



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dec. 19, 2019

Dear CFISD Community,

As the fall semester comes to a close, and with it, the 2019 calendar year, I wanted to take some time to share some of the successes we achieved in the final year of the decade. We have a lot to cheer about in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, and you have much to be proud of from your local school district.

Our fine arts students continued to impress. Forty-eight students were named [All-State musicians](#) in January. Cypress Ranch High School theatre students earned [two Tommy Tune awards](#) in April. A Cypress Woods High School art student was one of [eight national art portfolio scholarship recipients](#) this summer.



Cypress Ranch theatre student Mia Velasquez, left, was named Best Leading Actress in the Tommy Tune Awards in April; and Cypress Woods graduate Taylor Powers, right, with teacher Tina Fox, won a \$10,000 Scholastic Art scholarship in June.

We had many University Interscholastic League (UIL) achievements, highlighted by Cypress Woods winning CFISD's first-ever [UIL Academic state championship](#) in the spring. We also had individual athletics gold medals from Cypress Creek High School [swimmer Hayden Miller](#) and [wrestler Amanda McAleavey](#).



Cypress Woods HS students and staff celebrate making history by winning CFISD's first-ever UIL Academic state championship in May 2019.

I was proud of our community for helping raise \$110,000 for the Cy-Fair Educational Foundation at the sixth annual [Superintendent's Fun Run](#) in March. Save the date for the seventh annual event on [March 21, 2020 at the Berry Center!](#)



Runners begin the 5K at the sixth annual Superintendent's Fun Run & Festival. The event raised a record \$110,000 for the CFEF!

Voters approved a [bond referendum](#) in May that will address many critical district needs for the future. Among the bond's components are a new visual and performing arts center and many safety and security upgrades that are already underway at numerous campuses.



The 2019 bond package includes a new visual and performing arts center that will be located near Cy-Fair High School.

A year that perfectly encapsulated *Opportunity for All* included [17 National Merit semifinalists and finalists](#). More than \$670,000 was [given](#) to Livestock Show and Sale projects. Our New Arrival Center language immersion program won a [prestigious national award](#). More than 8,200 [Class of 2019 graduates](#) earned diplomas.

We kicked off the 2019-2020 school year by launching a [STEM Academy for Automation, Robotics and Computer Science \(ARC\)](#) at Cypress Springs High School, and we piloted [Spanish Language Action Based Learning Labs](#) at Andre' and Sampson elementary schools. The [Leonard Brautigam Center opened](#) with a district career and technical education (CTE) trade building, supporting programs and certifications in welding, HVAC and electrical trades.



New additions for 2019-2020 – the STEM Academy for ARC at Cypress Springs High School and Spanish Language Action Based Learning Labs at Andre’ and Sampson elementary schools.

The new year will bring more positive change for the district, as we expand our [full-day pre-kindergarten](#) program throughout our elementary schools. Our human resources team has been hiring qualified pre-K teachers to accommodate the transition. If you know of an interested educator, it’s not too late to [apply](#)!



2019 was a special year, and I look forward to 2020 as we usher in another promising decade of outstanding educational opportunities for all children in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. Enjoy a safe and restful holiday break, and I will see you back in January!

Sincerely,

Mark Henry Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Feb. 26, 2020

Dear CFISD community –

While we continue to closely work with local and federal health authorities to monitor the developing situation surrounding the COVID-19 coronavirus (see attached fact sheet from Harris County Public Health), here is a quick update:

Currently, **there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Harris County.** Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Coughing and sneezing;
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands;
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands; and
- Rarely, fecal contamination.

State medical experts indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID -19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (see the [CDC website](#) for more information on handwashing).
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Receive a flu vaccine if you are over the age of 6 months.
- Follow the CDC's recommendations regarding the use of facemasks. Facemasks are not recommended for people who are well to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others or by health workers and people who are taking care of someone with COVID-19 symptoms.

