

# *Your* **SCHOOLS**

APRIL 2008

HUMBLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Planning for future growth:  
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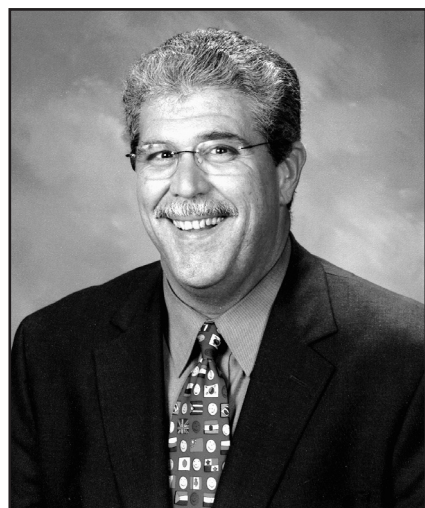


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# Superintendent's View



by Dr. Guy Sconzo

Humble ISD students have seen many successes this year in academics, athletics, in the fine arts and in the sciences. It has been a year for our students to shine especially brightly and much of that success is thanks to our supportive parents and volunteers, as well as an extraordinary staff. Educating children well is truly the work of an entire community.

Two important elections will be decided on May 10th. This is the day our community decides Board of Education representatives, as well as a \$245 million construction bond referendum. Two of the three

board positions that are open have 5 and 6 candidates. One of these positions is to fill the unexpired term of Jim Eggers who passed away suddenly last winter. One will fill the position currently held by Lynn Fields. Board member Dave Martin is running unopposed for another term.

With 33,000 students currently enrolled and projections showing nearly 50,000 by 2017, it is no surprise that we must plan for that growth. I want to urge each and every one of you to become educated about the candidates for board positions and about Bond 2008. A great place to start is the school district's web site at [www.humble.k12.tx.us](http://www.humble.k12.tx.us). Information can be found there about candidate forums, town hall meetings to discuss the bond referendum and construction, details about the bond proposal, and more.

There are few ballots closer to community members' hearts than those elections affecting our children. The decision is up to our community members. Please make informed choices and VOTE on May 10th or during early voting.

## A life of teaching

*Foster Elementary School teacher Joyce Lacy was recognized by the Humble ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Dr. Guy Sconzo for being in her 50th year of teaching in 2007-2008. A 1957 graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University, she began her career in Longview. She also taught for the Manor, Spring and Houston school districts, and has been employed by Humble ISD for 38 years. She was at Foster Elementary School the first year it opened. She currently teaches basic skills and loves it.*



## Graduation Dates for 2008

Atascocita High School.....	1:30 p.m. Saturday, May 31, 2008	Reliant Stadium
Humble High School.....	10 a.m. Saturday, May 31, 2008	Reliant Stadium
Kingwood High School.....	5 p.m. Saturday, May 31, 2008	Reliant Stadium
Quest High School.....	7 p.m. Tuesday, June 3, 2008	Humble Civic Center



### Humble ISD Police

Weekdays..... 281-641-7900  
 After Hours Patrol..... 281-541-3555  
 Anonymous Tip Line..... 281-641-8477



Visit [www.humble.k12.tx.us](http://www.humble.k12.tx.us)

To find what school your child will attend, log on to [www.humble.k12.tx.us](http://www.humble.k12.tx.us). Click on "Parents/Community" and then "Attendance Zones" to find an alphabetical listing of subdivisions. You will be able to see what schools serve your subdivision or apartment complex.

### Our Mission

The mission of the Humble Independent School District is to provide a safe, student-centered, supportive environment that utilizes all resources for the education of our children. Essential to this process is a district, parent, and community partnership that fosters mutual respect and willingness to work together. Our students will develop personal dignity, self-worth, and skills to prepare them to meet the challenges of the future.

### Board of Trustees

Dave Martin, president  
 Daniel G. Huberty, vice president  
 Keith Lapeze, secretary  
 Lynn Fields, parliamentarian  
 Dr. Bonnie Longnion, member  
 Charles Cunningham, member

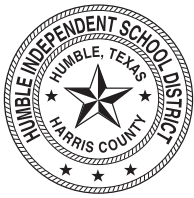
### On the Cover

Construction is underway on Summer Creek High School, scheduled to open in August 2009. The school is being built on 67 acres on Weckford Drive, near the intersection of Beltway 8 and West Lake Houston Parkway. Construction cost is \$71.7 million, with funding provided by Bond 2005.

### Humble ISD

Some homes not served by Humble ISD receive this newsletter as a result of postal routes crossing over district lines. To save money, we must mail to an entire postal carrier route.

Humble Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or disability in providing education services. Janet Orth (281-641-8000) has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements of Title IX and compliance with the non-discrimination requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.



## Humble ISD 2007-08 Calendar

### Second Semester

95 School Days

3 Professional Growth/Workdays

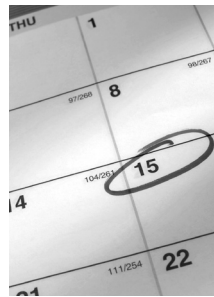
- April 8 ..... TAKS: gr. 5 & 8
- April 21 ..... Student Holiday  
Prof. Growth/Workday
- April 29-May 2 ..... TAKS  
gr. 3-10 & exit level
- May 13 ..... TAKS: gr. 5 test, gr. 8 retest
- May 26 ..... Memorial Day Holiday
- June 3 ..... Last Day of School
- June 4 ..... Prof. Growth/Workday
- July 1-2 ..... TAKS: gr. 3, 5 & 8 retests
- July 15-18 ..... TAKS exit level retest

## Services for students with disabilities

Humble ISD is responsible for identifying, locating and evaluating all children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services who live within the school district's boundaries. Children who have a disability, or are suspected of having a disability, may be referred to Humble ISD.

