the strong resiliency of the student-athletes representing the district of San Elizario and the Community.

The SEISD has been winning state championships since 1977, when Mr. Ray Johnson won the state UIL Track & Field - 1600M and defended that state title again in 1978. The SEHS has 34 state wins between individuals and teams' ef-



**Pictured left to right: Dr. Rogelio Segovia – Assistant Superintendent, Dexter Harmon - Supervisor – Support Services/Transportation, Beto Rivas – Chief Financial Officer, April Marioni – SEHS Principal, Dr. Jeannie Meza-Chavez – Superintendent, Blanca Cruz – Human Resources Director, Christine Jaksch – Athletic Director, Jesus Martinez – Support Services Director, and Horacio Hernandez – Technology Director**



forts to date. Since 2007, the SEISD has welcomed consecutive state championships in Skills USA and Athletics and even garnered a 2013 Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year state win. Each win proves that the district's small size and the zip code location are not barriers to success.

The evident state wins, and the Texas-size monuments inspire

future students to see themselves as true champions. Discipline is the strength of the programs that consistently cultivate championship after championship. Cross Country Head Coach Cesar Morales states, "A question everyone asks is, what is the formula?" Morales continues, "Well, there is not one. The key is consistency and motivation with a grounded belief to trust the process."

The SEISD believes in every student,

and the entire team commits to bringing out the best in all students. The SEISD truly is the place where eagles soar! The construction of the Pathway of Champions to honor the 9 UIL State Athletic Titles earned by athletics now consists of six monuments representing the multiple state championships in Cross Country and three monuments representing the boys' Soccer state titles. The Pathway of Champions also has a Wall of Champions honoring individual state championships that go back to 1977 in Track and Field.

The success of our teams demonstrates the strong resiliency of the student-athletes. The Pathway of Champions will serve the district of San Elizario and the Community of San Elizario to continue providing future generations a place of reflection and pride. San Elizario students continue to have a clear Pathway of Champions that they will forge for themselves and future generations.



# Fostering a Sisterhood of Respect & Responsibility

## Roma ISD Athletic Department

Roma, Texas is a small town located right on the Texas-Mexico border. Just like any other small town, it has a Main Street, which is home to festive holiday lights and the annual homecoming parade. The town thrives on the accomplishments of local students, filling the stands to cheer on the Roma High School Mighty Gladiators whenever the students take on their neighboring rival, Rio Grande City, or to enjoy their wonderful Christmas concert performances. Red and white Gladiator banners hang from doorways, blowing in the hot afternoon breezes which make up the majority of the days in this border town. But what sets Roma High students apart from those at pretty much any other high school is the automatic obstacle they have to overcome before people even see their faces or realize their talents.

“We come from a small community on the border and many times the first thing people hear about Roma is something negative, so we have that hurdle to jump before people even meet us. But as a district, we are intent on changing that,” said Roma ISD Head Volleyball Coach Angie Garcia. “When other students walk into a gym or school, we want them to encounter what we call Roma Pride in person, in action, through our students. We want to change their minds and show them we are a proud community of student learners and athletes with tremendous skills, self-respect and ability. That’s our way, The Gladiator Nation way.”

Recently, the district’s Varsity Volleyball Team caught the eye of a game spectator, who was very impressed with the way the ladies from Roma took time after their match to pick up trash around their sitting area, the court and nearby stands.

“I got a call from the RGCGISD Athletic Director Rey Ramirez, who was so impressed with such a simple act,”



explained Roma ISD Athletic Director Max Habecker. “I know how amazing our kids are, and it feels good to see that people are noticing. I guess it was easy to take good behavior for granted before COVID. I believe that the whole experience of COVID woke some people up; now they are much more appreciative of these simple acts, just cleaning up after oneself. It seems small, but it shows so much more - respect for others, responsibility, discipline. Coach Garcia has an interesting take on why kids in Roma show so much respect, which reflects in their actions and words.

We are raised in such a small, tight-knit community, and everyone knows each other. We all grow up with those traditional Hispanic parents who instill in us that we have to be respectful, and we have to show that everywhere we go,” she said. “Your tio’s (uncles) and tia’s (aunts) are everywhere, literally, so you know someone is watching you whatever you do and wherever you go here in our community. So our kids are all raised with that same morale code and certain expectations.”

She says that it’s the Roma way, especially in the athletics program, to instill the ideal of discipline and responsibility in all the students.

