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CELEBRATING LA JOYA ISD'S LEGACY OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT SINCE 1983!

La Joya ISD Receives Approval for Teacher Incentive Allotment Designations

La Joya ISD has received approval from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for its local designation system under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). The approval follows the district's successful appeal of its data validation report and allows La Joya ISD to move forward with recommending 2025–2026 Teacher Incentive Allotment designations based on 2024–2025 teacher effectiveness data.

"At La Joya ISD, we believe great teaching is the foundation of student success," said Superintendent Dr. Marcey Sorensen. "The Teacher Incentive Allotment helps us recognize educators whose work is driving meaningful student growth while also supporting our efforts to retain and develop outstanding teachers across the district. Our focus remains on building systems that elevate teaching excellence and strengthen outcomes for every student we serve."

The Teacher Incentive Allotment is a statewide initiative designed to recognize and reward highly effective teachers for the measurable impact they have on student learning and growth. Through this program, teachers may earn designations such as Recognized, Exemplary or Master based on multiple measures of effectiveness, including student growth and instructional performance. These designations generate additional funding that supports increased compensation for teachers and strategic investments in teacher development and retention.

"This approval represents an important step forward in recognizing the incredible work our teachers do every day in our classrooms," Sorensen added. "The Teacher Incentive Allotment allows us to celebrate highly effective teaching and ensure that educators who are making a measurable impact on student learning are recognized and supported. As we continue strengthening our local designation system, our goal is to create more opportunities for teachers to be acknowledged for the difference they make in the lives of our students."

As part of the approval process, the district will continue strengthening implementation of its local designation system and addressing identified areas for improvement to ensure alignment with TEA expectations. The district will also complete required program reporting, including the annual evaluation survey and program submission.

In addition to continuing the current system, La Joya ISD is exploring opportunities to expand Teacher Incentive Allotment eligible teaching categories to allow more educators to participate in the program. District leaders will review expansion and modification options and plan to submit an application to TEA for the 2026–2027 school year.

The Teacher Incentive Allotment remains an important component of La Joya ISD's broader efforts to support educator excellence, recognize the impact of effective teaching and strengthen student outcomes across the district. Through continued implementation of the program, the district aims to ensure that teachers who demonstrate strong instructional practice and measurable student growth are recognized for their contributions to student success.

La Joya ISD will continue working closely with the Texas Education Agency to ensure accurate reporting, implementation fidelity and ongoing program improvement as the district prepares to submit the next cycle of teacher effectiveness data.



La Joya ISD Advances Long-Range Facilities Master Plan to Support Student Success

La Joya ISD presented a comprehensive Facilities Condition Assessment and Long-Range Facilities Master Plan during its March 25 Board Meeting, outlining a strategic, data-driven approach to ensure district facilities effectively support student learning for years to come.

The initiative aligns directly with the district's strategic plan, Achieving Excellence Together 2030, and reinforces La Joya ISD's commitment to Operational Excellence and Financial Stability by prioritizing investments that directly impact teaching and learning.

Through a partnership with MGT Impact Solutions and Parsons, the district will conduct a full assessment of facility conditions, educational adequacy, enrollment trends, and campus utilization. The process will result in a clear, actionable facilities master plan designed to guide future capital improvements and long-term investments.

"This work is about ensuring every student has access to high-quality learning environments that match the excellence we expect across our District," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Marcey Sorensen. "We are taking a thoughtful, data-driven approach so that every decision we make reflects our commitment to students' success, supports our educators to deliver the highest quality instruction, provides innovative and state of the art spaces that allow our District to remain competitive, and positions our district for long-term success with a vision for the future."

The master planning process includes several key components:

- Comprehensive facility condition assessments, including building systems, safety, and compliance
- Educational adequacy reviews to ensure spaces meet modern instructional needs
- Enrollment projections and student forecasting
- Capacity and utilization analysis to identify opportunities and address growth or underuse
- Community engagement to ensure stakeholder voice is included throughout the process
- Development of prioritized capital improvement plans with clear implementation strategies

The outcome will provide the district with a clear vision, actionable options, and a phased investment strategy supported by data and community input. Chief of Operations and Infrastructure S.B. Pierson emphasized the importance of planning with clarity and transparency.

"Our goal is to give the district and our community a clear picture of the current state of our facilities so we can create a clear path forward, guided by the voices of our community," Pierson said. "This process ensures we fully understand the condition of our facilities, align them to instructional needs, engage our community in the findings, and allow us to have informed discussions that are responsible, strategic, and centered on student success."

The process is designed to be transparent and collaborative, incorporating stakeholder feedback through surveys, focus groups, and community meetings. The final master plan will serve as a roadmap for future facility improvements, ensuring resources are aligned with district priorities and student needs.

La Joya ISD will continue to provide updates as the planning process progresses.

MESSAGE FROM THE Superintendent of Schools



Dear La Joya ISD Family,

April is here, and with it comes one of the most important milestones of our school year, the time of year where our students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and we learn the impact of our instruction on student achievement. Across our district, this is an important time for our students as we enter the end of year (EOY) testing season. Our students will be taking the STAAR and End-of-Course (EOC) exams, which are our state accountability exams, along with Advanced Placement (AP) testing, end-of-year MAP assessments, and those last opportunities to pass the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) before we go to college.

- To our students: We see your effort, your growth, and your commitment. You are ready.
- To our teachers and staff: We thank you for the intentional work you've put in to ensure every student is supported and prepared. You have made growth this year and growth is the road to mastery.
- To our leaders: We know you create the conditions that provide the passion and purpose on your campus. We see you leading, learning, and loving - with courage and conviction.
- To our families: We are better as a result of our partnership with you. Your encouragement and support continue to make a meaningful difference.

This time of year is not just about testing. It's about progress. It's about seeing the impact of strong instruction, aligned systems, and the collective focus we've placed on improving outcomes for all students. Through our Strategic Plan, Achieving Excellence Together 2030, we remain grounded in one clear purpose: Every Student. Every Campus. Every Classroom. Every Day.

As we move through April, we are also continuing important conversations across our district. From campus visits and advisory groups to community engagement efforts, your voice continues to guide our work. We are listening, learning, and taking action to ensure our schools reflect the excellence our students deserve as we are also working to close the 25-26 school year strong while also planning for an even better 26-27 school year.

While the end of the year is coming quickly, there is still much ahead this year, and I am confident in what we can accomplish together. Let's continue to support one another, stay focused on our goals, and stay fully committed to our vision where educational excellence is truly the right of EVERY student.

Thank you for all you do for our students and for La Joya ISD. I believe in each of you and I am confident that together, we can do anything we set our minds to on behalf of our great District and brilliant students.

With appreciation,
Dr. Marcey Sorensen
Superintendent of Schools
La Joya Independent School District

MESSAGE FROM THE School Board President



Dear La Joya ISD Family,

As we enter the final stretch of the school year, April brings both focus and reflection across our district. Our students are preparing for important assessments, and I want to take a moment to recognize the hard work happening every day in our classrooms. From our students to our teachers and staff, the commitment to learning and growth is clear—and it makes us proud.

This time of year also reminds us of the importance of staying grounded in our purpose. Through our strategic plan, Achieving Excellence Together 2030, we continue working toward a shared vision: ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education, every day. That work is only possible because of the strong partnership we have with our families, staff, and community.

As a Board, we remain committed to making decisions that are in the best interest of our students while maintaining strong stewardship of district resources. We know that trust is built through communication, consistency, and a shared commitment to doing what's right—and we take that responsibility seriously.

Thank you for your continued support of La Joya ISD. Together, we will finish this school year strong and continue building a future full of opportunity for all of our students.

PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

David Torres, Strengthening Safety and Preparedness at La Joya ISD

At La Joya ISD, leadership extends beyond classrooms and campuses - it also lives in the systems and people who work every day to ensure schools remain safe, secure, and prepared. As part of the district's ongoing Profile of Leadership Excellence series, this month's spotlight highlights David Torres - Emergency Management Coordinator - whose steady leadership and commitment to service help safeguard the district's learning environments.

For Torres, leadership is not defined by a title, but by the responsibility to guide others with clarity, confidence, and purpose.