For children ages 3-21, contact the elementary, middle or high school in your neighborhood. For children from birth through age 2, call Humble ISD special education at 281-641-8326 or Early Childhood Intervention Keep Pace Program at 281-397-4000 (all areas except zip code 77044) or Early Childhood Intervention Bay Area Program at 281-838-4477 (zip code 77044).

If you are unsure about which schools serve your neighborhood or location, or if you are making the referral during the summer, call the special education department at 281-641-8326. All referrals are confidential and the parent, legal guardian or surrogate parent has the right to refuse services.



## Early release dates

### Elementary Schools

**May 8, June 3** For parent conferences.  
Classes will meet:  
Pre-K morning session, 8 to 10 a.m.  
Pre-K afternoon session, 10 to 11:30 a.m.  
Kindergarten through Grade 5, 8 to 11:30 a.m.

### Middle Schools

**June 2-3:** Students take final exams. Classes dismiss at noon.

### High Schools

Early release for final exams, times will be announced by the schools.

**AHS, HHS, KHS and KPHS:** May 30, June 2-3

**Quest High School:** June 2-3



## Your Schools Insider: A new tool to help keep you informed!

Humble ISD has a new tool for sending school-wide emergency notifications via telephone, text and email, as well as keeping you informed about district news and activities. Humble ISD-Your Schools Insider is expanding communications between the district and community.

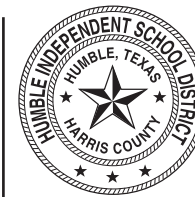
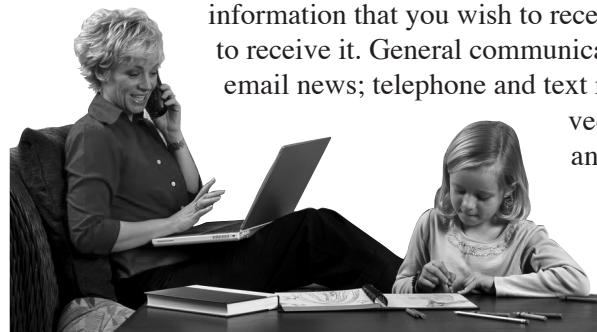
Have a question about your child's school? Heard a rumor? Want to keep up with what's happening in board meetings? These are among the many options you have to personalize communications, once you become part of this communications network.

You may already have an account with YS Insider if you provided an email address during online student update or registration procedures. If you don't, signing up is easy. Just visit the Humble ISD web site at <http://www.humble.k12.tx.us> and click on the YS Insider icon. If you attempt to set up a new account and receive the message that your email address is already in the system, you should click the button EMAIL PASSWORD. The system was preloaded with an email address you provided earlier to the district.

Once you have set up your account, choose the information that you wish to receive and how you prefer to receive it. General communications will be through email news; telephone and text messaging will be reserved for emergency alerts and announcements.

Questions?

Contact the Public Information Office at 281-641-8200.



## Humble ISD 2008-09 Calendar

### First Semester

80 School Days

7 Professional Growth/Workdays

- Aug. 18-22 ..... Prof. Growth/Workdays
- Aug. 25 ..... Begin First Semester
- Sept. 1 ..... School Holiday  
Labor Day
- Oct. 13 ..... Student Holiday  
Prof. Growth/Workday
- Oct. 21-24 ..... State-Mandated Testing
- Nov. 26-28 ..... School Holiday  
Thanksgiving
- Dec. 19 ..... End First Semester

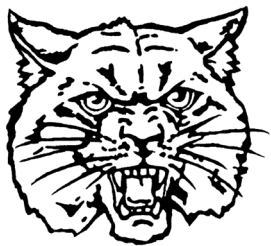
### Second Semester

97 School Days

3 Professional Growth/Workdays

- Dec. 22-Jan. 2 ..... Winter holidays
- Jan. 5 ..... Student Holiday  
Prof. Growth/Workday
- Jan. 6 ..... Begin Second Semester
- Jan. 19 ..... MLK Holiday
- Feb. 16 ..... Student Holiday  
Prof. Growth/Workday
- March 3-6 ..... State-Mandated Testing
- March 16-20 ..... Spring Vacation
- April 7 ..... State-Mandated Testing
- April 10 ..... Good Friday Holiday
- April 13 ..... Student Holiday  
Prof. Growth/Workday
- April 28-May 1 ... State-Mandated Testing
- May 19 ..... State-Mandated Testing
- May 25 ..... Memorial Day Holiday
- June 3 ..... Last Day of School
- June 4 .... Professional Growth/Workday
- June 30-July 1 ... State-Mandated Testing

TOTAL FOR SCHOOL YEAR  
177 Days of Instruction  
10 Professional Growth/Workdays



## HHS Alumni Celebration coming June 14

There probably isn't another high school in Texas that invites all of its alumni to gather once a year to reminisce about "the good old days" when they were classmates. Although it's admittedly a lot of work for the handful of people that organize the Humble High School Alumni Celebration reunion each year, the proud tradition must carry on.

"At one point in time, there was talk about not having it every year," remembers Karen Redmon Cullum, Class of 1976. "But when you have 300 to 400 people coming every year, you just have to keep doing it!"

The 76th annual HHS Alumni Celebration Evening is set for June 14 at the Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. A banquet at 6:30 p.m., catered by Taste Buds, will be followed by dancing from 9 p.m.-midnight.