“Those ideals translate into success for us, and we have been very successful as a team,” said Garcia, who has led her

team to six playoff appearances. “Honestly, we always have most of our team members in the top 10 percent or top 10 of their graduating class. I think it happens because they are very dedicated from a very young age, ever since middle school. We tell them if they work hard and show their commitment, it will show in all the other areas of their life. We have to make sure their commitment to school and citizenship is there, always. They are students and citizens before they are athletes, and we stress that constantly.”

“And when we are recruiting students for our program, we are looking for young ladies that are committed, dedicated, hardworking, loyal, and responsible. Volleyball season is just in the fall, but we are a family year round,” she added. “We work year round, but allow flexibility for our ladies to do other sports as well. The girls participate in spring and summer leagues so they can always work on their skills. We are always working to hone their skills, which means true commitment to developing yourself in all aspects as a student and athlete.”

Garcia says when it comes to the cleaning the students do everywhere they go that it’s not a written rule, but a golden rule.

“It’s just a way of living for us. I’ve been a coach for 18 years and maybe it comes from me being a mom and that’s what I expect from my kids,” Coach Garcia explained. “And these girls are my kids so I would expect no less from them. It kind of occurs spontaneously. I’ve always told the girls that they should clean up after themselves no matter where they are or what they are doing. It’s part of showing respect for others, no matter whether it’s at a restaurant, on the bus, or on the court. It’s an important lesson for life.”

In every aspect, Garcia’s ladies aren’t just a team, but a sisterhood, which is



showcased in everything they do, not just in cleaning up after themselves.

“Those ideals and morals we teach; I see them in action in other areas of their lives. I’m always reminding them they are role models for the little girls in our community, and to remember those little girls want to be you one day. They always have that in the back of their minds, and I know they make good decisions and work to always try to do the right thing. My girls are absolutely the best and I’m super proud of them,” she said. “In fact, I see the success of our program first hand because most of my current coaching staff is composed of my former student athletes. They love what we are doing so much that they want to come back and carry on our traditions, helping instill that sense of pride and respect.”

When it comes to advice she may give to other coaches who aspire to create a sisterhood founded on respect, she has some important words of wisdom. “Don’t ever just look at our girls as only athletes; see them as future community leaders, as girls that may be teachers or professionals in other capacities. You have to teach them skills they need for life - responsibility, accountability, respect, dependability, loyalty, and self-respect,” Garcia explained. “See the girls as young adults that will become women – you want to be part of making them the best women possible. I sometimes have to be everything for these girls - coach, teacher, second mom, and counselor, whatever it takes. I wear many hats in my work, but I have to be 100 percent committed to the program and these ladies to make an impact. And never, ever lower your expectations for the students in your care because they will always rise to the occasion if you believe in them. Be an honest, true and a caring voice for them, and you will see the results. It’s very rewarding when you see them cross the graduation stage and know you had a hand in that.”

## Mark Ball receives Distinguished Career Award — Scott Campbell

On April 28th, the Texas Tech Chapter of the National Football Foundation (NFF) honored their Chapter President Mark Ball at a banquet held at the Overton Hotel near the campus of Texas Tech. Former Executive Director of Athletics for Lubbock ISD Mark Ball was recognized for his impact on amateur football in West Texas but his influence extends all across the state. His influence is still felt today as he works closely with many schools in his role as Business Development Manager for Hellas Construction in the West Texas region. Coach Mark Ball helped revive the Texas Tech Chapter of the NFF in 2010 and has served as the chapter president ever since. Under his leadership the Lubbock Chapter has been actively involved in creating scholarship opportunities for graduating high school football players on the South Plains. On this particular evening the Lubbock Chapter awarded over \$30,000 in scholarships spread over 22 high school seniors. Mark Ball has worked tirelessly to secure these financial commitments from area businesses and supporters of high school athletics. Since 2011 the chapter has awarded over \$300,000 in scholarships. The three other NFF chapters in the state are located Houston, Austin and Dallas. The National Football Foundation would like to add local chapters across Texas and in doing so create more scholarships for high school athletes.

In recognition of his service to West Texas and his investment in young men; Coach Mark Ball was recognized with the Outstanding Contribution to Amateur Football Award. His wife of 40 years, Lori Ball was his presenter and shared some highlights of his coaching career but more importantly his lasting impact on those around him. Also in attendance for this event was his long time LISD Athletic Secretary, close

childhood friends from Wichita Falls and his children and grandchildren. In acceptance of this award Coach Mark Ball expressed his appreciation for the coaches in his life that impacted him and those he coached alongside with.