"To me, leadership is much more than issuing orders or managing a department - it is truly a way of life," Torres said. "Whether it is a routine day or a critical emergency, leadership means remaining calm under pressure, making sound decisions, and effectively communicating with everyone involved."

Torres elaborates that working in emergency management requires a unique blend of discipline, preparedness, and trust. He believes when people look to a leader during stressful situations, they need to see stability and direction.

Torres describes his leadership style as one rooted in leading by example. In the field of public safety, he believes it is essential for leaders to understand every role within an operation - from traffic control and building entry to incident command and coordination with external agencies. Having firsthand experience in these areas allows him to better support the individuals he leads and understand the challenges they face.

Motivated by the trust placed in him by the district and the families it serves, Torres reflects on his responsibilities as a public safety professional, as well as a parent.

"When I walk through our campuses and see our students, I cannot help but think about my own children," he said. "I put myself in the shoes of the parents who trust us with their children's safety. That perspective drives me to work harder and strive for excellence in everything I do."

Throughout his leadership journey, Torres has helped guide several major initiatives that have strengthened safety systems across the district. Among the accomplishments he is most proud of is helping lead the comprehensive restructuring and modernization of the district's emergency management efforts. From upgrades to the district's Silent Panic Alert Technology and expanded training for staff on how to effectively use emergency response systems, Torres ensures students, staff, and community members understand how to respond during emergency situations.

While many safety initiatives take place behind the scenes, Torres emphasizes they play a critical role in maintaining secure campuses. Infrastructure improvements, safety planning, coordination with local partners, and ongoing training all contribute to a stronger safety framework across the district.

Torres has also continued to strengthen his own expertise through specialized professional training programs, including Advanced Active Shooter Incident Management, where he was recognized as a standout participant. He credits these opportunities with allowing him to bring valuable knowledge and best practices back to the district.

Despite these accomplishments, Torres is quick to emphasize that meaningful progress in school safety is always the result of teamwork.

"This work is not accomplished by one person," he said. "It is the result of collaboration - the progress we have made reflects the dedication of many professionals working toward the same goal."

Torres believes leadership growth requires continuous learning and humility.

Torres regularly seeks opportunities to expand his knowledge, believing that leadership growth requires continuous learning and humility.

"Complacency can be dangerous in this field," he said. "Leaders must remain committed to learning, refining their skills, and investing in the development of the people around them."

Torres is grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside the dedicated professionals who work daily to protect the district's students and staff, fulfilling the mission of ensuring every person who walks onto any campus feels safe, supported, and ready to learn.

His leadership reflects the core of Priority 1: Excellence in Leadership under the district's Achieving Excellence Together: 2030 Strategic Plan. By strengthening safety systems, investing in preparedness, and fostering collaboration across the district, Torres demonstrates how effective leadership creates the conditions for students and staff to thrive.



La Joya ISD Educator Publishes Children's Book Giving Voice to Kids Navigating Co-Parenting

For many children growing up in co-parenting households, the emotional challenges they face often go unspoken. One La Joya ISD educator is working to change that by creating a story that helps young readers understand - and express - those complex feelings.

Melissa Diaz, a music teacher at Tabasco Elementary, recently published her first children's book, My Love for You is Everywhere: A Book on Coparenting Little Hearts, a heartfelt story designed to help children navigate the emotional realities of co-parenting while encouraging open conversations between parents and their children.

Inspired by her own childhood experiences and the stories she has witnessed in the classroom, Diaz wrote the book to give children a voice and help families address feelings that are often difficult to express.

"I wrote this book to give a voice to children navigating the silent complexities of co-parenting, a journey where their feelings are often overlooked," Diaz said. "Having grown up in that dynamic myself, I know how suppressed emotions can affect a child's self-esteem and relationships later in life. I wanted to create the resource I wish I had growing up."

As an educator, Diaz says her work with students played a major role in motivating her to bring the story to life.

"So many children feel alone in this experience because the books, shows, and media they see rarely reflect their reality," Diaz said. "I wanted this book to help children recognize their emotions and realize they are not alone. At the same time, I hope it gives parents a helpful tool to talk about those big feelings in a way that feels natural, supportive, and empowering."

For Diaz, addressing the topic of co-parenting openly is deeply personal. Through her own journey of healing and self-discovery, she realized how important it is to help children process difficult emotions early in life.

"When we support children through their big emotions while they are young, we help build confidence, resilience, and a stronger sense of self," she said. "That support can make a lifelong difference."

Diaz's work reflects the powerful impact La Joya ISD educators can have beyond the classroom - using their experiences and passion to advocate for the well-being of children and families. By tackling a meaningful and often difficult subject, Diaz is ensuring students navigating complex family dynamics feel seen, supported, and heard.

Diaz hopes her achievement as a published author will also inspire her students to pursue their own dreams.

"For a long time, my thoughts were just mine," Diaz shared. "But once I realized the message was too important to keep to myself, I knew I had to share it. Writing gives you the power to tell your story, imagine new possibilities, and discover your own voice."

Through her story, Diaz hopes to continue empowering children to understand their emotions, communicate openly, and know that their voices matter.



DISTRICT NEWS

Listening First: Dr. Marcey Sorensen Hosts Campus Conversations with Educators

In an effort to strengthen communication, foster collaboration, and build meaningful connections with educators across the district, La Joya ISD Superintendent Dr. Marcey Sorensen is launching a series of informal listening sessions titled "After the Bell Conversations."

Designed to provide teachers and staff with an open and welcoming space to share their perspectives, the sessions allow educators to ask questions and engage in honest dialogue about the work happening across the district. By meeting directly with educators on campuses after the school day ends, Dr. Sorensen is prioritizing time to listen, learn, and better understand the experiences and insights of those working closest with students.

Unlike traditional meetings, After the Bell Conversations are intentionally informal - there are no presentations, scripted remarks, or formal agendas. Instead, the sessions focus on authentic conversation, allowing educators to openly discuss what's working on their campuses, identify challenges, and share ideas that can help strengthen support for students and staff.

"These conversations are about being present, listening, and learning from the incredible professionals who serve our students every day," said Dr. Marcey Sorensen, Superintendent of Schools for La Joya ISD. "Our teachers and staff bring invaluable insight into what is happening in our classrooms and campuses. Creating opportunities for open dialogue allows us to better understand their experiences and continue working together to support student success."

Throughout the sessions, educators will have the opportunity to hear updates on district priorities, initiatives, and decisions while also contributing their own ideas and feedback. The conversations are designed to help strengthen communication across campuses while reinforcing a culture of trust, transparency, and collaboration throughout the district.

By meeting with staff directly, Dr. Sorensen is reaffirming the district's commitment to ensuring educators have a voice in conversations that shape the future of La Joya ISD.

The sessions will take place across several campuses throughout late March and April, allowing educators from across the district to participate in the discussions, with all sessions open to La Joya ISD educators.

Through initiatives like After the Bell Conversations, La Joya ISD continues to strengthen its commitment to collaboration and open communication - ensuring that the voices of educators remain central to the district's ongoing efforts to support students and achieve excellence together.



La Joya ISD Launches New Website & Integrated Communication System to Better Connect with Families and Community

La Joya ISD is excited to announce the launch of its newly redesigned website launching in May. Built on ParentSquare's Smart Sites platform, the new website offers a fresh look, improved navigation, and greater accessibility to better serve students, families, and the wider community.

In addition to streamlined navigation that allows visitors to easily find news, events, and essential resources, the new website offers built-in accessibility tools to support all users. Beyond a new website, La Joya ISD will also have integrated communication features through ParentSquare - the district's new platform for school-home communication.

The update reflects La Joya ISD's ongoing commitment to strengthening communication and deepening connections with the families and communities it serves. Aligned with Priority 4 of the district's strategic plan - which focuses on Community Trust, Unity, & Partnership - the new website and integrated communication system are designed to improve how information is shared across the district.

By modernizing the district's communication tools and expanding opportunities for two-way engagement, La Joya ISD aims to ensure families, staff, and our community members receive timely, accurate, and accessible information while fostering greater transparency, trust, and meaningful connection.