All CFISD campuses have wall-mounted soap dispensers in restrooms and free-standing hand sanitizer dispensers at the building and cafeteria entrances.

In addition, our campus custodial staff will continue to disinfect campuses each day with hospital-grade products to help offset the spread of communicable illnesses.

Did you know that CFISD employs Registered Nurses at all 91 campuses (which is above and beyond what is required)? We are proud of our Health Services Department in CFISD, for the day-to-day medical care they offer our students and for their regular communication with local and federal health officials during outbreaks like coronavirus.

I will keep you informed as we receive additional information. It takes all of us working together to ensure healthy learning environments.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of schools

2020 *Harris County Public Health* **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

WHAT IS A CORONAVIRUS?



Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Common human coronaviruses can cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, such as the common cold. There have been coronaviruses that have caused more severe illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

A new coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China, in December of 2019 and is currently referred to as the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19. There are now cases of COVID-19 reported in the United States.

At this time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),
the risk to the general public is considered to be LOW.

SYMPTOMS

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms. However, there have been deaths from COVID-19 infection. CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure.

The following are typical symptoms of COVID-19:

Fever



Cough



*Shortness
of Breath*



PREVENTION & PROTECTION



There is currently no vaccine or specific treatments at this time for the COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

As a reminder, HCPH always recommends everyday preventive actions to help avoid the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home while you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

RECENT TRAVEL

If you traveled to China **in the last 14 days** and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should take the above precautionary measures and:

- Contact your healthcare provider right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, **call ahead** and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.



If you have recently traveled to where the virus has been confirmed (and/or have been in contact with someone who has) and now feel sick, **contact your healthcare provider or your local health department immediately.**

FUTURE INFORMATION

As things change with this disease, stay tuned for additional information from credible sources and remember to get your flu shot every year.

For more information on the COVID-19, please visit

www.hcphtx.org/nCoV

Sources of information:

Texas Department of State Services (DSHS)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
World Health Organization (WHO)



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 5, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

With the recent news of a “presumptive positive” case for coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 in Fort Bend County and two confirmed cases in Northwest Harris County, I want to reassure you that we are continuing to work closely with local and federal health authorities to monitor the developing situation in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the students and staff in CFISD. Local health officials have shared with us that these are both travel-related cases, and **there are no confirmed community-spread cases in our area.**

The steps we are taking in CFISD to prevent the spread of ALL communicable diseases include continuing our daily routine of disinfecting campuses and buses with hospital-grade products, encouraging proper handwashing, and when soap and water are not available, using hand sanitizer. All CFISD campuses have wall-mounted soap dispensers in restrooms and free-standing hand sanitizer dispensers at the building and cafeteria entrances. In addition, we are in the process of installing wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispensers in every classroom in the district.

State medical experts indicate that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same recommendations for preventing the spread of the flu, such as avoiding close contact with those who are sick, proper handwashing, covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue and staying home when sick.

We do not want students or staff to come to school sick. As a precautionary measure, we are making the following changes to perfect attendance calculations and Spring 2020 semester exam exemptions.

- CFISD will suspend perfect attendance rules for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Instead, perfect attendance recognition will be for August 26, 2019 – March 5, 2020.
- CFISD will suspend exam exemption criteria related to attendance for Spring 2020 exams. All other district criteria for exam exemptions still apply.

As we head into Spring Break, some of you may have questions about travel. While there are travel restrictions in place for several countries identified by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as of today, there are no travel restrictions or advisories pertaining to COVID-19 within the United States. Please refer to the [CDC's webpage](#) for more information regarding travel.

I will keep you informed as we receive additional information. It takes all of us working together to ensure healthy learning environments. I hope everyone has a restful and safe Spring Break.

Sincerely,
Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



— MESSAGE FROM THE — **SUPERINTENDENT**



March 11, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

As you are aware, the situation regarding COVID-19 continues to be very fluid for the Greater Houston area. I want to assure you that despite our schools being closed for spring break, the CFISD administrative team is participating in daily calls with local, state and federal officials and is actively monitoring the situation.