Coach Ball’s coaching career included a stop as the Athletic Director / Head Football Coach of Wylie ISD from 1997-2010. He fathered the growth of the football programs and athletic programs rising from the 4A ranks to Class 5A. During that time he also saw the growth of THSADA and supported the growth of the association. In 2010 he became full time Executive Director of Athletics for Lubbock ISD. During his 10 years in LISD he ushered in a 20 million dollar project of Lowrey Field at PlainsCapital Park, making it the marquee venue for high school football, soccer and track and field in West Texas. This year alone PlainsCapital Park has played host to football playoff games, district and regional track meets, semi-professional soccer league games and the ASCO Football All-Star Game.

In 2017 Mark Ball was honored for his service to THSADA with his induction into the Hall of Honor. He stays connected to the Association through his leadership role with Hellas Construction. Hellas Construction serves as a sponsor of the THSADA State Conference and the Benny Carter Memorial Golf Tournament held annually at the gathering of state athletic administrators. Hellas Construction will celebrate 20 years in the business in 2023. Hellas serves as the official turf supplier for both the Houston Texans and Dallas Cowboys ; along with the Big 12 Football Champion the Baylor Bears. THSADA is proud to partner with this great company as they look to continue to provide the best atmosphere you can find for high school athletics.



# Phil Blue - A Legendary Career

Andrea Fluhman, Amarillo ISD

Still very green as an assistant athletic director, I attended my first THSADA/THSCA convention in Summer of 2017 in San Antonio, Texas. What a gloriously busy, chaotic time full of learning opportunities. Taking a midafternoon walk, I found myself in the shadow of Coach Phil Blue. In my few short months of being an athletic administrator, I knew I was in the presence of one of the best. As John C. Maxwell states, "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." Coach Phil Blue is that leader. Not only in that moment did I need a leader to know the way and could show me the way back to the convention center, Coach Blue continually goes the way above and beyond the call of duty. He exemplifies unparalleled passion, continuous dedication, and a great deal of hard work. Passion is a critical component of happiness in any job. I believe Coach Blue's passion to be the difference in his performance and the interactions among those he worked alongside and those of us that had the pleasure of working with in other school districts.

As Coach Blue begins his ride off into the sunset with retirement, we



connected so I could gain further perspective on his passion. Thank you, Coach Phil Blue for the impact on my life as an athletic administrator!

Congratulations on your retirement, Coach Blue!

When representatives from AISD contacted me about possibly coming to Abilene as the AD, it was a no brainer to say yes! Abilene ISD is a special place. The people of West Texas are special people. Teachers, coaches, and principals still enjoy a level of appreciation and respect that is sadly missing from many areas of the state of Texas.

## Most memorable moment(s):

**As coach:** Coming back from a 21-7 deficit with 2 minutes remaining in the game to win the TAPPS State Championship in 1986.

**As AD:** @ Georgetown ISD – Georgetown HS winning the district championship in every sport during the 2012-2013 year, as well as, State Champions in Girls Basketball, State Finalist in Football, State Finalist in Volleyball, and State Finalist in Baseball.

## Most challenging moment in your career and the actions of growth:

The educational finance of crisis of 2008-2009 was a challenge. Georgetown ISD was opening a 2nd high school at the same time that a reduction in athletic staff was being required to meet a budget deficit. Many Georgetown High coaches were reassigned to the new high school in order to meet the staffing requirements. Morale was adversely affected as all coaches in the district had to make adjustments in their campus assignment, expanded duties, teaching assignments, and coaching assignments. I grew as a leader by learning to find additional methods of being personally supportive to coaches, and exploring ways to provide additional auxiliary support for coaches and their programs.

## Departing words of wisdom:

To Coaches and Athletic Directors: Galatians 6:9 says it all!

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap the harvest if we do not give up."