"This new system represents an important step forward in how we connect with our community," said Blanca Cantu, Director of Public Relations and Communications for La Joya ISD. "We felt this change was needed in order to achieve our goal of making information easier to access, ensure com-

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DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD Hosted Pre-K & Kinder Discovery Night

Families from across the community were welcomed to explore the world of early childhood education during La Joya ISD's Pre-K & Kinder Discovery Night, which took place on April 1 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at elementary campuses across the district. The event was designed for current and new-to-the-district Pre-K 3, Pre-K 4, and Kindergarten students and their families, providing them with an opportunity to learn more about the programs that support young learners as they begin their educational journey.

Throughout the evening, campuses showcased their Pre-K and Kindergarten programs through engaging, hands-on activities and classroom experiences. Families had the opportunity to visit classrooms, explore learning materials, and participate in interactive activities that reflected the type of meaningful and engaging instruction students experience every day.



Parents and children also toured classrooms that may become their future learning spaces, met teachers and campus staff, and interacted with other students who will soon be part of the school community. These experiences allowed families to see firsthand the nurturing environments where students build important foundational skills in literacy, math, creativity, and social development.

In addition to exploring classrooms, families received on-site registration support and important information about district programs. Campus staff were available to assist parents with the registration process and answer questions about enrollment requirements, curriculum, and the many opportunities available to students in La Joya ISD.



The event also served as a valuable opportunity for families who may be transitioning to a different campus in the upcoming school year. Visiting a future campus helped students and parents become familiar with the school environment, meet teachers, and feel more confident about the next step in their child's educational journey.



La Joya ISD continues to remain committed to ensuring every child begins school with strong academic and social foundations. Events such as Pre-K & Kinder Discovery Night helped families connect with schools, learn about available programs, and experience the supportive learning communities that make the district a special place for students to grow and thrive.

The evening allowed families to discover the opportunities awaiting their young learners and highlighted how La Joya ISD supports students from their very first steps in education.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Autism Month

National Poetry Month Poetry Cafe

School Library Month

Hearth Health Awareness Month

April 3, 2026
Paraprofessional Appreciation Day

April 4, 2026
School Librarian Appreciation Day

April 6-10, 2026
National Assistant Principal Week

April 6-10, 2026
GT Awareness Week

April 9, 2026
GT Parent Night

April 15, 2026
Purple Up Day for Military Kids

April 20-24, 2026
Public School Volunteer Week

April 22, 2026
Administrative Professionals Day

April 28, 2026
School Bus Driver Appreciation Day

April 30, 2026
Dia del Niño

Celebrating the People Who Support Student Success: April Employee Observances

April offers meaningful opportunities for La Joya ISD to recognize and celebrate the many dedicated individuals who contribute to the success of our students and schools each day. From the classroom to the front office, from the library to the bus route, these observances highlight the many professionals and volunteers whose commitment help create a strong and supportive learning environment across the district.

Throughout the month, we proudly celebrate National School Library Month, recognizing the vital role school libraries and library professionals play in fostering curiosity, literacy, and a lifelong love of learning. Our libraries serve as hubs of exploration and discovery where students build critical thinking skills, develop research abilities, and expand their knowledge in meaningful ways.

On April 1, Paraprofessionals Day, we honor the hardworking paraprofessionals who provide essential instructional and classroom support. Their dedication, patience, and commitment help ensure that every student receives the attention and guidance they need to succeed.

A few days later, on April 4, we celebrate Librarian Day, recognizing the educators who inspire students to explore new ideas through reading, research, and technology. Our librarians play an important role in guiding students toward information literacy and supporting academic growth across all grade levels.

From April 6-10, La Joya ISD joins schools across the nation in celebrating National Assistant Principals Week. Assistant principals are instrumental leaders on our campuses, supporting students, teachers, and families while helping create safe, positive learning environments where everyone can thrive.

Later in the month, from April 20-24, we observe National Public School Volunteer Week, honoring the many community members who generously give their time and energy to support our schools. Their partnership and dedication strengthen the connection between our campuses and the communities we serve.

Finally, on April 28, we recognize School Bus Driver Appreciation Day, celebrating the professionals who safely transport our students to and from school each day. Their commitment to safety, reliability, and care ensures that students begin and end their school day in a secure and supportive environment.

Together, these observances highlight the many individuals who contribute to the success of La Joya ISD. The district extends its sincere appreciation to each of these team members and community partners for the dedication, compassion, and service they bring to our schools as we continue Achieving Excellence Together.

DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD Coaches Train for New Lifetime Recreation and Outdoor Pursuits Course

La Joya ISD Physical Education coaches recently participated in specialized training to prepare for the district's Lifetime Recreation and Outdoor Pursuits course, an innovative class designed to help students build practical outdoor skills while developing responsibility and confidence.



During the training, coaches learned how to teach students a variety of outdoor recreation skills, including safely building a campfire, basic fishing techniques, and demonstrating respect and responsibility toward wildlife and natural resources. The course focuses on helping students develop lifelong recreation habits while also learning about environmental stewardship and safety.

Norberto Garza, PE Coordinator for La Joya ISD, emphasized the value of preparing coaches to lead these experiences. "This training gives our coaches the tools to teach students skills they can use for the rest of their lives," Garza said. "Learning how to fish, build a campfire, and care for wildlife teaches responsibility, patience, and respect for the outdoors."

The training equips teachers with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed to guide students through these activities in a structured and safe environment. By introducing outdoor recreation skills in school, the district is creating opportunities for students to learn teamwork, patience, and personal responsibility while connecting with nature.

The course also supports the district's strategic priority of Thriving Students, which focuses on helping students grow not only academically but also physically, socially, and emotionally through meaningful learning experiences.

Veronica Chavez, Executive Director of Academic Enrichment, highlighted how the course expands opportunities for student enrichment. "Programs like Lifetime Recreation and Outdoor Pursuits allow students to explore new interests and build real-world skills," Chavez said. "These experiences help students grow in confidence and responsibility, which is an important part of our commitment to helping every student thrive."

La Joya ISD looks forward to seeing students engage in these new learning experiences as the course continues to expand across the district.



La Joya ISD Hosts Annual Heart Walk, Bringing Community Together for Health & Awareness

La Joya ISD proudly hosted its annual American Heart Month Walk at La Joya ISD Pack Stadium, welcoming students, families, staff, and community members for a morning dedicated to promoting heart health and strengthening community connections.

With participants dressed in red and united by a shared purpose, the event served as a powerful reminder that heart health is more than an individual responsibility - it is a community priority.

In the Rio Grande Valley, where rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and related health conditions remain among the highest in the state, initiatives like the Heart Walk play a vital role in raising awareness and encouraging proactive wellness. By creating opportunities for families to engage in healthy activities together, La Joya ISD continues to help foster a culture of prevention, education, and support.

"Heart health impacts every family - especially in communities like ours," said Anne Marie Candelario, Deputy Chief of School Leadership. "When we come together for events like this, we're not only raising awareness but also empowering one another to





make healthier choices and support lifelong well-being."

The free, family-friendly walk offered more than just steps toward physical wellness. Participants also had access to informational resources, healthy snacks, and giveaways - all designed to spark conversations about cardiovascular health and encourage heart-healthy lifestyles at home.

For La Joya ISD, the Heart Walk represents a meaningful extension of its commitment beyond the classroom. By investing in the well-being of students and their families, the district continues to advance Strategic Priority 4: Community Trust, Unity & Partnership - ensuring that schools remain a hub for connection, support, and shared growth.



"La Joya ISD is proud to stand alongside our families in prioritizing health and wellness," added Candelario. "When our community thrives, our students thrive."

As American Heart Month wraps, La Joya ISD remains steadfast in its mission to support the whole child and the whole community - walking together toward a healthier future.



LA JOYA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ★ EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE: THE RIGHT OF EVERY STUDENT ★

DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD Prepares for a Summer of Learning with 2026 ADSY Program

La Joya ISD is gearing up for an exciting summer of learning, growth, and opportunity with the return of its annual Additional Days School Year (ADSY) Summer Initiative. Taking place from June 1–26, 2026, the program will serve students from Pre-K through high school, offering a blend of academic support and hands-on enrichment designed to keep students engaged and on track for success.