I am attending a meeting on Friday morning with neighboring superintendents and local officials and will have an update for you later that afternoon.

It takes all of us working together to ensure healthy learning environments.

Sincerely,
Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 12, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

Although there are **no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in CFISD**, in an abundance of caution, CFISD, along with most neighboring school districts, will close all schools and facilities next week. **Beginning Friday, March 13 at 4 p.m. until Sunday, March 22, all CFISD schools and facilities (including the Berry Center) will be closed.**

Students: Effective immediately, before- and after-school care, extracurricular activities, and field trips for students are canceled. All schools are closed.

Employees: Effective at 4 p.m. on Friday, March 13, no employee should report to work unless specifically requested by a supervisor. All facilities are closed.

Community: All buildings are closed to outside rentals during this time.

The district plans to resume on Monday, March 23. We are actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation and continue to participate in daily calls with local, state and federal officials. We will provide updates as more information becomes available.

It is paramount that we protect the health of our students, our staff and our community. It takes all of us working together to ensure healthy learning environments.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 13, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

COVID-19 continues to be an unprecedented and very fluid event for our country as evidenced by President Trump's declaration of a National Emergency and Governor Abbott's declaration of a State of Disaster for all Texas counties. I attended a meeting earlier today with Harris County Public Health, Harris County Judge Hidalgo, and the Office of Emergency Management and have been in communication with the Commissioner of Education and government health officials. This afternoon I met with our district administrative team, and we are all committed to providing resources for our students and staff during the CFISD closure period.

- **Curbside Meals:**
 - Beginning Monday, March 16
 - **Breakfast** will be available from 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.
 - **Lunch** will be available from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
 - **Dinner** will be available from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
 - Children 18 years and younger (must be present) may pick up meals at any CFISD school listed; this is not dependent on where the student is enrolled.
 - **Schools available for curbside meals:** Arnold MS, Bane ES, Cy Creek HS, Cy Lakes HS, Cy Park HS, Cy Ridge HS, Cy Springs HS, Danish ES, Francone ES, Frazier ES, Holbrook ES, Horne ES, Kirk ES, Langham Creek HS, Thornton MS
 - Beginning Tuesday, March 17
 - Goodson MS will be added to the original list of schools.
- **Payroll:**
 - Staff will be receiving a separate email today regarding pay.
- **Medication:**
 - If you have questions about accessing your child's medication from school, please contact CFPD at 832-237-CFPD.
- **UIL Contests** (see <https://www.uiltexas.org/>):
 - All UIL events have been suspended thru March 29.
 - The UIL anticipates completing the competitive season for academics, athletics and fine arts later this spring.
- **Superintendent's Fun Run & Festival:**
 - The event is cancelled, and t-shirts will be distributed at a later date. This is one of my favorite events every year because of you. Let's celebrate the scholarships that will still be awarded because of donations, registrations and business sponsorships. I'm already looking forward to next year's event.
- **Extended Learning Resources:**
 - Extended learning resources will be available next week for students on the district website.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):**

- Beginning Monday, March 16
 - An FAQ will be posted on the district website (www.cfisd.net) and updated as we receive additional information on the COVID-19 situation and its impact to our CFISD families.

The district website will continue to be updated with information for staff and students, and I will provide regular communication with you through email.

Please stay safe,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 16, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

For the last 55 years, I have either attended, taught or served in public schools. I understand the significance and comfort that the routine of the school calendar provides students, staff and our community. In addition, I know the importance of academics, athletics, fine arts and extracurricular activities. That is why, with great sadness and reluctance, I must share with you that we have made the difficult decision to cancel in-person classes for students from March 23 until April 9, following consultation today with local and state health officials, the Centers for Disease Control and other Region 4 superintendents. Our instructional team is making plans for long-term delivery of instruction and continues to navigate the many details of this unprecedented situation.

On Monday, March 23 staff will resume duty with a modified work schedule and location as assigned and detailed by your supervisor.

Although today is only the first day of instruction that our 118,000-plus students are missing due to COVID-19, I am proud that we have been able to quickly provide valuable resources for our students, and we will continue to do so. The district website (<http://www.cfisd.net/covid19>) has details regarding the following resources and will continue to be regularly updated.

- Curbside meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) for children 18 years or younger, Monday through Friday, began today.
 - Arnold MS, Bane ES, Cy Creek HS, Cy Lakes HS, Cy Park HS, Cy Ridge HS, Cy Springs HS, Danish ES, Francone ES, Frazier ES, Holbrook ES, Horne ES, Kirk ES, Langham Creek HS, Thornton MS (Goodson MS begins Tuesday, March 17)
- Houston Food Bank mobile food truck at Cy-Hope's Hope Chest (12015 Barker Cypress) on Wednesday, March 18 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Families will need to sign in to receive food.
- Extended Learning Resources to support reading, writing and math for Early Childhood through 12th Grade. Long-term delivery of instruction will be greatly expanded next week.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that will be updated as we receive additional information on COVID-19 and its impact to our CFISD families.

Today, we also learned that the Texas Education Agency has waived all STAAR tests for the 2019-2020 school year. I expect that more information regarding other tests will be announced soon.

I will continue to participate in frequent calls and meetings with local and state health officials and will update you regularly as we receive new information. We are all committed to providing resources for our students and staff during this time.

Please stay safe,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 20, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

Our school district and our country are amidst an unprecedented event. I appreciate your patience and your support during this public health crisis. Please take a few minutes to view my video message to all of you. [VIDEO LINK](#)

Beginning Monday, March 23, CFISD teachers will be contacting their students to share information about our new *Learning at Home* program, which will be launched on Monday. Parents will receive another communication about *Learning at Home* this weekend.

I continue to participate in frequent calls and meetings with local and state health officials, neighboring superintendents and the commissioner of education and will update you regularly as I receive new information. Please continue to check the district website at www.cfisd.net for updates and resources during this time.

Please stay safe,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 27, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

Classes resumed in CFISD this week, although learning and teaching look a lot different now than before spring break. I am so proud of the *Learning at Home* program that was launched on our website Monday, and my heart warms when I hear about the remote connections that our teachers and staff are making with students.

Please take a few minutes to view my video message to all of you. [VIDEO LINK](#)

Continue to check the district website at www.cfisd.net for updates and resources. Thank you for your patience and your support during this public health crisis.

Please stay safe,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



March 31, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

In compliance with Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order issued today, CFISD has canceled in-person classes through Friday, May 1.

In-person classes are now scheduled to resume on Monday, May 4, which coincides with the [first day that UIL games and contests may continue](#). We will continue to evaluate this date with the input from health and government officials.

Although nothing can replace the value of quality classroom instruction, the online [Learning at Home program](#) and take-home packets have allowed our students to resume education outside of campus. We are continuing to enhance this curriculum.

I have received many questions from students and parents about graduation ceremonies. For now, we still have graduations scheduled, but we will be discussing alternative options and dates with high school leadership to recognize our seniors while maintaining safety for all.

It troubles me to prolong time apart from our students and staff, but during this unprecedented time, I feel it is critical to protect our community and halt the spread of COVID-19.

Please stay tuned for my weekly video update on Friday, when I will provide additional details for the plan ahead.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



April 3, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

Earlier this week, Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order that closed all Texas schools through Friday, May 1. In-person classes are currently scheduled to resume in CFISD on Monday, May 4. We miss seeing our students and teachers and look forward to the time where we can all safely come back together. In the upcoming weeks, we will be making announcements regarding May activities including proms, graduations and awards programs.

Please take a few minutes to view my video message to all of you. [VIDEO LINK](#)



I appreciate your patience and support during this public health crisis. Continue to check the district website at www.cfisd.net for updates and resources.