## Career Outline:

1986-87: Head Football Coach, Texas Christian Academy, TAPPS State Champions

1987-88: AD/Head Football Coach, Celeste HS

1988-91: Head Football Coach, Quinlan Ford HS

1991-98: Head Football Coach, Mineral Wells HS

1998-01: Head Football Coach, Farmersville HS

2001-05: Offensive Coordinator, Abilene HS

2005-09: AD/Head Football Coach, Georgetown ISD

2009-14: Executive Director of Athletics, Georgetown ISD

2014-15: Executive Director of Athletics, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

2015-current: Executive Director of Athletics, Abilene ISD



# It is for the love of the sport that a Mission CISD coach makes a difference

Cynthia Ybarra Leal (MISD Athletic Director)

A coach at Mission Consolidated Independent School District has been making a difference in the lives of her young athletes for the love of the sport. Kathryn L. Howell has dedicated over 40 years of her career to shaping young minds on and off the field. She has coached track and field and cross-country since starting her career in 1979 at Mission Jr. High then moving on to Mission High School.



Coach Howell worked at Mission High School from 1986 to 1999 and it was here that her 1991 cross-country team won the 5A State Championship. Her leadership at this school led the Lady Eagles to three 5A Championships, 10 Regional qualifications, 6 District titles, and 7 times State Finalist in cross-country. In track and field the Lady Eagles also won five District 5A Championships, 3 District 4A Track Championships, and 3 Individual State Champions before adopting her son and eventually moving to Veterans Memorial High School (VMHS).

In 2002, she started out as the head cross-country coach and the head track and field coach at VMHS for the Patriots. Her coaching strategies have helped the Lady Patriots secure two District Championships and are Regional Qualifiers, nine times in cross-country. In track and field, the Lady Patriots have won a total of 13 District Championships and two Area Championships throughout the years. “It is about trying to make a difference and making sure that these young athletes are challenging themselves,”

states Coach Kathryn Howell. “It is not only about the sport, but it is also about developing their mindset to strive for more especially when I know that they are capable of it.”

Coach Howell grew up around sports her entire life. Both her parents were high school athletes, and her father chose to coach as his career. She attended Mission High School and ran track for the Eagles. Sports is something that has been a part of her entire life. “It is about guiding these young athletes and students,” states Coach Howell. “It is about seeing the light bulb go on when they get it. It is these moments of watching them grow that I love the most.”

One of her most memorable moments is when the cross-country team took the 1991 5A Texas State Championship. A young Mission High School team with mostly freshmen and sophomores qualified for State. The ladies were just so happy to be at the meet and never expected to win but maybe just finish in the top four but when they called the teams for 4th, 3rd, and 2nd the girls still had not been called they started getting upset because they knew that they couldn’t have come in 1st place. Well, when they did call them, and they took the Championship they were absolutely thrilled.

Coach Howell attributes her success to her love for the sport and for helping her runners achieve success. She states that it is great to watch her runners grow and find their newfound confidence. She keeps up with many

of her runners that have graduated, gotten married, and now have children of their own. It is quite clear that a life-long bond is created not only among the members of the team but also with their coach.

She has been recognized for her dedication and talents not only for sports but as an educator as well. She was named the Mission Jr. High Teacher of the Year in 1986 and again in 1999. She received the Bill Rhyne Coaches Clinic State Play-Off Award (1983), Whataburger Relays Honorary Coaches Award (1999), and the Rio Grande Valley Track Coach of the Year (1999). Coach Howell has a long list of accolades, awards, and experience but the secret to her success comes from her passion and love for coaching and teaching.



# Bond Money at Work — Sonia Almanza, Northside ISD

As with most school districts in the state, there is little money in the school system to help fund new schools, renovate and upgrade existing facilities, maintain facilities, and staying up to date with the latest technology. When school districts need to finance large projects, they propose a bond to be voted on. Bonds not only support academics and schools, but also plays a role in extracurricular activities such as athletics and fine arts. This past May, several school districts in Region 8 proposed bonds to their community and the voters voted in favor of the bond.

Boerne ISD will build a new Aquatics Learning Center. The center will consist of a new outdoor pool for Boerne ISD's water polo and swim teams.

Harlandale ISD had three propositions passed. The propositions contain several projects towards athletics such as: a new district gym/multipurpose facility, all-weather tracks at their high schools, new district turf soccer field, turf baseball and softball fields, outdoor lights for high school fields. Their district football stadium will have their press box, locker rooms, training rooms renovated as well as their track resurfaced.