Elementary students will participate in the district's Summer STEAM Camp, featuring interactive, hands-on activities that strengthen literacy and math skills, while middle and high school students will have access to credit recovery, advancement opportunities, Early College Summer Bridge Institutes, and College Readiness Camps. Programs will be hosted across multiple campuses, with transportation and meals provided to ensure accessibility for all students.

The ADSY Summer Initiative supports La Joya ISD's strategic plan, Achieving Excellence Together: 2030, by advancing Priority 2: Empowered Graduates and Priority 3: Thriving Students. Registration is now open through Skyward, with additional information available at lajoyaisd.com/adsy. For more information, scan the QR Code.





La Joya ISD Emphasizes the Importance of STAAR Testing and Intentional Preparation for Student Success

As STAAR and End-of-Course (EOC) testing begins across the state, La Joya ISD is reinforcing the importance of both the assessment itself and the intentional preparation that leads to student success.

While STAAR testing serves as a key measure of academic progress and mastery of grade-level standards, district leaders emphasize that success on these assessments is not achieved overnight. Instead, it is the result of consistent, data-driven instruction, strategic planning, and a shared commitment between educators, students, and families.

"At La Joya ISD, we view STAAR as an opportunity for our students to demonstrate their growth, confidence, and readiness," said Dr. Derek Little, Chief of Academics & School Leadership for La Joya ISD. "Equally important is the preparation process that ensures every student is equipped with the skills and support needed to succeed."

Throughout the school year, campuses across the district have focused on delivering strong Tier I instruction, aligned to state standards and responsive to student needs. Teachers have engaged in intentional lesson internalization, using data from Demonstrations of Learning (DOLs), unit assessments, and classroom observations to guide instruction and provide targeted support.

This approach allows educators to identify learning gaps in real time and implement meaningful interventions, including small group instruction, additional practice opportunities, and writing across content areas. These strategies ensure that students are not only learning, but actively engaging with the material in ways that build deeper understanding.

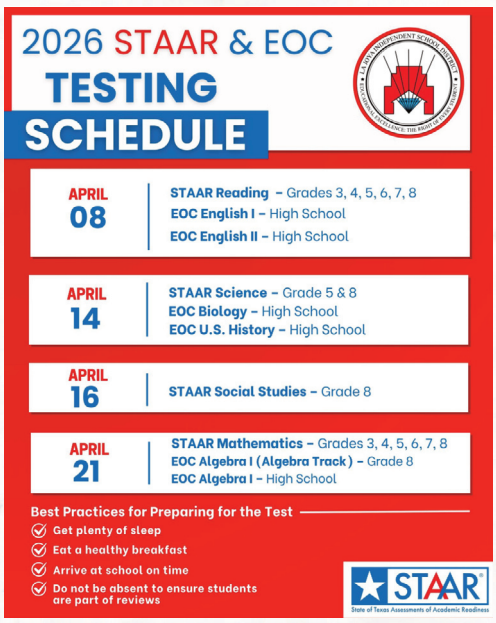
In classrooms, this preparation is evident through clear, explicit instruction, ongoing checks for understanding, and purposeful opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate mastery. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning by understanding where they are academically, setting goals, and identifying the steps needed to reach success.

"Preparation is just as critical as the assessment itself," added Dr. Little. "When students are given consistent opportunities to practice with purpose, they build the confidence needed to perform at their best."

Family engagement also plays a vital role in student success during testing season. La Joya ISD encourages families to support students by ensuring they are well-rested, present, and prepared on testing days. Strong school-home partnerships help reinforce the importance of attendance, focus, and a positive mindset.

This collective effort reflects the district's commitment to its strategic plan, Achieving Excellence Together: 2030, particularly Priority 3: Thriving Students, by creating supportive, engaging learning environments where students are empowered to succeed.

As students across La Joya ISD take on STAAR and EOC assessments, the district remains confident in their ability to rise to the occasion - backed by the preparation, support, and belief that success is within reach.



La Joya ISD Encourages Students to Complete FAFSA and Finalize Post-Secondary Plans Ahead of Decision Day

As National Decision Day approaches on May 1, La Joya ISD is encouraging all seniors to take the next step toward their future by finalizing their post-secondary plans and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Whether students are planning to attend college, pursue a technical certification, enlist in the military, or enter the workforce, having a clear plan after graduation is a critical milestone. Completing the FAFSA remains one of the most important steps in that journey, opening the door to financial aid opportunities including

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DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD Celebrates Read Across America Week, Inspiring a Love of Reading Across the District

There is something timeless and powerful about the moment a child opens a book. Within its pages lies the ability to spark imagination, build knowledge, and inspire dreams that reach far beyond the classroom. This week, La Joya ISD proudly celebrated Read Across America Week, a nationwide initiative dedicated to fostering a lifelong love of reading among students of all ages.

Observed annually during the week of March 2, in honor of the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss, Read Across America encourages schools and communities across the country to come together in celebration of literacy. Through engaging reading activities, storytelling, and community involvement, the initiative highlights the importance of reading as a foundation for academic success and personal growth.



Throughout the week, district leadership visited campuses to sit down with students and share the joy of reading. From colorful storybooks to timeless classics, leaders read aloud across libraries, creating memorable moments that reinforced the value of literacy and the excitement that comes with discovering new stories.

The visits provided students with an opportunity to see firsthand how reading connects every part of education and leadership, while also emphasizing the district's ongoing commitment to nurturing strong readers and lifelong learners.

"Reading opens doors to endless possibilities for our students," said Dr. Derek Little, Chief of Academics & School Leadership for La Joya ISD. "When we take time to share stories with our students, we are not only encouraging literacy but also showing them that learning can be joyful, imaginative, and meaningful. Initiatives like Read Across America help cultivate curiosity and inspire our students to explore the world through books."

Libraries were filled with excitement as students gathered to listen, ask questions, and immerse themselves in stories that sparked laughter, curiosity, and creativity. The initiative served as a reminder that literacy is not just an academic skill, but a gateway to understanding the world and shaping the future.

By participating in Read Across America Week, La Joya ISD continues to reinforce its commitment to



creating engaging learning experiences that empower students to grow academically and personally. As the pages turn on another successful celebration of reading, La Joya ISD remains dedicated to ensuring every student has the opportunity to discover the transformative power of a good book - because the journey of learning often begins with a single story.



La Joya ISD and Industry Partners Collaborate to Shape the Future of Career and Technical Education

As industries evolve and workforce demands continue to shift, Career and Technical Education (CTE) has become an essential bridge between classroom learning and real-world opportunity. By providing students with hands-on experiences, industry-aligned training, and exposure to high-demand career fields, CTE programs empower students to graduate with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to succeed in college, careers, and beyond.

At La Joya ISD, that commitment to preparing future-ready graduates continues to drive meaningful collaboration between education leaders, industry partners, and the community. The district recently brought together educators, industry professionals, and community leaders for the 2026 CTE Transformation Advisory Committee, an important collaborative session focused on strengthening career pathways and ensuring students are prepared for success beyond graduation.

Hosted by La Joya ISD's College and Career Success Department, the advisory session served as a platform for meaningful dialogue between education and industry leaders about how schools can better align learning experiences with the evolving demands of today's workforce.

Throughout the session, participants engaged in conversations about emerging workforce trends, innovative program development, and opportunities to expand hands-on learning experiences that connect classroom instruction with real-world careers. Industry representatives shared valuable insights into the skills and competencies students will need to thrive in high-demand fields, helping guide the future direction of La Joya ISD's CTE programs.

With a focus on expanding high-quality college, career, and military readiness opportunities, the CTE Transformation Advisory Committee reflects the district's continued commitment to Priority 2 of Achieving Excellence Together: 2030, which focuses on Empowered Graduates. This collaborative advisory session also reflects Priority 4 of the district's strategic plan - Community Trust, Unity, and Partnership - by bringing together educators, industry leaders, and community stakeholders to strengthen partnerships that support student success and workforce readiness.

"Events like the CTE Transformation Advisory Committee are essential because they bring education and industry together with a shared goal - preparing our students for the future," said Melinda Flores, Executive Director of College and Career Success. "When we collaborate with business leaders and community partners, we gain valuable insight into workforce needs and can design programs that give our students real opportunities to succeed after graduation."

By working closely with industry partners and community stakeholders, La Joya ISD continues to strengthen its CTE programs, ensuring students have access to relevant, rigorous, and engaging learning experiences that reflect both regional workforce needs and emerging career opportunities.

Additionally, the session highlighted the importance of partnerships in shaping innovative educational experiences - from internship and mentorship opportunities to career-focused programs that help students explore their interests and develop critical skills.

La Joya ISD extends its appreciation to the advisory committee members, industry partners, educators, and community leaders who participated in the session and shared their expertise.

Through collaboration and shared vision, the district continues to expand opportunities that empower students to explore their passions, develop career-ready skills, and confidently pursue their goals after graduation.



DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD soccer programs shine on the postseason stage

The postseason spotlight has never shined brighter on La Joya ISD soccer, as two powerhouse programs - the Palmview High School Lobos and the Juarez-Lincoln High School Huskies - took center stage in the UIL State Playoffs, showcasing grit, determination, and the undeniable spirit of their communities.



With a thrilling 1-0 victory over Leander Glenn, the Palmview Boys Soccer Team has advanced to the UIL Region IV-5A Division I Finals, marking the first time in program history the Lobos have reached the Elite Eight.

In a match defined by intensity and precision, it was #9 Fabian Montalvo who delivered the defining moment of the night. Off a perfectly placed assist, Montalvo connected on a powerful header that found the back of the net - securing the win and sending the Lobos into celebration.

From the opening whistle to the final seconds, Palmview executed with discipline, unity, and heart, earning the title of Area Champions and solidifying their place among the top eight teams in Texas, with the historic win placing the Lobos just one step away from a chance to compete for a state title, as they now prepare to take the field in the Regional Final.

On the other side of the bracket, the Juarez-Lincoln Huskies saw their impressive playoff run come to an end in the UIL State 5A Division II Regional Semifinals, falling 4-1 to San Antonio Pieper on March 26 at Cabaniss Field. The Huskies came out strong, striking first and taking a 1-0 lead, extending the momentum of an incredible eight-game winning streak that carried them deep into the postseason. Despite a hard-fought effort, Pieper surged in the second half to secure the win and advance.

Even in defeat, the Huskies demonstrated resilience, teamwork, and the kind of competitive spirit that defines championship-caliber programs. Their playoff journey was a testament to their dedication and leaves a lasting sense of pride across La Joya ISD.

"This has been an incredible run for both of our soccer programs," said Joe Peña, Executive Director of Athletics for La Joya ISD. "Palmview's historic advancement speaks to the dedication and belief within that team, while Juarez-Lincoln's postseason performance showcased resilience and heart. We are extremely proud of our student-athletes and coaches for representing La Joya ISD with excellence, determination, and pride."

Moments like these reflect La Joya ISD's commitment to developing well-rounded students through athletics, aligning with the district's vision of Empowered Graduates and Thriving Students under Achieving Excellence Together: 2030. From historic wins to hard-fought battles, these student-athletes are gaining more than victories - they are building character, leadership, and lifelong memories.

While the season has concluded for the Juarez-Lincoln Huskies, their impact continues to resonate, serving as a powerful reminder of the strength and spirit that define La Joya ISD. As the Palmview Lobos prepare for the Regional Final, the entire district stands behind them, united in support and pride.



from pg. 7 ■ FAFSA

grants, scholarships, and work-study programs.

"At La Joya ISD, we are committed to ensuring every student graduates with a plan and a pathway to success," said Anna Marie Candelario, Deputy Chief of Academics & School Leadership. "FAFSA completion is not just a form - it's an opportunity that can make higher education more accessible and affordable for our students and families."

Throughout the school year, campuses have provided students and families with hands-on support through FAFSA nights, one-on-one assistance, and college and career readiness initiatives. These efforts are designed to remove barriers and empower students to make informed decisions about their futures.

As May 1 draws near, students are encouraged to submit their FAFSA, review their acceptance offers, and confidently declare their next step - whether that means enrolling in college, joining the workforce, or pursuing another meaningful pathway.

National Decision Day is more than a deadline - it's a celebration of hard work, ambition, and the bright futures ahead for La Joya ISD graduates.

Through its commitment to Achieving Excellence Together: 2030, particularly Priority 2: Empowered Graduates, La Joya ISD continues to ensure students are equipped with the tools, resources, and support needed to succeed beyond high school.



DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD Criminal Justice Students Witness Historic Texas Supreme Court Session Held in the Rio Grande Valley

For more than one hundred La Joya ISD Criminal Justice students, the courtroom came to life in an unforgettable way as they witnessed history unfold right here in the Rio Grande Valley.

Students from Jimmy Carter Early College High School (JCECHS) and Juarez-Lincoln High School's P-TECH program recently attended a live Texas Supreme Court oral argument session held at the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex - the first time the state's highest civil court has convened in the Valley in more than a decade.



The rare event offered students a firsthand look at how the judicial system works at the highest level in Texas, giving them the opportunity to observe real cases, hear legal arguments, and see the justices deliberate on issues that impact communities across the state.

One of the cases discussed during the session centered on whether the State of Texas can close Boca Chica Beach during SpaceX rocket launches, highlighting how court decisions can influence public access, economic development, and state policy.

Among the nearly 1,000 attendees, JCECHS student Luz Morado received a distinguished honor - she was one of only four audience members selected to ask a question directly to the Texas Supreme Court justices.

Morado asked, "Considering the Texas Constitution, how do you stay loyal to the original texts and laws while considering modern situations and times of cases?"

For students interested in pursuing careers in law, government, and public service, the experience brought classroom learning to life.

"Experiencing a live oral argument gave our students a firsthand look at the legal process and the role of advocacy in the courtroom," said Alvin Garza, College, Career, & Military Readiness Coach at Juarez-Lincoln High School. "It helped students see how careers in law, public service, and the justice system connect directly to what they are learning in the classroom."

Texas Supreme Court Justice Evan Young (Place 9) also spoke to students about the importance of understanding the role of the judicial system.

"I hope that those who come, especially the young people, the students, will find that it's less mysterious than they had thought," Young said. "The judicial system of Texas belongs to the people of Texas."

Justice Young also emphasized the significance of the court's decisions, noting that rulings made by the Texas Supreme Court set legal precedent for all 254 counties across the state.

"That's why it's really important that we get it right," Young said. "If we get it wrong, we're messing up not just the one case that we're deciding, but lots of other cases as well."

For La Joya ISD students, witnessing the Texas Supreme Court in action served as a powerful reminder that the paths they are exploring today can lead to meaningful careers in law, leadership, and public service.

Experiences like these reflect La Joya ISD's ongoing commitment to preparing empowered graduates, providing students with real-world learning opportunities that expand their understanding of college and career pathways while inspiring them to make an impact in their communities and beyond.



TECH CORNER

Network Upgrades Beginning at Chapa and Garza Elementary

La Joya ISD continues to invest in the technology infrastructure that supports daily instruction and learning across our campuses. In the coming days, the Technology Department will begin network upgrades at Chapa Elementary and Garza Elementary as part of the district's ongoing modernization efforts.

This project will replace aging network switching equipment with modern infrastructure designed to provide faster speeds, improved reliability, and better support for the growing number of devices used in classrooms.

These upgrades will help ensure students and teachers can access digital learning tools, online resources, and instructional platforms with minimal interruption. Work will begin soon and will be completed with minimal impact to campus operations.

Preparing the Next Phase of Network Modernization

Alongside the upcoming upgrades at Chapa and Garza Elementary, La Joya ISD is also procuring new network infrastructure equipment that will support additional campus upgrades in the near future.

As technology use continues to grow across the district, modern network infrastructure is essential to ensure stable connectivity for classroom devices, instructional tools, and district systems. These improvements will replace aging equipment and prepare campuses for future technology initiatives.

By planning ahead and investing strategically, La Joya ISD is building a strong technology foundation that supports students, staff, and learning for years to come.

Simple Steps for Better Device Performance

A few simple habits can help prevent common technology issues and keep devices running smoothly throughout the school year.

Here are a few quick tips:

- Restart your device regularly to clear temporary system issues
- Install software updates when prompted to ensure security and performance improvements
- Avoid saving large files directly to your desktop
- Report technical issues early so they can be resolved quickly

These small steps help reduce downtime and ensure technology continues supporting instruction effectively.

Cybersecurity Corner

Cybersecurity Tip: Think Before You Click

Schools across the country continue to see an increase in phishing attempts—emails designed to trick users into clicking malicious links or sharing sensitive information.

To stay safe:

- Verify the sender before responding to unexpected emails
- Be cautious of messages that create urgency or request confidential information
- Hover over links before clicking to confirm the destination
- Report suspicious emails immediately

Remember: If something feels suspicious, it probably is. Reporting potential phishing attempts helps protect the entire district.

Password Security Best Practices

Strong passwords remain one of the most effective ways to protect accounts and district systems.

Helpful tips include:

- Use long passwords or passphrases
- Avoid reusing passwords across different accounts
- Never share your login credentials with anyone
- Take advantage of security features like multi-factor authentication when available

Practicing good password habits helps protect sensitive information and keeps district systems secure.

DISTRICT NEWS

La Joya ISD Celebrates Texas Girls in STEM Day, Inspiring Future Innovators

Across the country, educators and community leaders are working to encourage more young girls to explore opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) - fields where women have historically been underrepresented but continue making groundbreaking contributions.



At La Joya ISD, that mission came to life as fifth-grade girls from campuses across the district gathered for a day dedicated to exploration, creativity, and hands-on learning.

This Texas Girls in STEM Day, La Joya ISD hosted its fourth annual STEM expo - an event designed to to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators. Hundreds of young learners stepped into a world of discovery, curiosity, and possibility as the district celebrated Texas Girls in STEM Day at the La Joya ISD Wellness Center.

Hosted by the district's Office of Academics & School Leadership and the Math and Science Department, the event featured more than 20 interactive STEM stations where students engaged in activities designed to spark curiosity and introduce them to real-world applications of science and technology.

Throughout the day, students rotated through a variety of engaging experiences - from engineering challenges to science demonstrations - while learning about the many career pathways available in STEM-related fields.

"This event is all about giving our students the chance to explore, ask questions, and see how exciting STEM can be," said Brenda Garcia, Executive Director of K-12 Mathematics & Science for La Joya ISD. "When girls are given opportunities like this to experiment, collaborate, and think critically, it helps build confidence and shows them that they belong in these spaces. Our goal is to spark that curiosity early and help them begin imagining themselves in careers that can shape the future."



For many students, the experience opened their eyes to possibilities they had never considered before.

Fifth-grade student Alexa Iglesias said her favorite activity involved creating a lava lamp experiment, but what stood out most was the chance to explore new ideas.

"I liked that we got to go to different stations and try different things," Iglesias said. "It helped me learn about jobs I didn't really know about before. Now I think I might want to be a teacher or someone who does science experiments and math when I grow up."

Events like Texas Girls in STEM Day highlight La Joya ISD's commitment to creating engaging learning experiences that empower students to explore their interests and discover new possibilities. It fulfills Priority 3 of the district's strategic plan, which focuses on Thriving Students. By introducing STEM concepts at an early age, the district hopes to inspire students to pursue careers in fields that continue to shape the world through innovation, technology, and scientific discovery.

As students left the event filled with new ideas and inspiration, the message of the day remained clear: when young girls are encouraged to explore STEM, they gain the confidence to dream bigger, think boldly, and imagine themselves as the innovators of tomorrow.



C.A.R.E Academy Provides Hands-On Learning Through Culinary Collaboration

At La Joya ISD, every student is empowered with the tools, experiences, and support needed to thrive - both in and beyond the classroom. At the heart of this commitment is the district's C.A.R.E. Academy (Career, Achievement, Readiness, and Empowerment) at Jimmy Carter Early College High School.

Dedicated to supporting students with special needs through hands-on learning, life skills development, and career-focused training, the C.A.R.E. Academy is a specialized program designed to provide opportunities that blend classroom instruction with real-world application.

As part of the program's commitment to fostering independence and career readiness, students recently participated in a hands-on collaboration with the district's Child Nutrition Services team. Under structured supervision, students applied skills learned in the classroom by assisting in the preparation of designated food items, reinforcing workplace expectations, teamwork, and food safety practices in an authentic setting.





"This experience is a powerful example of how we are preparing our students for success beyond the classroom," said Luis Bocanegra, principal of Jimmy Carter Early College High School. "Through hands-on learning and strong partnerships, our students are building confidence, independence, and the skills they need to thrive in their future careers and daily lives."

Aligned with La Joya ISD's commitment to its strategic plan, the collaboration with Child Nutrition Services reflects the district's dedication to advancing Priorities 2 and 3 - Empowered Graduates and Thriving Students. By providing authentic, hands-on learning that promotes independence, confidence, skill-building, and real-world readiness, the district continues ensuring all students - regardless of ability - have access to pathways that ensure lifelong success, gaining not only valuable experience, but also shaping a future filled with possibility.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

La Joya High School Senior Earns National Recognition Through U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

A culture of excellence continues to shine at La Joya ISD as La Joya High School senior Ximena Lopez is recognized by the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program - one of the nation's most esteemed academic honors for graduating high school students.

Established in 1964 by executive order of the President, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program honors some of the country's most distinguished graduating seniors for their academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to achievement. Over the years, the program has expanded to also recognize exceptional talent in the visual and performing arts as well as accomplishments in career and technical education fields. Each year, up to just 161 students nationwide are selected for this prestigious recognition.

At La Joya ISD, Ximena is the first student that has achieved the recognition in the last 15 years, making her distinction a reflection of her academic dedication and perseverance, but also her commitment to excellence both inside and outside the classroom. Her recognition places her among an elite group of students whose achievements represent the very best of American education.

"This recognition is a powerful reflection of Ximena's intellectual curiosity, discipline, and unwavering commitment to academic excellence," said Dr. Derek Little, Chief of Academics & School Leadership for La Joya ISD. "To be honored by the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is to be recognized among the most accomplished students in the country. Ximena exemplifies what is possible when talent is supported



by strong instructional systems, dedicated educators, and a culture that values high expectations."

At La Joya ISD, student success is driven by a deep commitment to preparing empowered graduates who are equipped to thrive in college, career, and beyond. Ximena's achievement serves as a shining example of this mission in action - demonstrating the impact of rigorous academic pathways, supportive leadership, and a community that believes in the limitless potential of its students.

As she prepares to graduate, Ximena's recognition stands as a proud moment for her family, her school, and the entire La Joya ISD community.

Her accomplishment not only highlights her personal dedication to scholarship and excellence, but also reflects the district's continued commitment to fostering academic distinction and cultivating future leaders ready to make meaningful contributions to their communities and beyond.

"Ximena's recognition by the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is a testament to her dedication to academic excellence and her commitment to pushing herself to achieve at the highest level," said Eduardo Flores, Principal of La Joya High School. "She represents the very best of La Joya High School - driven, focused, and committed to growth. We are incredibly proud of her accomplishments and excited to see the impact she will continue to make beyond our campus."

La Joya ISD congratulates Ximena Lopez on this remarkable honor and looks forward to the bright future that lies ahead.

Coyotes and Lady Coyotes Conclude Memorable Basketball Season in the Area Round

The La Joya High School Coyotes and Lady Coyotes delivered an outstanding basketball season filled with determination, resilience, and pride. Both programs competed at a high level throughout district play, overcoming challenges and battling through tough matchups to earn their place in the UIL State Basketball Playoffs.

Their hard work and perseverance paid off as both teams secured playoff berths and hosted Bi-District playoff games at the La Joya High School Gym. In front of their home crowd, both the Coyotes and Lady Coyotes rose to the occasion and captured Bi-District Championships, advancing to the Area Round for the first time since 2020.





The Coyotes faced a formidable challenge against No. 4 ranked Converse Judson and came up short after a hard-fought battle in Goliad. The Lady Coyotes also competed with tremendous heart and intensity but suffered a tough late fourth-quarter loss to San Antonio Buda Johnson.

Although their postseason runs came to an end in the Area Round, both teams represented La Joya High School and La Joya ISD with excellence, grit, and class throughout the season.

La Joya ISD Athletics proudly congratulates the Coyotes and Lady Coyotes on an incredible year and thanks them for the memories, excitement, and pride they brought to the community. Congratulations on a remarkable season, and we look forward to seeing both teams back on the court next year.

Henry B. Gonzalez ACE Cheer Pack Proudly Represents La Joya ISD at RGV Vipers Game

Students from the Texas ACE Program at Henry B. Gonzalez Elementary proudly represented La Joya ISD during an exciting performance at the RGV Vipers basketball game held at the Bert Ogden Arena. The Henry B. Gonzalez Cheer Pack energized the crowd with a spirited routine that showcased their dedication, teamwork, and campus pride.

This opportunity reflects La Joya ISD's Strategic Plan, Achieving Excellence Together 2030, specifically Strategic Priority #3: Thriving Students, which focuses on ensuring students have access to enriching extracurricular experiences that help them grow both inside and outside the classroom. Through programs like Texas ACE, students build confidence, leadership skills, and a strong sense of belonging while proudly representing their campus and district.

The outstanding performance by the Henry B. Gonzalez Cheer Pack was a proud moment for the school community and a shining example of La Joya ISD students demonstrating excellence and school spirit.

Congratulations to our Gonzalez Cheer Pack for proudly representing La Joya ISD. Go González Pack!



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

La Joya ISD Mariachi Programs Earn Division I Ratings at UIL South Zone Competition

La Joya ISD proudly celebrates the outstanding accomplishments of its middle school and high school mariachi programs. This year, every participating mariachi ensemble across the district earned a Division I rating, the highest distinction awarded at competition. This achievement reflects the dedication of students, directors, and campus leaders who continue to elevate the arts across our schools.

Mariachi programs across La Joya ISD have



grown in strength and visibility, giving students the opportunity to build musical skill, discipline, and cultural pride. The Division I ratings highlight the level of preparation and performance demonstrated by students who represent their campuses and community with excellence.

This success also reflects the district's ongoing commitment to expanding access to enrichment





programs, a key focus of the La Joya ISD Strategic Plan. By strengthening fine arts opportunities at both the middle school and high school levels, the district continues to provide meaningful pathways for students to explore their talents and connect with their cultural heritage.

"Mariachi is more than a performance program. It is a powerful way for students to connect with culture, teamwork, and pride in their identity," said Mr. Ruben Adame. "Seeing every middle school and high school mariachi program earn a Division I rating is a testament to the dedication of our students and directors."





Veronica Chavez, Executive Director of Academic Enrichment, also highlighted the broader impact of the accomplishment. "These results show what is possible when students have access to strong enrichment opportunities," Chavez said. "Our mariachi programs are helping students grow as musicians, leaders, and ambassadors for our district. This achievement reflects our commitment to ensuring every student has opportunities to discover and develop their talents."

La Joya ISD congratulates all mariachi students and directors for their hard work and excellence. Their accomplishments continue to strengthen the district's vision of providing high-quality enrichment experiences that support student growth both inside and beyond the classroom.



from pg. 4 ■ FAMILIES

munication is clear and consistent across the district, and create more opportunities for families to stay informed and engaged in their child's education."

Among notable updates are an events calendar that syncs with school schedules, easier access to lunch menus, bus routes, and a modern, consistent design across all pages and devices.

Since the website is built on the ParentSquare platform, it works seamlessly with the district's communication plans allowing content to be posted once within ParentSquare and automatically published to the website. Schools can easily choose what information to share with their communities - whether it's news, emergency alerts, or other updates to provide clear, timely communication that fits everyone's needs.

These communication tools also play an important role in supporting the district's safety and security efforts, particularly as schools continue implementing requirements under Texas House Bill 1481 - the prohibited use of unauthorized electronic devices in schools. Through the integrated system, La Joya ISD can communicate with families more quickly and clearly in real time, helping parents stay informed during urgent situations while reinforcing the district's commitment to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment.

"The new platform is ultimately about strengthening the connection between our schools and the community we serve," added Cantu. "When families have clear, timely, access to information and meaningful opportunities to stay engaged, it creates a stronger partnership that supports student success."

La Joya ISD is excited to take this next step in building a more connected and informed school community. The district's new site is slated to launch in May, with staff training taking place in the coming weeks to ensure a smooth rollout. Through this effort, La Joya ISD is strengthening communication, enhancing transparency, and fostering meaningful engagement with students, families, and the broader community.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

La Joya ISD Students Qualify for TMSCA State Meet

Forty-nine La Joya ISD middle school students have qualified for the Texas Math and Science Coaches Association (TMSCA) State Meet, which will take place on April 11. Students earned their place at the state competition through strong performances in math and science contests throughout the season, demonstrating advanced problem-solving skills and a strong commitment to academic preparation.

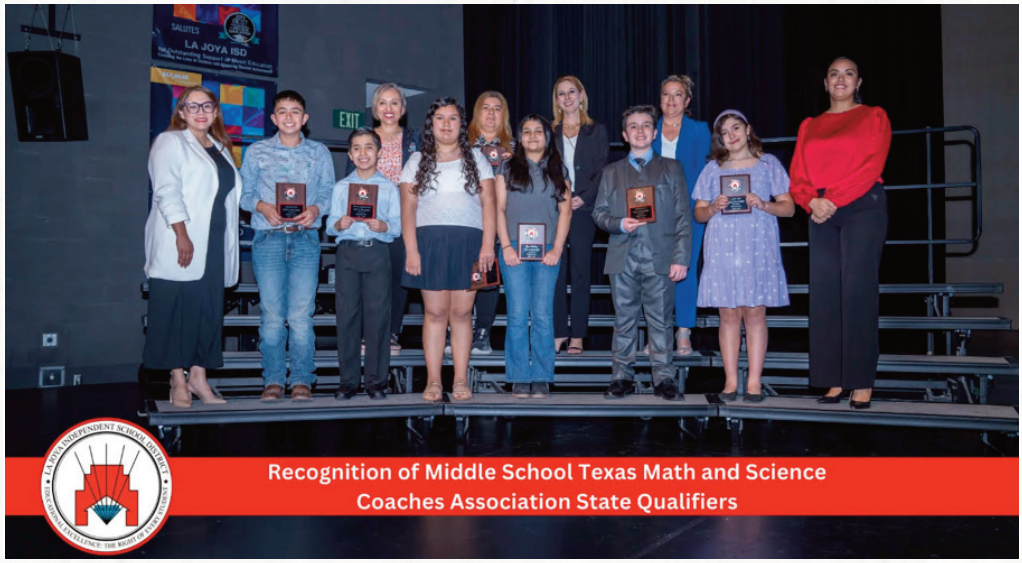
Memorial Middle School led the district with 14 state qualifiers, the highest number of any La Joya ISD campus. The accomplishment reflects the dedication of students and the support of teachers and coaches who guide them through the challenging preparation required for TMSCA competitions.

Several students stood out for qualifying in three of the four contest events, an impressive academic achievement. Kevin Balaguer-Sanchez, a 6th-grade student at Lorenzo de Zavala Middle School, earned qualifications in three events. Two 7th-grade students also achieved this milestone: Santiago Gonzalez from J.D. Salinas Middle School and Jaziel Cantu from Memorial Middle School. Kevin Balaguer-Sanchez explained that he enjoys the challenge of solving complex problems and competing with other students who share an interest in math and science. Qualifying for the state competition, he said, motivates him to continue improving his skills.

Qualifying for the TMSCA State Meet is a significant accomplishment, as students compete against some of the strongest math and science students from across Texas. These results highlight the strong academic preparation taking place across La Joya ISD middle schools and reflect the district's continued commitment to expanding access to enrichment opportunities that challenge students to grow and excel.

Santiago Gonzalez from J.D. Salinas Middle School and Jaziel Cantu from Memorial Middle School. Gonzalez shared that preparing for the contests helped him develop new ways of thinking about difficult problems and strengthened his confidence as a competitor. Cantu noted that although the competitions are demanding, they are also rewarding, and qualifying for state is an accomplishment he is proud to represent his school in.

La Joya ISD congratulates the students and their coaches and wishes them success as they represent the district at the state competition.



Recognition of Middle School Texas Math and Science Coaches Association State Qualifiers

United in Excellence: All La Joya ISD Boys' and Girls' Soccer Teams Reach the State Playoffs

La Joya ISD is proud to celebrate a historic milestone during the 2025–2026 soccer season, as all six boys' and girls' soccer programs from the district's three comprehensive high schools have qualified for the state playoffs.

Since December 1, each program has battled through a demanding season filled with challenges, growth, and strong competition in both District 31-5A and 32-6A. Their hard work and resilience have resulted in an outstanding achievement for La Joya ISD Athletics.



In District 31-5A boys soccer, the Palmview High School Lobos captured the district championship, ending Juarez-Lincoln High School's impressive run as eight-time district champions. Palmview will host Corpus Christi Veterans Memorial in the opening round of the playoffs at Palmview High School. Juarez-Lincoln boys finished second in district and will travel to Corpus Christi to face Corpus Christi Ray.

In District 32-6A boys soccer, the La Joya High School Coyotes secured a playoff berth and will take on Brownsville Veterans Memorial at Sam Stadium at 7:30 p.m.

On the girls' side, the Juarez-Lincoln Lady Huskies will compete for the District 31-5A championship against Laredo Nixon on Friday, March 13. The Palmview Lady Lobos have also earned a playoff berth and will host Corpus Christi Veterans Memorial at Palmview High School.

In District 32-6A girls soccer, the La Joya Lady Coyotes have advanced to the playoffs and will travel to Harlingen High School to face Harlingen High.

This marks the first time in district history that all six soccer programs from La Joya ISD's comprehensive high schools have advanced to the state playoffs, a true reflection of the dedication of our student-athletes, coaches, and campuses.

La Joya ISD congratulates the Palmview Lobos, Juarez-Lincoln Huskies, and La Joya Coyotes on this remarkable accomplishment and wishes all teams the very best as they begin postseason play.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

La Joya ISD Students Dominate STVT Weld Wars, Earn First and Second Place Overall

La Joya ISD welding students recently sparked success and welded their way to the top, earning top honors on a regional stage and showcasing the district's strength in Career and Technical Education (CTE).

During the second annual Weld Wars hosted by South Texas Vocational Technical Institute (STVT), students from La Joya High School and Juarez-Lincoln High School delivered standout performances against top competitors from across the Rio Grande Valley.



Juarez-Lincoln High School earned the Overall Championship title, rising to the top through a strong cumulative performance under an updated scoring system that awarded points across multiple categories. The Huskies' consistency and depth secured them the highest overall score of the competition. Notable achievements included:

- Miguel Partida, named team MVP, earning 2nd Place Overall and a 50% scholarship
- Santiago Martinez, 1st Place in GMAW

La Joya High School delivered an exceptional performance, placing first in all individual categories, highlighting the team's technical excellence and skill across the board. The Coyotes' top performers included:

- Emmanuel Galaviz, named VIP Overall, earning 1st Place in GTAW and a full-tuition scholarship
- Jose Ramos, 1st Place in SMAW
- Julio Ramirez, 1st Place in Cutting Torch
- Fernando Gonzalez, 2nd Place in GTAW

Beyond the competition, STVT raised the stakes this year by offering a significant incentive for top participants. Each team selected an MVP based on overall performance, skill, and precision, with those students receiving either a full-tuition or half-tuition scholarship to continue their training in STVT's welding program - providing a direct pathway into advanced technical education and high-demand careers in the skilled trades.

Weld Wars is a high-energy, hands-on competition designed to challenge students through timed welding projects, testing their technical ability, precision, and performance under pressure. The event also connects students with industry opportunities and post-secondary pathways.

"This achievement reflects the dedication, talent, and hard work of our students and instructors," said Pablo DeLeon, La Joya ISD CTE Director. "Our CTE programs are designed to equip students with real-world, in-demand skills, and competitions like this provide an opportunity for students to truly shine. We are incredibly proud of how our students represented La Joya ISD."

The success at Weld Wars aligns with La Joya ISD's strategic plan, Achieving Excellence Together: 2030, particularly Priority 2: Empowered Graduates, by providing students with meaningful, hands-on experiences that prepare them for college, career, and workforce success.

With an overall championship for Juarez-Lincoln High School and a dominant category sweep by La Joya High School, La Joya ISD continues to set the standard for excellence in CTE across the Rio Grande Valley.

La Joya ISD extends its congratulations to all participating students and wishes them continued success as they pursue their future careers.



La Joya ISD Students Shine at Texas Science and Engineering Fair, Earn State-Level Recognition

Competing among the brightest young minds in the state, La Joya ISD students demonstrated exceptional talent, innovation, and academic excellence at the Texas Science and Engineering Fair held at Texas A&M University - one of the most prestigious science competitions in Texas.

A total of 12 La Joya ISD students earned the opportunity to compete at the state level after qualifying at the Regional Science Fair in Brownsville this past January, representing the district with confidence, dedication, and a passion for discovery.

Among the standout participants, two students received special recognition for their outstanding research and innovation. Jaziel Cantu of Memorial Middle School was awarded the Broadcom Coding with Commitment Special Award, along with a $250 prize, for his work utilizing coding to create a positive impact within his community. Nathan Montelongo of Lorenzo de Zavala Middle School earned the Texas Master Naturalist Special Award and a $250 prize for his project focused on environmental awareness and conservation.





"These accomplishments speak volumes about the curiosity, creativity, and determination of our students," said Brenda Garcia, Executive Director of K-12 Math and Science for La Joya ISD. "To compete and be recognized at this level is no small feat. Our students are not only excelling academically, but they are also using their knowledge to solve real-world problems and make meaningful contributions to their communities."

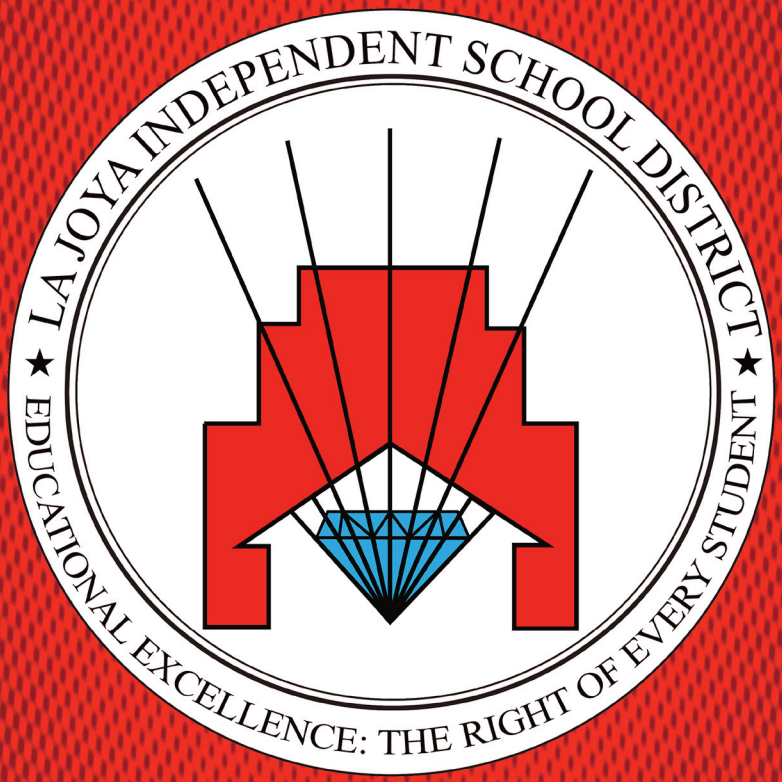


La Joya ISD proudly celebrates all 12 students who represented the district at this prestigious event. Their success reflects not only their hard work and commitment, but also the strength of the district's academic programs and its dedication to fostering innovation and excellence in STEM education.

Aligned with La Joya ISD's vision of Achieving Excellence Together: 2030, these accomplishments highlight the district's commitment to developing Empowered Graduates who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities needed to succeed in college, careers, and beyond.

As these students continue to explore, innovate, and achieve, they serve as a powerful reminder that the future is bright in La Joya ISD.





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