Please stay safe,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



April 17, 2020

At noon today, Gov. Greg Abbott **extended the closure of all Texas schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year; however, distance learning will continue.** While I am disappointed that we will not be able to close out the school year in ways that we usually do, we must follow the directives issued by the governor so that we can safely come back together sometime soon.

Here are some of our key priorities as we continue to navigate the challenges brought about by COVID-19:

- **Learning at Home program:** Although our classrooms are empty, we are committed to supporting student learning through the dedication of our campus staff and teachers as they connect with their students and provide additional instructional support. The CFISD *Learning at Home* program will continue to be enriched and enhanced each week.
- **Curbside Meals:** We will continue to provide Curbside Meals each weekday at 19 campuses. To date, CFISD has provided more than 400,000 meals to our students.
- **Class of 2020 seniors:** Like you, I am holding out hope that graduations will be held in May or on our alternative dates in July. Gov. Abbott indicated today that Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath would soon provide details about how school districts should proceed and how they could conduct graduation ceremonies. We will provide you with more information once available.
- **Grading, GPA and semester averages:** Now that it is certain we will not be returning to in-class instruction this school year, we will finalize plans regarding grade calculations and communicate this to you soon.
- **Student and staff items:** Campuses will be developing and communicating a plan with you on when you may return to campus to retrieve personal belongings safely.
- **UIL:** In response to the extended closure of Texas schools, the UIL has suspended all practices and contests (extracurricular academic, athletic and music) for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Our departments and campuses will continue to take your calls between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, as well as through email. On behalf of all of the staff in CFISD, we miss you and look forward to the time when we can safely be together again.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



May 29, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

Prior to the start of the school year, I challenged our staff members to give “a little extra, on purpose,” or *lagniappe*, to their students, parents and colleagues in 2019-2020. I had no idea at the time how much “extra” would be shown after COVID-19 forced us to be apart this spring!

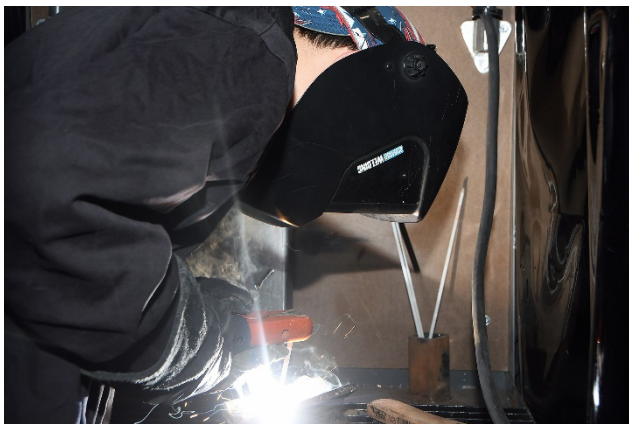


- Our curriculum and instruction team worked around the clock to provide structured *Learning at Home* curriculum following the unexpected cancellation of in-person classes.
- Nutrition Services employees modified their procedures to provide more than 800,000 curbside meals at 19 campuses over 2 ½ months.
- Bus drivers delivered more than 5,500 *Learning at Home* packets to homes each week.
- Technology Services staff provided devices for students to help facilitate home instruction.
- Operations staff provided extra hand sanitizing stations throughout the district and implemented additional disinfecting procedures.
- Berry Center staff and the CFISD police department facilitated Mega Food Distributions for the Houston Food Bank and blood drives for the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center.
- Teachers and administrators remained in contact with students and families and supported them through Zoom, Flipgrid and other resources.

And the list goes on and on. I am so proud of our school district for the way we finished the year despite such immense challenges. It is important that we celebrate these successes, as well as the many other achievements throughout 2019-2020.



We launched a full-day pre-kindergarten program districtwide, serving almost 4,000 students while hiring 80 new pre-K teachers and paraeducators. We know that when students start their educational careers with us, it leads to success.



We opened the Leonard Brautigam Center, a dawn-to-dusk program that meets the needs of today's students, featuring a new district CTE trade building where certifications in plumbing, welding and culinary arts are all accessible.