Northside ISD also had a bond passed in May. Included in the bond will be the construction of a new district baseball and softball complex, tennis court upgrades at schools and district facilities, and upgrade athletic facilities at three high schools



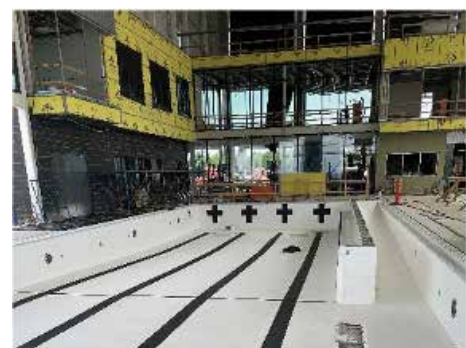
**This facility opens in August 2022. It will include two separate pools and a weight room. One pool for swimming/diving/water polo competition and the second for instructional and recreational use. The facility has stadium seating for 770 spectators. The competitive pool can transform to an eight lane 50-meter course or by using the bulkheads can be two-eight lane 25-yard courses with additional lanes for various uses. The depth of the competitive pool is 7 feet to 13 feet. This includes two 1-meter and will have one 3-meter maxi-flex springboards for diving competition. The instructional pool is a 4 lane 25-yard course at 3 ½ to 4 ½ deep. The facility will contain the Colorado Timing System with two video boards.**



and three middle schools. Multi-use vehicles will also be purchased to help transport athletes to and from events.

Southwest ISD will open a new natatorium in August 2022

The natatorium is part of the Southwest ISD bond passed in 2018.



## Programs will consist of:

*High School Water Polo/Swimming/Diving*

*Elementary school water-safety/learn to swim*

*Middle school swimming/water polo /diving*

*Age group diving, swimming and water polo club program.*

*Site to host events for swimming, water polo, diving. etc.*

*Red Cross courses throughout the year for staff and community.*

*Open to the public when applicable.*



# New Central Texas Facilities for 2021-2022

Deena Bosier



## Hutto ISD Hutto Memorial Stadium

The stadium was newly remodeled and will recognize our past, present and future of "Hippo Nation" while hosting multiple events for those within our community and those around the great state of Texas.

Increased seating capacity to just over 10,000 while adding a new multi-level press box, state-of-the-art audio-visual system and added concession stands and restrooms to accommodate fans for all events.

By VLK Architects & Joeris Construction



Austin ISD has 3 new digital score boards here is a peek at the House Park Display. New digital (video) scoreboards were placed at Burger and Nelson Stadiums by Daktronics.



Austin ISD - Bowie High School  
The above facilities were built by JE Dunn



# Unified Sports: Increasing Participation in Athletics While Building Long Lasting Relationships

Dena Scott, CMAA, Director of Athletics, Fort Bend ISD

As Athletic Administrators continue to provide students as many opportunities as possible to participate in sports programs, Unified Sports is just another great opportunity that includes even more of our student population. Unified Sports & Activities programs within the UIL and Unified Champion Schools® (UCS) is a joint effort between UIL and Special Olympics Texas (SOTX) to recognize and offer opportunities for students with and without disabilities to compete in UIL sanctioned competitions and activities.

Participants consist of a Unified Student Athlete who is a student receiving special education and related services pursuant to an individual education program based on a cognitive, developmental and/or intellectual delay or disability. An additional participant is a Unified Student Partner who is a student who is NOT identified by the school as a Unified Student Athlete. All participants in Unified Sports must have appropriate UIL paperwork on file with their campus and SOTX.

Currently, there are two sports that are sanctioned by the UIL, basketball and track and field. Several districts across the state participate in Unified sports including in the Houston area, Spring Branch ISD, Brazosport ISD, and Fort Bend ISD.

The benefits of providing this program provides student athletes to learn life lessons through sports: teamwork, commitment, and perseverance. Through sports, these student athletes can find shared interest that allow friendships to form. Finally, through Unified Sports, we have an opportunity to make profound changes in the lives of student with and without disabilities.

“Training and Playing together is what brings individuals together for a greater cause, which in turns makes them and the world better,” said Campus Co-Athletic Coordinator, Coach Kimberly Smallwood, from Fort Bend Bush High School.

If interested in more information as it relates to becoming a part of the Unified Sports program, please contact AJ Edenzon, Associate Executive Director - East Region at [aedenzon@sotx.org](mailto:aedenzon@sotx.org)



Fort Bend Bush HS Unified Track and Field Team



Spring Woods High School Unified Track team wins 3rd place at STATE. (Spring Branch ISD)



Pflugerville Falcons National Special Olympics Flag Football Team. Heading to Florida for the USA Games