A few years ago, the usual guest speakers gave way to the more popular slide shows of yearbook photos that are set to music appropriate to the era. This year's slide show will highlight the classes of 1958, 1968, 1978, 1988 and 1998, as well as the 25-year mark of the class of 1983.



A 1926 photo of Humble High School.



An Humble class photo from 1948 likely includes alumni and family members of HHS alumni living in our community.

"Everyone can laugh and giggle at the old photographs and keep on visiting with each other without bothering anyone. They really seem to enjoy it," Cullum said.

Tickets are \$20 for the entire evening or \$15 for those who are 65 or over. Up-to-date ticket information and details on plans for the event are available at [www.humbleisd.net/hhs](http://www.humbleisd.net/hhs)

As in the past, a "Long-Time Friends Gathering" will take place near the west entrance of the Civic Center from 4:30 to 6 p.m. The most senior of

alumni, who may not be able to endure an entire evening of activities, enjoy coming early and catching up on the news with their high school friends.

"People look forward to this all year because it may be the only time they see each other," Sandie Ramos Coleman, Class of 1968, said. "Since we have the entire Civic Center, we can reserve meeting rooms for any of the classes that want to get together before or after the banquet."

In addition to the celebration, the group is planning the 10th Annual HHS Alumni Scholarship Golf Tournament to raise funds for college scholarships. Five \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to HHS graduates in 2007. The tourney is set for

May 16 at Cypresswood Golf Club and is open to the community. To sponsor a hole, donate silent or live auction items or to sign up to play, call Matt Barrett at 832-433-1088.

According to Coleman, few HHS graduates attend an alumni celebration until they've been out of school for at least 10 years.

"At 10 years, people may come to the reunion and try to impress their classmates but after 20 years everyone is more casual," she said. "Then, at 40 years, they talk about when they're going to retire. At that point, it's not about whether you have gray hair or no hair. We just want to see each other and we have more in common now than ever before."



Above, from left, Allen Calfee of Kingwood Park HS, Riley Watson of Atascocita HS and Reese Watson of Summerwood Elementary

## Livestock show enjoys long tradition of community support

Local businesses and community members continued a long tradition of great support by contributing a combined total of \$227,200 at the 2008 livestock auction. This continued support helps students obtain money for college, post secondary training, as well as assist students in continuing their project program involving raising animals.

Students receiving grand champion honors were: Erin Okeson of Kingwood HS for steer,

purchased by Thomas Markle Jewelers; Justin Alford of Atascocita HS for swine, purchased by Northstar EMS; Taylor Calfee of Riverwood Middle for lamb, purchased by Memorial Hermann Northeast Hospital; Riley Watson of Atascocita HS for goat, purchased by Texas Barge & Boat; Joleigh

Michaela Hornback of River Pines Elementary



Sydney Ware and Erin Okeson of Kingwood High School

Hamilton of Atascocita HS for turkey, purchased by Robert H. Brown, Inc.; Rachael Dzedzic of AHS for broiler, purchased by Crawford Young Drywall, LP; Delaney Stafford of Elm Grove Elementary for rabbit, purchased by Perdue, Brandon, Fielder, Collins & Mott, LLP.



Left, Delaney Stafford of Elm Grove Elementary



# Experience a day of creative family fun

*Sixth Annual Humble ISD/Lonestar College-Kingwood Fine Arts Festival*

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 26

*Admission and activities are free!*

*Open to the public*

Hands-On Creation Stations  
Musical Performances  
Silent Auction  
Author Readings and Signings  
District-Wide K-12 Art Exhibit  
Scholastic Book Fair  
Food Concessions  
T-shirt Sales



### Gold and Silver Sponsors:

Alsbaugh's Ace Hardware  
Jerry's Artarama  
Stott's Hideaway Ranch  
AT&T-  
4536 Kingwood Dr., 77345

### Bronze Sponsors:

Deerwood PTA  
Eagle Springs PTO  
Hidden Hollow PTA  
National Junior Charity League  
Kings Trails Chapter  
Lindley Family  
McEntee Family

# Voters will cast ballots May 10 on \$245 million bond

## Early voting begins April 28.



The bond funds, if approved by voters, would allow Humble ISD to:

- Build two elementary schools
  - Build a new middle school
  - Purchase land for schools – two elementaries and two middle schools – that would be built in future years
  - Purchase approximately 100 school buses
  - Construct a school district police station
- Add and replace computers, improve the wide area network, and install ceiling-mounted video projectors in elementary classrooms
  - Improve stadium lighting at Kingwood High School
  - Install surveillance cameras at all elementary schools
  - Replace roofs, chillers, mechanical systems, plumbing and electrical components based on life-cycle schedules for preventive maintenance
  - Add parking lot and exterior lighting at several campuses for additional security
  - Upgrade kitchens at several campuses
  - Launch energy conservation projects including lighting upgrades and improved energy management software
  - Add digital recording system for school bus security
  - Renovate Turner Stadium to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to improve the locker and training rooms, and more
  - Enlarge and renovate the Community Learning Center and Instructional Support Center

An eight-cent tax rate increase is projected if the proposition is approved by voters. But even with the increase, the tax rate would still be lower than it was in recent years due to changes in state law affecting school finance (see graph at right).

School district leaders say new schools are needed to keep up with growing enrollment, and to alleviate or prevent overcrowding at existing schools. Humble ISD is serving 33,000 children this year. Enrollment is expected to climb as developers continue to construct new homes and neighborhoods, especially along Beltway 8 and West Lake Houston Parkway. Humble ISD is expected to serve 40,672 children in 2012 and 48,609 children in 2017.



The bond plan was developed by a 167-member Bond Study Committee made up of parents, business professionals, teachers and district staff. Membership on the committee was open to the public. The committee examined demographic projections, safety and security concerns, technology issues, and more.

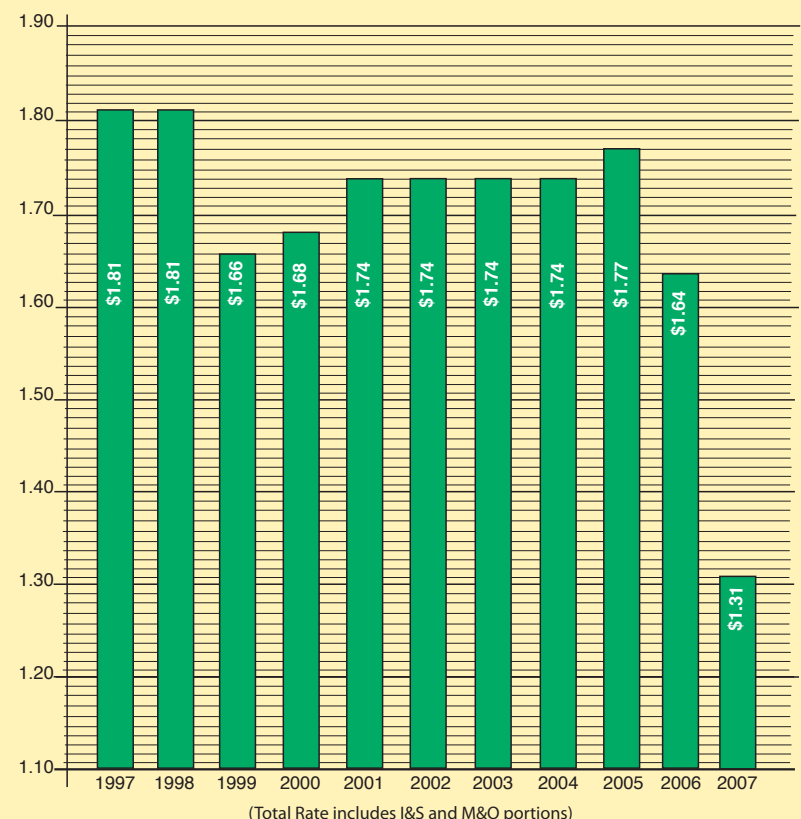
*From left, Pine Forest Principal Nancy Morrison, community resident Herb Gordon and Humble ISD Director of Maintenance and Operations Kenny Kendrick participate with the Bond Study Committee.*



*Members of the Bond Study Committee hold up flags to vote on proposals.*

## Humble ISD Tax Rate History

*With passage of May 10, 2008 bond referendum: \$1.39 estimated*



A school district's tax rate has two parts. One portion is for debt service and includes paying off bonds. It is called the Interest and Sinking (I&S) rate. Based on current assumptions, the passage of the Bond 2008 \$245 million package would increase the I&S tax rate by 8 cents. That is, the current debt service tax rate to pay for school bonds would increase from 27 cents to 35 cents. This increase would mean an additional annual tax of \$160 on a home valued at \$200,000.

Humble ISD's current maintenance and operations (M&O) tax rate is \$1.04. This pays for staff salaries and other day to day expenses. Voter approval would be needed in a separate referendum for any increase in this portion of the tax rate.

# Summer Creek HS opens August 2009



Construction is underway on Summer Creek High School, scheduled to open in August 2009. The school is being built on 67 acres on Weckford Drive, near the intersection of Beltway 8 and West Lake Houston Parkway. Construction cost is \$71.7 million, with funding provided by Bond 2005.

Summer Creek High School is being built to address the residential growth in the southern portion of Humble ISD, where hundreds of families are moving into newly constructed homes.

The school is designed for

3,200 students in grades 9-12. The floor plan is similar to Atascocita High School. The building is designed around eight houses, or small learning communities. Most students will spend the majority of their school day within their house, where they will attend their core academic classes of English, math, science and social studies. This ar-

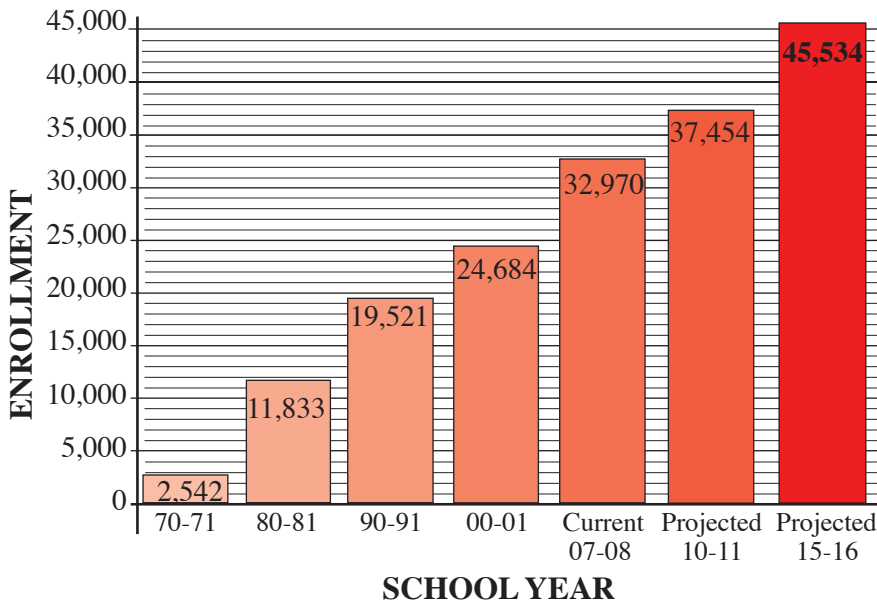
angement allows house principals, teachers and counselors to work together to personalize learning for students.

The houses include flexible learning areas outside classrooms for working on group projects and independent study. The campus also has facilities for athletic, fine arts and career/technology classes.

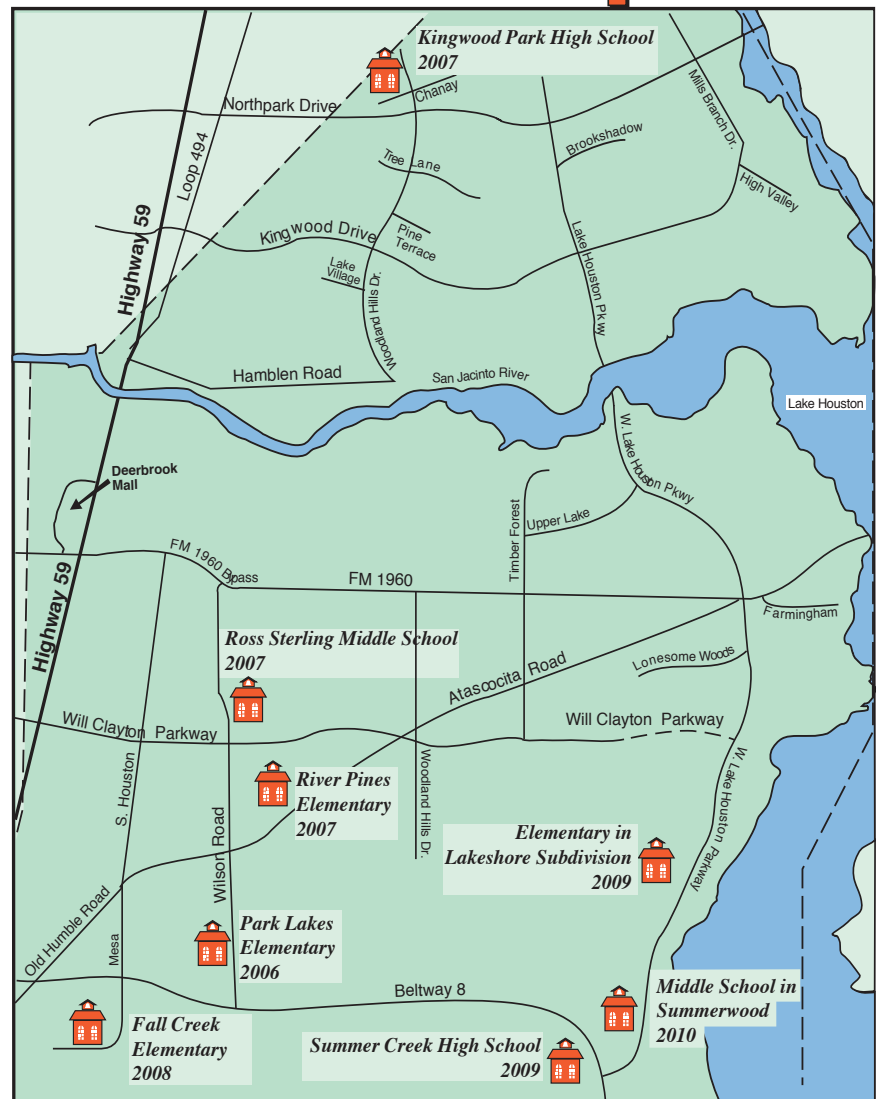
The school's exterior design was inspired by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. PBK designed the school. It is being built by Gilbane Construction Company.

Summer Creek will be Humble ISD's sixth high school, joining Atascocita, Humble, Kingwood, Kingwood Park and Quest high schools.

## Student Enrollment Growth

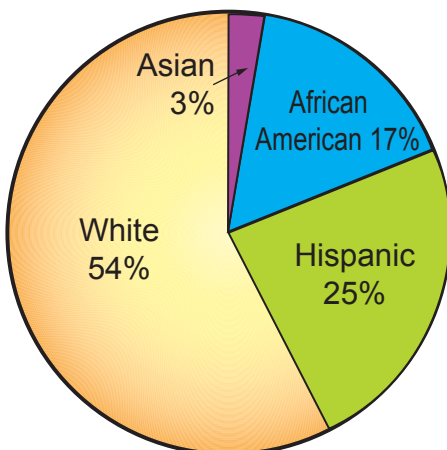


## Bond 2005 Update



Schools created with Bond 2005 funds, with opening dates

## Enrollment Facts and Figures



Total Student Enrollment: 32,970

Asian: 3%  
 African American: 17%  
 Hispanic: 25%  
 White: 54%

(Does not add up to 100% due to rounding)

Special Populations:

Economically Disadvantaged: 27%  
 Special Education: 9%  
 Gifted and Talented: 8%  
 English Language Learner: 8%

# Bond 2005 . . .

## HHS renovations near completion

People often talk about teenagers going through “growing pains.” But for nearly two years now, both students and teachers at Humble High School have been going through their own kind of growing pains, and these have nothing to do with biology.

Humble High is in the midst of what might be called Extreme Makeover: High School Edition. The school is undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation, and with completion of the two year project set for October 2008, students and educators are already beginning to see the difference between old and new.

When completed, the renovated HHS will comfortably accommodate 2,400 students without using portable buildings.

Associate Principal James Paschall is the campus administrator who was given the task of resolving issues that arise out of the \$37 million dollar renovation. He acknowledged that the work is in the home stretch. Paschall says the idea behind the changes stems

in part from plans for new high schools for Humble ISD.

“With the building of a new high school, we feel like all our students should have the same quality educational environment,” Paschall said. Construction crews demolished and completely rebuilt the two story building that was the original part of Humble High School, and renovated much of what was added on in later years.

The improvements feature a new two-story building, designed around four different educational “houses.” Each house will serve as a mini-school, with its own classrooms and administrative offices. Two more houses will be located inside the school’s annex.

The house concept is designed to give students a smaller and more personalized learning environment, so they are less likely to be lost in the crowd.

One major element for each of the houses is what’s known as flexible areas. These areas contain desks or tables for students to work on group projects, or just relax and



*Students enjoy lunch in the commons while the cafeteria is being renovated. The updated theater entrance is in the background.*

socialize with friends. They are designed to resemble study areas at many colleges, and are versatile enough to have a variety of uses.

Many specific subjects and areas of the school also are seeing improvements. The gymnasium is being renovated and a practice room specifically for dance students was added.

The theater department is being upgraded, both in its classrooms and with the addition of a black box theater, a type of auditorium that can be quickly remodeled for a variety of performances. Other areas of the school being renovated include the library and music room.

Classes got underway earlier this semester at Humble High’s new Career/Tech building, which is connected to the main building. Students are taking classes in a variety of fields, such as auto tech, cosmetology and marketing.

Members of the school’s Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps are enjoying their new quarters. A double classroom will be used for marching during bad weather. Next door is an actual rifle range for pellet and air rifle target practice.

Another set of additions that can be used in a variety of ways are

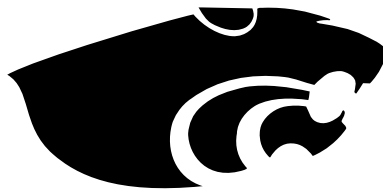
three large group instruction areas. One of the new rooms has the look of a university classroom with theater-type seating and fold-over desks. Two other large instruction rooms have more of a conference room look, and are designed to be multi-functional.

The construction work that could prove to be the most popular with students is in the cafeteria. That work is just getting underway and students will be pleasantly surprised with the results once it’s complete. Instead of the usual serving line inside the cafeteria, the updated look will more closely resemble the food court at a local mall.

The renovations are resulting in a safer and cleaner educational environment for students, Paschall said. The renovations are also helping them feel like they are special. “For students, it’s an attitude that the new building gives them a feeling of worth, makes them feel like they have value,” Paschall said.

Students are especially glad that the house concept being implemented in the school means they’re much closer to their next classes.

Humble ISD has been working hard in recent years to keep up with a growing student population and to provide parity between older and newer schools.



*From left, Humble High seniors Jesse Hernandez, Sarah Parker and Tina Tran enjoy one of the new flexible learning areas located outside classrooms.*



Juniors Caitlin Saunders and Scott Meara visit beneath a new covered walkway in front of Kingwood High.

Funding for the Humble High School renovations was provided by bonds approved by voters in 2005. "If you knew what it looked like before and see it now," Paschall said, "you'd say, 'Wow,! This is the same building?'"

## Kingwood High School to look like new school

High schools can be busy, noisy places at times. But life at Kingwood High School this year is even busier and noisier than usual, as the 28-year-old school is nearly two years into major renovations that will be completed in early 2009. It's a challenge that has both students and faculty looking forward to the day when it's all complete.

"When you see changes every day, I don't think you look at it as a 'Wow,'" said Bill McCabe, Kingwood High School construction manager. He says right now the people who would most appreciate all the work being done are actually KHS alumni who went to school here 15 years ago, and remember what the school used to look like.

McCabe believes that 'Wow' moment will come for the 2,800

students at Kingwood High next fall. "I think when the kids come back in August, that's when they're going to see the change," he said. Although renovations will continue for several months into the 2008-2009 school year, by the end of summer you'll begin to see the final product, he said.

When completed, the renovated KHS will comfortably accommodate 2,800 students without using portable classroom buildings.

Some areas of the campus are already taking shape. The administration and special education areas have been completely rebuilt. Students are already taking advantage of a new and improved science rooms. The science wing features upgraded equipment inside the classrooms, and wider hallways outside.

Theater students have seen the existing auditorium go through a makeover, including new projection screens. The theater department has more space now for set construction. The seating and stage in the black box theater can be easily changed to accommodate a variety of uses.

The gymnastics and cheer-

## ... money at work

leading teams need plenty of room to practice, and now they have a room of their own. Before these rooms were completed, the gymnastics and basketball teams had to practice in the gym at the same time. Dance students now have their own room that resembles an actual dance studio, with hardwood floors and mirrors on the walls.

Some of the most significant changes at Kingwood High that will be seen in the fall will be the revamping of the school into seven "houses." These will resemble smaller learning communities inside of the main high school, each with their own principal and secretary. The house concept should give students more individualized attention and allow staff to better respond to situations. Classrooms and the houses are the focus in the current phase of reconstruction.

Upcoming renovations include the band and choir departments. Two of the biggest upgrades will be the new career and technology wing and the gymnasium. The career and technology classes are currently being taught in temporary classrooms. Once the technology wing is complete in January 2009, these T-buildings will be removed. Renovation of the gym is scheduled to begin this month.

Along with construction of new sections of the school, upgrades are also un-

derway on existing portions of the campus. That means teachers and students sometimes have to look for a new parking area or bathroom. Crews are doing what they can to work around the educational process. "They stay out of our way," said junior Josh Lincoln.

McCabe said school administrators have worked to keep everyone informed about the renovation's progress. The school's web site is kept up to date on what's happening and Kingwood High principal Melissa Hayhurst has held several meetings to update parents.

"The school's transformation by this time next year will really amaze people," McCabe said. "It will look like a brand new school."



From left, Anine Pedersen, Scott Meara, Caitlin Saunders, Reed Thomas and Katie Medford-Davis pose in front of Kingwood High School's new main entrance. Through the window, construction is seen continuing on other areas of the campus.

# Administaff Observatory at Fields Elementary

Usually, if students are accused of having their heads in outer space, it means they're not paying attention. Soon however, Humble ISD classes will be encouraged to do just that.

Humble ISD will be one of the few school districts in the country with its own astronomical observatory. Construction began in February on the Administaff Observatory on the campus of Jack M. Fields Elementary School. Once complete, plans call for the observatory to include three powerful telescopes with which to view the heavens. Construction is expected to be completed in August.

The observatory will give students in the district hands-on access to science, said Dr. Aaron Clevenson, a former school board member as well as member of the North Houston Astronomy Club. "This will provide the opportunity to touch equipment, look through it, and my hope is this will put realism on the things they're learning in their books," he said.

Current plans call for the observatory to have a sliding roof, with three large telescopes inside the facility, Clevenson said. Developers are working to get telescopes of different sizes. One type of telescope is best for viewing galaxies and nebulae, while others are better suited for looking at smaller objects like planets and star clusters. In addition, a smaller solar telescope will likely accompany one of the larger ones. Cameras will also be available to take pictures of what students see. Those pictures will likely be published on the district's intranet, so teachers will be able to incorporate them into classroom lessons.

The idea for the observatory originally came as part of a challenge by the Humble ISD Education Foundation. The Foundation

invited educators to come up with ideas for its Challenge Your Dreams campaign, a major project that would help student education. The Humble ISD Education Foundation raised funds needed for construction and received the largest donation from Administaff, which contributed \$300,000. Administaff raised the funds through corporate dollars and an employee fundraising campaign to help fund the observatory's construction.

"The observatory aligns well with Administaff's philanthropic efforts," said Corinn Price, manager of community involvement. "We believe this project will inspire creativity and interest in our children, and hopefully many will decide to pursue a career in the sciences," she said.

In addition, Administaff is also working with the Education Foundation on another contribution honoring two leaders within Humble ISD who passed away unexpectedly in December from health conditions. Administaff is donating an additional \$35,000 for a telescope in memory of Jim Eggers, president of Humble ISD's Board of Trustees, and in memory



Architectural rendering of Administaff Observatory

of Larry Johnson, Humble High School principal.

The district's emphasis on improvements in math and science learning is very much a part of the plan behind the observatory, Clevenson said. It will give teachers the opportunity to better teach astronomy in the classroom by planning field trips to the observatory and using pictures from the telescopes in their lessons.

Jack Fields Elementary is nearly an ideal location to build the observatory, Clevenson said. Foundation officials and North Houston Astronomy Club members compared the darkness of the sky around various schools in the

district. Elementary schools are better because they don't have as much ground lighting as middle and high schools. In addition, Jack Fields is one of the few Humble ISD elementary schools not in a subdivision, so there are fewer street lights with which to contend. Humble's proximity to Houston and Bush Intercontinental Airport increases the amount of light pollution, but Clevenson said you might be surprised at how dark Humble's skies really are. "The skies to the east and north are very good," he said.

Once completed, the observatory will be the only one operating in the Houston metropolitan area. For now, the closest observatory to Houston is the George Observatory, an hour south of Houston in Brazos Bend State Park.

While the observatory will be owned by the school district, Lone Star College students will use it as well. There may also be opportunities for the public to use the facility, although priority will be given to students.

The Humble ISD Education Foundation is still seeking donations and grants for the Administaff Observatory from the public and area businesses. You can contact the Foundation at [www.humbleisd-foundation.org](http://www.humbleisd-foundation.org) or 281-641-8140 if you're interested in contributing.



Representatives from Administaff, the Humble ISD Education Foundation and the Humble ISD Board of Trustees participated in a groundbreaking ceremony on Feb. 20 for the Administaff Observatory. The observatory is being built for use by students throughout the district.

# Annual Science/Engineering Fairs build independent thinkers

For eight years, Humble ISD has celebrated independent thinking with the Science and Engineering Fairs for elementary and secondary levels. The fairs continue to expand as more students from Kindergarten through 12th grade eagerly prepare their projects.

Humble Middle seventh graders Tiana Matthews and Tray Housley had their first experience in the science fair this year. Working after school under their science teacher's supervision, Tiana and Tray built a maze to see how ants communicate. Their hypothesis that ants use pheromones to find food was not supported by their research. Nevertheless their efforts won first place at the district's Secondary Fair and allows them to advance to the Science Engineering Fair of Houston.

The thrill of working on this project encouraged Tiana to join the school's science club. "A science fair project is something that you can really achieve," she said. "There's a lot to learn and it's enjoyable!"

Fun is one of the best surprises about a science fair, said Deborah Badeaux, Humble Middle seventh grade science teacher. "Our students didn't expect to have so much fun, but a science fair project lets students explore, on their own, a topic they are interested in, then share their discoveries with others," Badeaux said.

Students and parents alike find a true learning adventure awaits. That was the belief of parents Aaron



*The Elementary Science Fair awards assembly always attracts a large crowd.*

Clevenson and Kurt Smith, who established the first district-wide science fair in 2000. "We started the fair as a way to expand the opportunities for our children to explore the scientific method in a hands-on way," said Dr. Clevenson, a former school board trustee and current volunteer consultant astronomer for the observatory.

"The district science fairs also help students get better understanding of the fields of Science and Engineering," said Bob Deister, who has assisted Dr. Clevenson in coordinating the Elementary Fair for a number of years.

## Students Build Many Skills

Many educators agree that a science fair project is one of the best learning experiences. Students can develop many skills, such as:

- Planning a large project that may span several weeks;
- Researching at the library and online;
- Problem-solving with various techniques;
- Applying math and computer skills, including using electronic spreadsheets;
- Developing visual presentations;
- Giving oral presentations;
- Adapting to teamwork (if they

- work with a partner); and
- Working independently and staying on task.

These skills are crucial for later success in life. Equally important is the confidence students acquire when they tackle a problem and see it through to the end.

Tyler Croskey, a sixth grader at Kingwood Middle, won second place at the Secondary Fair this year. For his project, Tyler studied whether color affects the taste of soda. In his experiment he added food coloring to the same flavor of clear soda and had people of different ages compare the taste.

"I was surprised by some of the results; some age groups were impacted by color, but others weren't," he said. The biggest thing he learned, though, was that "anything is possible with science!"

## Value of Science Education

Science education is essential for students of all backgrounds, talents, interests, and abilities. When students learn to think like scientists—by observing, collecting evidence, and drawing conclusions—they sharpen their thinking about the world around them. The Humble Independent School District has a special focus on improving

students' mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in science and math. The science fairs are another avenue for achieving this goal.

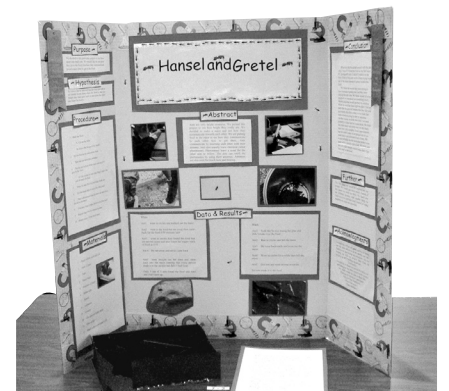
Last year's first place Elementary Fair winner, Connor Groel, studied whether color impacts how we sense water temperature. He advised, "Good projects are ones that haven't been done before and that you can explain." A Summerwood Elementary fourth grader, Connor used 117 classmates as subjects for his experiment. He learned how to use an electronic spreadsheet to analyze his data and create graphs. "It's really fun to practice the scientific method!"

So, is this for everyone? Absolutely! "We want every student to have the opportunity to participate," Dr. Clevenson said. "That's why we open the fair to all students living in our district, including students in private or home-school programs."

In March, the largest Elementary Fair to-date included 18 public and private elementary schools.

## Get Involved in the Fun

Humble Intercontinental Rotary Club has been the Fairs' principal sponsor, providing funding and judges. As the program grows, more help is needed for judging. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Dr. Aaron Clevenson at [aaron@clevenson.org](mailto:aaron@clevenson.org).



*Sample project*

# When & where to vote

## in Bond Referendum and School Board Election

### Early Voting for all Precincts is available:

Monday, April 28: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Tuesday, April 29: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Wednesday, April 30: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Thursday, May 1: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Friday, May 2: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Monday, May 5: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Tuesday, May 6: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



### Early Voting Locations

Humble City Hall/City Council Chamber, 114 W. Higgins St., Humble  
 Humble ISD Administration Building, 20200 Eastway Village Dr., Humble  
 Humble ISD ISC building, 4810 Magnolia Cove Dr., Kingwood

**Election Day:** Polls will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 10.

### Election Day Precincts and Voting Locations:

Precinct 108, 334, 598, 599, 776 –  
 Humble City Hall/Council Chamber, 114 W. Higgins Street, Humble  
 Precinct 45, 83, 363, 380, 742, 799, 840, 841, 847-  
 North Belt Elementary School, 8105 North Belt Drive, Humble  
 Precinct 351, 388, 658, 659, 674, 764 –  
 Oaks Elementary School, 5858 Upper Lake Drive, Humble  
 Precinct 199, 469 –  
 Foster Elementary School, 1800 Trailwood Drive, Kingwood  
 Precinct 340, 357, 590, 635, 636, 758 –  
 Kingwood Middle School, 2407 Pine Terrace, Kingwood  
 Precinct 459, 563, 612, 670, 760 –  
 Creekwood Middle School, 3603 Lake Houston Parkway, Kingwood

### How do I know my precinct number?

Your number is printed on your voter registration card. Or, you can search by your name on [www.hcvoter.com](http://www.hcvoter.com). Click on “voter registration,” and then click on “voter search.”



## Seven who serve: School Board election May 10

Three positions on the seven-member Humble ISD Board of Trustees are up for election this year. Board members are volunteers who serve without pay. On the ballot will be:

### Trustee Position No. 5

Vernon Reed  
 Jeremy Wilkerson  
 Glenn Redmon  
 Brent Engelage  
 Cheryl Burbano

### Trustee Position No. 6

David P. Martin

### Trustee Position No. 7

Matthew Cavanaugh  
 Mike Rafferty  
 Victoria “Tori” Clapp  
 Robert Scarfo  
 Nancy Cozad  
 Arthur Burbano



## What your bond ballot will say:

For

The issuance of \$244,920,000 bonds for school buildings, school support facilities, school sites, and school buses and the

Against

levying of a tax in payment thereof

*Your Schools* is published by the Humble Independent School District.

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 Keith Lapeze, secretary  
 Lynn Fields, parliamentarian  
 Dr. Bonnie Longnion, member  
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