We launched Spanish Action Based Learning Lab pilot programs at two elementary schools, with hopes to expand throughout the district, as a STEM Academy for Automation, Robotics and Computer Science (ARC) at Cypress Springs High School. We also expanded our College Academy partnership with Lone Star College-CyFair to 11 high schools where students can earn an associate's degree along with their high school diploma.



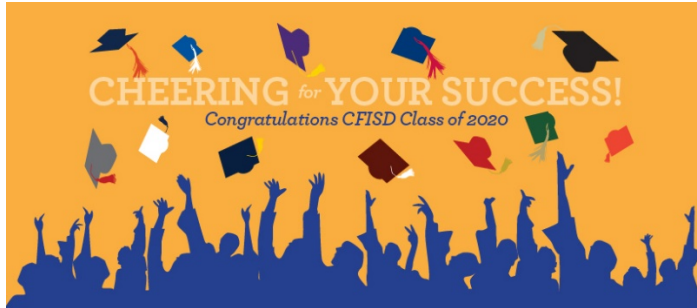
For the third straight year, we earned a Best Communities for Music Education national designation from the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation. A total of 49 high school musicians were named to Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) All-State ensembles.



Cypress Creek High School senior wrestler Amanda McAleavey captured her second straight state championship at the Berry Center in February. The Cypress Creek girls' basketball team finished as state runner-up in March, continuing our district's proud athletics tradition.



We learned that four CFISD students earned perfect ACT scores this spring—an incredible accomplishment earned by fewer than half of 1 percent of students who take the exam! Congratulations to **Gabriel Bolanos** of Cypress Ranch High School, **Ananya Kaalva** and **Rohit Jha** of Bridgeland High School and **Toby Yi** of Cypress Woods High School.



Next week, we will celebrate more than 8,000 graduates, including the inaugural graduating classes of Bridgeland and Cypress Park high schools. It will look a little different from past ceremonies as we accommodate new health and social distancing guidelines, but we look forward to celebrating with our Class of 2020—a group of graduates that will always have a special place in my heart.

I know that there have been many updates shared with you these last couple months, and I have been appreciative of your flexibility as we have all worked together to navigate a fluid situation amid COVID-19. I will continue to provide you with updates throughout the summer as soon as we have any news to share.

Thank you for being a part of this special CFISD community that continues to give a little extra for one another each day.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of schools



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



June 5, 2020

Dear CFISD community,

This has been a week of conflicting emotions for me as a school superintendent and an American citizen. While I have been immensely proud of our Class of 2020 graduates as they walk across the stage and accept hard-earned diplomas, my heart aches from the tragic death of former Houstonian George Floyd and the resulting division that has occurred in our nation. The cries for justice and awareness have been loud and clear, and I stand beside you as you express your feelings.

I continue to believe that public education is the equalizer for all children. One of the reasons I sent my children to public school is I knew they would be surrounded by a diverse community that better reflects what the world looks like. I truly believe that they are more understanding people because they went to school with people who did not look, think or believe exactly like they did. The more we know each other, the better off we're going to be.

Something I have shared with our graduating seniors this week is that for those of us who have not experienced discrimination, the most important thing we can do is listen to others. Just because we haven't experienced discrimination doesn't mean it doesn't exist. I don't need to tell you how you should think; I need to listen to how you feel.

I want each of our students to feel safe and welcome in our schools. Despite the many challenges we have faced in recent months, I am optimistic that we will emerge stronger and more unified than ever before. Each new class of students is more diverse, more accepting and more committed to making our country a better place. I look forward to being a part of the future shaped by the Class of 2020 and beyond.

In CFISD, our motto, *Opportunity for All*, is our pledge to do our best to offer an exceptional education to every student without regard to race, creed or family background. I recognize that CFISD can always improve as an organization, and I am committed to increasing our understanding and becoming more racially and culturally sensitive.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools