



Aug. 20, 2015

Dear CFISD Community,

We are a week away from kicking off the 2015-2016 school year, when we will welcome more than 114,000 of the most talented students in Texas back into our 87 CFISD campuses.

We had many accomplishments to celebrate in 2014-2015, an historic year ringing in the district's [75th Anniversary](#). We cheered our fine arts and athletics successes, including the [Cy-Fair and Cypress Falls bands](#) placing in the top 25 at state and the [Cypress Ridge girls' wrestling](#) team, [Cypress Woods girls' basketball](#) team and [Cypress Ranch baseball](#) team winning state championships.



In June, our Class of 2015 graduates earned more than [7,300 diplomas](#) and scholarships valued at \$65 million.

The momentum has already continued into 2015-2016:

- We are pleased to once again be the largest district in which all campuses receive the state's [highest possible accountability rating](#).
- Our Board of Trustees won the Region 4 nomination for [TASA Outstanding School Board](#).



- Our growth as the 22nd-largest school system in the nation continues with the opening of our 54th elementary school, Woodard ES, on Aug. 24. I have been out to visit the campus and could not be more proud of the quality instructional facility that students in the Woodard community will utilize this fall.

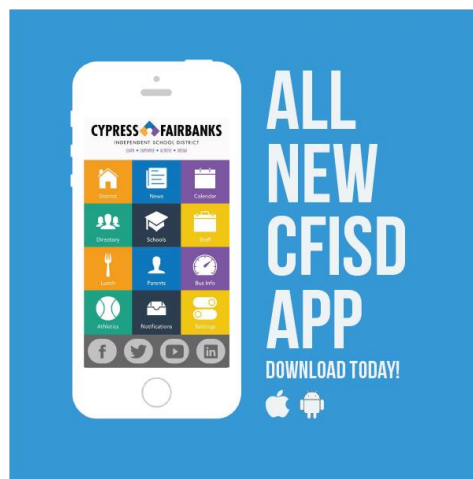


New construction and renovations have highlighted the summer of 2015. We completed the initial phase of the Pridgeon Stadium renovation—resurfacing the parking lot—and will wrap up stadium upgrades in 2016.

We recently announced the name of our newest high school, [Cypress Park High School](#), which is scheduled to open in August 2016 at FM 529 and Westgreen Blvd. The “topping out” ceremony (in which the final beam was placed on the facility) took place on Aug. 19, and we thank our facilities team and Satterfield & Pontikes Construction, Inc., for making this beautiful design from PBK Architects a reality.



We are continually seeking new ways to reach our community, so please take advantage of our new mobile website by visiting www.cfisd.net on your tablets and smart phones. You can also stay connected with the incredible resource that is our new CFISD mobile app! Search “CFISD” in the App Store or Google Play to download on your Apple or Android devices.



I was so pleased with our successes in 2014-2015, and I am confident that 2015-2016 will bring even more accomplishments for CFISD.

In just a few days, the pace is about to pick up dramatically throughout our district’s 186 square miles. Still, I encourage you to exercise patience—both on the roads as we transport nearly 80,000 students and in our schools as we make sure all 114,000 students are in the right spot.

Thank you for your support as we seek to serve **Every Student, Every Day** in 2015-2016.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Sept. 17, 2015

Did you know that only 21 districts in the nation have a larger enrollment than us? Or that 97.8 percent of our school-aged population attends public school? You may be surprised to learn that our students speak *100* different languages and dialects.

These and many other facts about Cypress-Fairbanks ISD often come as a pleasant surprise to our community members. I was happy to reveal many of them this week in my annual *State of the District* presentation for the Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce.



Members of the Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce listen to Dr. Henry's State of the District address at the Berry Center on Sept. 15.

I was proud to share that our 2015 graduates earned more than \$81 million in scholarships, and that our graduation rate exceeds that of the state by more than 4 percent.

Some eye-opening growth statistics were shared, including our two new high schools planned by 2017-2018 and the more than 47,000 new housing units expected in our community by 2024.



Chamber of Commerce luncheon guests browse the 2015-2016 State of the District brochure, which is available on the district website.

All of these statistics and more are available online on our [State of the District page](#), which includes links to our State of the District brochure, presentation and video that give an inside look into the fantastic things happening in CFISD. Look for the “Every Student, Every Day” block on our homepage to access this information.

I hope you enjoy these great resources, and that you, too, are pleasantly surprised by our school district’s excellence.

Don’t forget to follow me on Twitter at [@SuptMarkHenry](#) for more great news and updates throughout the school year!

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Oct. 6, 2015

Dear CFISD community,

The Nov. 3 general election will be upon us in less than a month. In addition to the many important races and measures on the ballot will be four positions for the [CFISD Board of Trustees Election](#):

Position 1

1. **Thomas Jackson**, incumbent (unopposed).

Position 2

1. **Christine Hartley**, incumbent (unopposed).

Position 3

1. **Natalie Blasingame**; and
2. **Darcy Mingoia**, incumbent.

Position 4

1. **Debbie Blackshear**; and
2. **Pam Redd**.

You will have an opportunity to learn more about each candidate at the Candidate Forum, scheduled for **Oct. 13 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Berry Center**. A [Candidate Profiles Guide](#) is also available on the website to give voters more background on each candidate, and questions can be submitted through [this online form](#). Access the [election block](#) on the homepage of our district website for additional information.



The two-week [early voting period](#) begins on **Oct. 19** and continues through **Oct. 30**, and I'd like to encourage you to make plans to vote in the election.

A scroll through your [sample ballot online](#) reveals a constitutional amendment to increase the statewide homestead exemption from \$15,000 to \$25,000 and several other propositions, in addition to the list of candidates running in the CFISD Trustee Election.

Please take a few minutes to browse the voter-specific ballot and polling locations on Harris County Clerk Stan Stanart's [website](#) by entering in your name and address. You can also access the [early voting sites and hours](#) on the site.

Voting is one of the great American freedoms that too many of us take for granted. I hope you will take the brief amount of time necessary to exercise that right, either during the early voting period or on Election Day.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
CFISD Superintendent



Jan. 14, 2016

“The glow of one warm thought is to me worth more than money.” ~ Thomas Jefferson

Dear CFISD community,

I hope you are enjoying your first days of the new year! My 2016 is off to a great start, and I would like to share one reason why.

In a time when we are seemingly surrounded by negative news, it can be discouraging when the great stories happening in and around our schools are not the prevailing headlines. But when I browsed our local papers during the first week of the new semester, it was refreshing to see the following positive press about our students, staff and district:

- [Teen combines love for shoes, caring for others](#) (*Houston Chronicle*, Jan. 11)
- [Bobcat basketball players throw New Year’s bash at Reach Unlimited](#) (*Cypress Creek Mirror*, Jan. 4)
- [Cypress Ridge coach wins Texans HS Coach of the Year award](#) (*Cypress Creek Mirror*, Jan. 4)
- [CFISD takes part in 911 Bears initiative](#) (*Houston Chronicle*, Dec. 31)
- [First on-campus clinic planned in CFISD](#) (*Houston Chronicle*, Dec. 29)
- [District partners celebrate gift of giving](#) (*Cypress Creek Mirror*, Dec. 24)
- [CFISD schools help one another during holiday season](#) (*Cypress Creek Mirror*, Dec. 18)

These stories confirmed what I already knew about the quality of people in our schools and surrounding community, but it was nice to have this kind of public validation.

A clickbait culture has conditioned us to look for the latest train wrecks, but for every bad story we read about, there may be 10 great stories that don’t get published.

More positivity is around the corner: the third annual [Superintendent’s Fun Run](#) will take place Feb. 27 at the Berry Center and Towne Lake and [Salute to Our Heroes](#) is Feb. 13 at the Omni Hotel Westside. Both events benefit student scholarships through the Cy-

Fair Educational Foundation. We will also [host the state wrestling tournament](#) for the first time at the Berry Center, Feb. 18-20!

On Monday, Jan. 18, we will honor a great American on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a school holiday. The principle of equality he stood for during a time when it was not popular to do so brought about fair legislation that will impact our country and education system forever.

We have many reasons to celebrate in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. May you focus on the good that surrounds us as we journey through the second semester of a successful 2015-2016 school year.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of schools



Jan. 22, 2016

Dear CFISD community,

An incredible school district and community event, the 22nd Annual Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Livestock Show Association Show and Sale, is just around the corner.

The Livestock Show and Sale will fill the CFISD Exhibit Center at 11206 Telge Road Feb. 4-6, where nearly 700 student exhibitors will showcase 900 student projects and animals to the community.



The [three-day event](http://www.cfisd.net/en/calendar/2016-cfisd-livestock-show-association-show-and-sale/?eID=804) will conclude on Feb. 6 with a Buyers' Luncheon at Arnold Middle School, followed by the premium auction. A complete schedule is available on the CFISD website at: <http://www.cfisd.net/en/calendar/2016-cfisd-livestock-show-association-show-and-sale/?eID=804>.

I am continually amazed at how much our business partners and donors contribute to student projects each year. At the 2015 sale, a record amount of nearly \$890,000 was given through the premium sale, freezer sale and donations to students. The generosity of organizations such as the Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce, which commits to purchasing an animal from each district high school through the *John Fox Chamber Herd*, makes me proud to be a part of this community.

Students in our agriculture science programs learn a variety of valuable lessons, including hard work and discipline, through raising an animal. It is a special sight to see the joy on a student's face when these characteristics pay off with an award-winning animal at the Livestock Show.



Please join me in supporting these dedicated students at the 22nd Annual Livestock Show and Sale.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



April 20, 2016

After further assessment of our campuses, as well as input from the Harris County Flood Control District and emergency response teams in our area, I have made the difficult decision to **keep CFISD schools and facilities closed through Friday, April 22.**

As I shared in my April 19 message, hundreds of residents have been displaced by flood waters, and many of you are still not able to leave your homes or neighborhoods. The threat to homes grows each day as Cypress Creek and Addicks Reservoir levels rise from the stormwater runoff. Houston TranStar and county officials have shared with me that we are at “ground zero” of this weather event.

This has resulted in many of our roadways being unsafe for travel for both bus drivers and commuters alike. Please continue to exercise caution if travel is a necessity.

I have spoken with Texas Education Agency officials, and they have been very understanding of the magnitude of this disaster. The TEA is working closely with us to determine our options going forward.

Again, school closure is not a decision I take lightly, but it is currently the best option for all our students and staff as we support those who have lost everything and ensure all buildings are safe for school.

Please continue to monitor the district website and social media pages for official updates.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.



April 24, 2016

Dear CFISD community,

The major flooding across the region has made it a tough week for all. While I feel that education is important, the safety of our students, staff and community came first when weighing five days of cancellations.

It has been a stressful week for the CFISD leadership team and staff, but that pales in comparison with the burden faced by those who have lost their homes, vehicles or lives as a result of this flood. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this trying time as we all get back on our feet.

Hundreds of CFISD staff members and volunteers have worked tirelessly to bring our facilities back to order and meet the needs of those who are hurting. I cannot praise you enough for your unified efforts.

We have 57 facilities that sustained some level of damage. All facilities will be ready for students and staff by Monday, April 25, although some will require continued work through the summer to return to their original state.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has been extremely supportive and responsive to our historic situation, and is working with us to develop a plan to finish out the school year. We will announce a plan this week once it is finalized.

This has been my third major event in the last 12 years as a superintendent. It does not get any easier, but it does bring out the best in a wonderful community like Cy-Fair. Thank you for your kindness, charity and concern over the last seven days. I am so proud to be a part of CFISD.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



April 26, 2016

Dear CFISD community,

Texas Education Agency (TEA) officials, who have been wonderful in assisting us through an unprecedented weather event, have agreed to establish **Thursday, June 2** as the **inclement weather makeup day** for students following last week's flood cancellations.

The state also agreed to waive the additional missed days of instruction. June 2 is already designated as an established inclement weather day on our [2015-2016 CFISD calendar](#), and June 3 will remain a professional development day for CFISD staff. [Class of 2016 graduation ceremonies](#) will be held as originally scheduled.

Thank you for your patience as we have worked closely with the state throughout this major weather event.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools