

Come see why we are



There are many reasons why in Alief ISD, we are all Alief Proud. Come experience them for yourself!

Join us at Alief Proud Day for a day of fun and wellness on Saturday, October 25, at Crump Stadium. For more information on the family bike rally and the free festival, please view page 3.

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Superintendent's Message

HD Chambers

Dear Alief ISD Parents and Community Members:

It is a great time to be a part of the Alief area, and I am so proud of all of the outstanding things happening at Alief ISD.

- Proud of the district's long history of wise financial management
- Proud of the reassurance of continuing to keep the Alief ISD tax rate as one of the lowest in the Houston area
- Proud of our campuses continued commitment to *Preparing Students for Tomorrow... Caring for Them Today*
- Proud of the more than \$37 million in scholarships awarded to our graduating seniors
- Proud of our work with institutions of higher learning to support our students in their desire for a post-secondary education
- Proud of our partnership with businesses and corporations in providing opportunities and training for our students in preparing for careers and jobs after graduation
- Proud of the more than \$2.7 million our campuses receive in competitive grants each year in support of creative and innovative classroom programs

These statements are not just words. Other people are recognizing the extremely dedicated work of our staff. Recently, The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded Alief ISD a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2013. For the same fiscal year, the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) also awarded a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting to the Alief Independent School District for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. This marks the 26th consecutive year that Alief ISD has earned this award.

Alief also received the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award and the ASBO's Meritorious Budget Award for its annual budget document for 2013-14. In order to qualify for these budget awards, the budget document was judged in several categories as specified by both organizations.

Keeping with the district's assertion to fiscal responsibility when it comes to taxpayer money, the Alief ISD Board of Trustees passed the budget and tax rate at the August 26 Board meeting. The total budget is \$447.1 million with the majority of the budget allocated towards instruction and the education of our students. The Board also approved a tax rate reduction of \$0.01. This is a combined tax rate of \$1.28 per \$100 of assessed value, creating a decrease in the tax rate of six cents over the last five years. This serves as testament to our commitment in maintaining fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers of the Alief ISD.

As I stated earlier, this is a great time to be a part of the Alief community and Alief ISD. Thank you for your continued support and interest in the Alief Independent School District.

I am...Alief Proud.

Sincerely,

HD Chambers
Alief ISD Superintendent of Schools

Federal Dollars Support Education

Alief ISD will receive over \$18 million in funding through Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act for the 2014-15 school year. The purpose of Title I is to help ensure that all students meet state academic standards. Funding provides additional instructional support for campuses including teachers, materials, technology, professional development, summer programs and family engagement. For more information, please contact the Federal Programs/Grants Office at 281-498-8110, extension 5882. To learn about family engagement opportunities, contact the Family Engagement Office at extension 2820.

District Educational Improvement Council

The Alief ISD Educational Improvement Council (EIC) is a district-level committee that serves in an advisory role to the superintendent.

During the school year, the committee meets monthly to learn about and provide input on a variety of district programs and practices. The EIC is comprised of elected campus teachers, professionals, other district staff, volunteer parents and students, and business and community members.

If you are interested in serving on the EIC, please contact Karla Kessler at 281-498-8110, extension 4900.

District Family Engagement Policy

Did You Know...

Students whose families are engaged in their education in some way earn higher grades and test scores?

- Are less likely to be retained a grade?
- Attend school regularly?
- Like school and adapt well to it?
- Have better social skills?
- Have fewer negative behavior reports?
- Are more likely to graduate and go on to post-secondary education?

Find out how you can become more engaged. Contact or visit the Family Engagement Center on your student's campus and visit the website at www.aliefisd.net.

A Voice for Your Child's Future

If you want to have a voice in the future of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) in Alief, join us on the FACE Advisory Council. Everyone gains if school and home work together to promote high achievement by our children.

Contact Shanceler Terry at 281-498-8110, extension 2820, or email Denesse Bolanos at denesse.bolanos@aliefisd.net.

Alief ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap or sex. The career and technology education program operates in accordance with the provisions of Titles VI, VII, and IX and Section 504 of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Alief ISD program admission procedures, facilities and graduation requirements are designed to eliminate discrimination. Alief ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all programs, including career and technology education. For information about your rights or grievance procedures, write the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources at P.O. Box 68, Alief, TX 77411, or call 281-498-8110, ext. 3870.

Show us why you are Alief proud on *Alief Proud Day!*

Event includes family bike rally, festival, student performances, food, door prizes

Alief Proud Day will be held this year on Saturday, October 25. Rather than schools going out into their nearby community, we are inviting students, parents, staff, and community members to Alief ISD's Crump Stadium for a bike rally and festival.

The bike rally, which includes a 5 or 10-mile option, will kick off at 8 a.m. and will end at 10 a.m. This cycling tour of Alief is a great wellness activity for participants. Participants must register online for the bike rally and pay a registration fee, which will benefit the Alief ISD Special Olympics team. Space is limited.

Alief ISD will be holding the Alief Proud Festival at Crump starting at 9 a.m. In conjunction with *National Make A Difference Day*, those who donate canned goods at the festival will be entered to win door prizes. It is free to enter the festival, which will feature student performances, a vendor fair and school/program information. The festival will end at noon.

During the festival, Alief ISD will be attempting to break a world record for jumping rope at 10:30 a.m. If you are interested in participating in the record attempt, please email Jessika Leal at barbarajessika.leal@aliefisd.net.

Alief Proud Day was created in October 2013 to make positive connections with our community. We want our families and community to know we are here to provide the best education for our students as well as offer services to our families to make everyone successful.

Thank you for taking the time to visit with us!

Alief ISD students, parents, staff and community members helped create huge turnouts across the district at various events.

From left to right:

Top Row: Open House at Holub Middle School (photo by William Everett), Alief ISD College & Career Night saw a packed house with two gyms full of parents and students researching post-secondary options

Bottom Row: Family Engagement Centers kicked off their Grand Openings with festivities and information sessions.

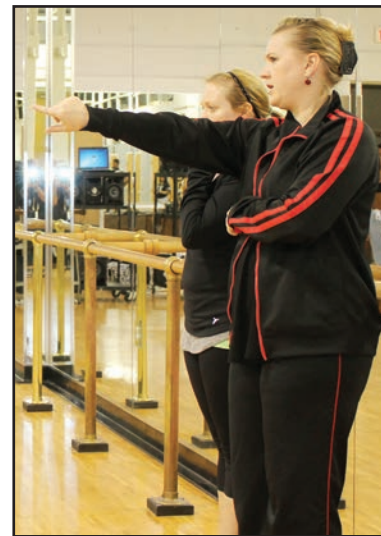


Alief ISD Band, Orchestra Day strikes a chord with students

Alief ISD's high school students performed for intermediate and middle school students to further their interest in Alief ISD's band and orchestra program.



Alief Jazz Ballet taps into a new direction



The Alief Jazz Ballet (AJB) has been a presence in Alief ISD since the 1990's but is taking steps in a new direction...and we do mean "steps."

Now under the direction of new director, Kirsten Burandt, AJB is hoping to add tap to its repertoire. The program, which is housed at Elsie High School, includes over 40 performers made up of male and female students from Elsie High School, Taylor High School, Kerr High School and Hastings High School.

Students are exposed to a studio-type atmosphere while studying jazz, ballet and hip hop dance. The addition of tap dance will be a challenge for these performers.

Burandt is a classically trained dancer who has been dancing since she was two years old. She has a degree in dance and considers herself "always a student, taking workshops and classes myself" to continue perfecting her talent.

"The studio-type training our students receive is pretty exclusive and a privilege. A program like ours is mostly seen at performing arts-type schools but to have what we have available for our kids is special and rare," adds Burandt.

Taylor High School senior Rachael Nsek agrees with Ms. Burandt. Rachael has been a part of AJB since she was a freshman and looks forward to what new direction the group is taking under the new leadership.

"Ms. B really has us concentrating on technique."

Rachael tells us that AJB is a huge commitment, but she loves what it has taught her and the friends that she has made while in the program.



AJB has planned a full schedule this year including competitions, workshops and performances.

If you would like to see the Alief Jazz Ballet, their annual winter performance takes place in December, and they also have a spring show. Tickets for each of these shows are available to the public.

Let's jump into learning!

Action Based Learning takes off in Alief ISD

In Alief ISD, we are no strangers to taking action when it comes to engaging our students. Recently, schools have implemented Action Based Learning to make learning a fun, enriching process for students and staff. Action Based Learning is academic learning using purposeful movement. It utilizes the natural link between the brain and the body to maximize learning.

Alief ISD has been promoting active learning for several years, helping teachers include more movement across the school day. New teachers to Alief are trained in Action Based Learning as a part of their teacher induction program, and teachers are given resources to help them teach using purposeful movement.

Brain research shows that when kids move, learning improves. Alief has taken this research and is putting it into action through movement in the classroom, and through an innovative approach using Action Based Learning Labs. These labs are research-based, brain and body compatible, kid friendly and time efficient. Six campuses are piloting the labs, and data will be collected about behavior and academic improvement.

The Action Based Learning Lab is a series of progressions and stations, each designed to prepare the brain for input and processing. Students work on balance, coordination, spatial awareness, fitness and visual literacy while reinforcing academic concepts.

The labs are designed with very specific activities that have proven to prepare brains for learning. The activities in the lab are also layered with academic content in order to help kids cement their learning. Research shows that the same place in your brain that initiates movement also initiates certain thinking patterns, and in order for students to maximize learning, moving and thinking should occur together. Lessons should be designed to integrate the body and the brain.

Students come to the lab three times per week and rotate through the stations. The level of difficulty increases throughout the year, and academic concepts are added based on what students are learning in the classroom. Early results are very promising, as discipline issues have decreased across several campuses that have implemented these learning labs. Students and teachers have been very positive, and we hope this program continues to expand in the coming years.



Alief ISD After School Program creates magical moments

The Alief ISD After School Program (ASP) is setting a new standard for after school care for students. "Join the MAGIC" is the theme for the program which is committed to *creating meaningful magical moments* for students.

According to Margot Butler, Assistant Director for the Alief ISD After School Program, ASP is an "extended part of the school day, not just daycare." It is a structured concept that provides children with homework help, engaged learning and enrichment courses. Currently, ASP has 1,600 students enrolled in 23 schools throughout the district.

Each day, the students receive a snack followed by homework help. The enrichment courses offer students unique opportunities in exploring outside interests. Along with hip hop classes, forensic science and robotics, each year, the students participate in an entrepreneurial course in which students create, develop, market and sell an original product. Last year's products included duct tape bow ties, tie dye socks and bracelets. "Making the bracelets was my favorite part (of ASP)," said Heflin Elementary student Julissa Williams. Upon completion of their products, students are given the opportunity to "sell" their products at an end of year event called "Market Day."

The Texas Education Agency awarded the ASP a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant, which assist in funding services that focus on student academic success and character development at some of the campuses. In addition, some of the participating schools are licensed by the Department of Family and Protective Services, which allows these sites to accept NCI (Neighborhood Centers Incorporated program). Other funding comes from parent payments and fundraising. The After School Rocks Fun Run takes place each year in the spring and raises money to help offset monthly tuition for qualifying students through ASP scholarships.

The Alief After School Program continues to grow and expand services to provide quality programs for our students. Its top priorities for this school year include increasing funding and enrollment, implement college and career readiness for 100% of our students and enhance family engagement.

If you are interested in your child being a part of the Alief ISD After School Program, please contact your student's school.



Congratulations to our Scholar Athletes!

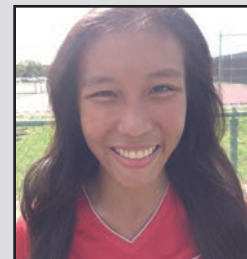
Alief ISD Scholar Athletes are students nominated by their athletic coaches for their outstanding work both on and off the field. These students are committed in the classroom, in the community and during their games.



September

Tristan L.

Amanda H.



October

Jaleel C.

Tram N.



Thank you, Alief ISD's Business & Community Partners!

Community groups and businesses generously donated school supplies, uniforms and other items to the schools throughout the summer months and into the current school year.

Many of the donated school supplies will help fill the shelves at the Alief ISD Education Foundation's Uniform Effort Clothing Pantry, which serves Alief ISD children in need of a helping hand throughout the school year. The Foundation relies on donations from the community in order to keep the pantry stocked.

For more information on how to positively impact our students by becoming a district business or community partner, please contact Dee Jones at 281-498-8110, extension 6580, or via email at delores.jones@aliefisd.net.

How do our partners contribute to student success?

- **Donations to Alief ISD**
 - Monetary donations to campuses/departments
 - Food donations for district events, such as Alief Proud Day
 - Business partners may "adopt a school" and donate to specific campuses
- **Mentoring Alief ISD students, such as through the Real Men Read Program**
- **Volunteering for district/campus events and programs, including acting as community partners on committees and speaking at campus Career Days**
- **Career opportunities for Alief ISD high school students**
- **Supporting the Alief ISD Education Foundation**



Alief ISD off to a great start for the 2014-15 school year!

Alief ISD opened its doors to about 46,000 students on the first day of school. Our enrollment has increased to 47,421 students. See below for photos from the first day.



Horn Elementary honors first responders

Horn Elementary honored emergency personnel during First Responder's Day on September 11. Houston Fire Department, Houston Police Department and the Alief ISD Police Department visited the school and were thanked by students and staff for their commitment and service to the community. Students also had the opportunity to examine first responder's equipment, including an Alief ISD police vehicle.



Alief ISD Bond Information

Alief ISD held a bond referendum in 2003 for \$175 million that was forecasted at that time to last six years for capital needs through 2009. The referendum was very successful with the voters who participated in the election, and the authorization of bonds actually lasted through 2016 as growth slowed and new construction was no longer necessary.

Since the 2003 authorization is almost complete, the Alief ISD Board of Trustees voted in June 2014 to have the administration form a bond steering committee to review the needs for the next ten years. A committee was formed through nominations from a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the district and community. The committee is comprised of parents, taxpayers, business owners, real estate owners, faith-based leaders, staff members and liaisons from overlapping entities, such as the International Management District.

Several meetings have occurred already, including a tour of several facilities at all grade levels. The process for developing a list of needs for ten years into the future is one that takes foresight and commitment, and the committee of more than 70 community members has shown great interest and enthusiasm in being part of the endeavor. The process is being documented online, which can be found on our district web site at www.aliefisd.net.

The end result of the great work will be a recommendation to the Board of Trustees regarding what areas of focus the district should address with respect to facilities. The recommendation will also include what the cost will be for each year over the ten year span, with the associated ramifications to the taxpayer and benefits to the students of our district.



Alief ISD Technology Night a success!

Alief ISD elementary, intermediate and middle schools stayed open late on October 9 to showcase and share the digital learning environments available to our students. The event was sponsored by Alief ISD libraries and the district's Family and Community Engagement Department. Each campus hosted its own unique activities, student work and resources to share, such as:

- *Electronic Resources Available 24/7* - Handouts with remote passwords for home use
- *Opportunities to read digital books* - Capstone, Sebcos etc from school and at home
- *Internet Safety & Digital Citizenship* - Opportunities to investigate resources which promote and teach these important concepts as well as materials to take home
- *Technology Integration* - iPads being used in libraries and classrooms
- *Flipped Classrooms* where students have the opportunity to watch a video introducing a topic and then using the class time the next day to more fully understand and work through the learning process with the teacher facilitating and answering questions
- *Demonstrating how to get to eChalk or Edmodo class pages* to see what's happening in your student's classrooms
- *Available Digital Communication* between school and home to help you stay informed
- *Students demonstrating their "digital work/projects"*



B.Y.O.D. information is online!

This is an exciting time in Alief ISD as we prepare our students and staff for future "Bring Your Own Device" (B.Y.O.D.) opportunities.

Currently, we are piloting B.Y.O.D. at Kerr High School as well as in a few classrooms at Elsie High School, Hastings Ninth Grade Center, Albright and O'Donnell middle schools and Budewig and Miller intermediate schools.

For more information on the district's B.Y.O.D. policy and what that means for students, staff and parents, visit the Alief ISD website at www.aliefisd.net.

Stay connected with Alief ISD!



- **Website:** www.aliefisd.net
- **Twitter:** @aliefisd
- **Let's Talk:** Access *Let's Talk!* through the district or campus website to send Alief ISD non-emergency questions and comments
- **Mobile App:** The Alief ISD app is available through the Apple iTunes Store and Google Play Store.

- **Key Communicator Email Updates:** Join the mailing list to receive the latest updates directly from Superintendent HD Chambers. Sign up at www.aliefisd.net.



Meet our Student Technology Council!



Alexander Elementary students who are a part of the Alief ISD Student Technology Council are pictured with District Technology Trainer Jorge Cavazos, who is leading this council.

Alief ISD students from all grade levels are helping Alief ISD lead the way in terms of student technology.

Alief ISD 3rd through 12th grade students were nominated by campus tech specialists to become a part of the Alief ISD Student Technology Council. Students from across Alief were selected to this prestigious group of 178 members.

The point of the group is to give feedback on technology needs for Alief ISD and to help promote how we use technology in our schools and at campus events, such as Alief ISD Technology Night.

Students are meeting once a month via webinar. Projects are submitted online, similar to an online course for students.

Alief International Parade show why we are Alief proud



The annual Alief International Parade was met with sweltering heat as Alief ISD students, staff and community groups made their way down Bellaire Blvd. Participants marched, performed and shouted as they made their way to Hastings Ninth Grade Center.

Photos Courtesy of Alief ISD's Family Engagement Liaison Marco Salazar
Counter-clockwise from left: Hastings High School, Olle Middle School, Alief ISD Family Engagement Department



Hastings student, Youngblood staff member bring home knowledge from science exploration trip

Youngblood Intermediate staff member Joseph Sanchez and Hastings High School student Jelilat O. recently returned to Alief ISD after a summer research trip at the Cape Eleuthera Institute in the Bahamas. The opportunity was provided by JASON Learning and district business partner Chevron.



Jelilat and Joseph were surprised by their respective campuses last spring regarding this extraordinary opportunity.

Left: Jelilat with Alief ISD staff (Photo by Andrew Duong)

Below: Joseph (center) pictured next to Alief ISD Superintendent HD Chambers and other Alief ISD staff



Cummings Elementary staff proudly wore purple during Purple Out Day to support Kerr High School.

Alief ISD celebrates Purple Out, Blue Out

Alief ISD students and staff are celebrating each of the high schools and their respective programs.

Kerr High School's Purple Out day kicked off the series of high school spirit days, and staff and students from across the district wore purple to show their support.

When Elsik High School's Blue Out rolled around, Alief ISD wore blue to support the Mighty Rams.

Taylor High School's Red Out is on Friday, October 17, and Hastings High School's Black Out is on Friday, October 24. Alief Early College High School's Teal Out will cap the series of events on Thursday, November 13.



From top to bottom: O'Donnell Middle School staff and Alief ISD support staff in the Administration Building recently wore blue to support Elsik High School. Alief Middle School students and staff wore purple to show their support for Kerr High School.

Alumni Spotlight

@aliefisd
#AliefProud

Welcome home, proud Alief ISD alumni!



More than 30 Alief graduates were hired as teachers by Alief ISD for the 2014-15 school year. They are pictured here at the New Teacher Celebration. Like the hundreds of other Alief ISD alumni who chose the district as their employer, these staff members now give back to the district that provided them an educational foundation.

Alief ISD graduate takes command of United States Coast Guard unit

United States Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Steve Morris is happy to be home.

Morris, a proud Alief ISD graduate, was recently named the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Galveston (91104) and returned to Texas to serve.

He is currently in charge of supervising and leading more than 100 active duty and reserve members. He is responsible for personnel, operations, safety and well being of a deployable team engaged in maritime homeland security, maritime law enforcement, alien migrant interdiction, counter-drug, search & rescue and anti-terrorism/force protection missions. In addition, he advises others on strategy, tactics and asset employment and administers an annual budget of more than \$1 million.

Morris attended Liestman Elementary and Killough Middle School while in Alief ISD. He's a proud member of Alief Hastings High School's Class of 1991 and said his favorite memories include selling spirit gear in the school store and rooting for the Fighting Bears.

His mother, B.A. Morris-Bullock, is a retired teacher who spent much of her teaching career at Liestman. She brought Morris with her to Liestman, and Morris started his education in Alief in the second grade. Morris said he enjoyed his time in Alief ISD and thinks it helped him develop into the person he is today.

"I especially flourished under teachers who demonstrated control of their classroom and met me halfway in the learning experience, where I gave effort, and they gave effort."

Morris, who has 10 years enlisted and 12 years commissioned officer experience in the Coast Guard, notes the disciplines instilled in him did not start with his entrance into the military.

"My parents' leadership and my teachers along the way laid the foundation that allowed me to transition into a lifestyle of heightened discipline. Serving others is a critical element of Coast Guard leadership and something that I can personally point back to my pre-teenage years and see initial development."

He encourages current Alief ISD students to focus on school work and finish the race strong. He also wants students to "set dreams and do all they can to chase them with determination and using feedback from others to focus their drive."

"My dad taught me three tenants of life, and Alief schools served as a place of opportunity to practice them: Treat people right, finish what you start, and don't let anyone steal your happiness," Morris explained. "Life is not fair, but it is what one makes it."

For those struggling in their current situation, Morris encourages them to consider life in one of the branches of the United States military. He also challenges fellow Alief ISD alumni who did not seek higher education after graduation to seek higher education opportunities as an adult.

Morris said he did not start his advanced education until he was 36-years-old but "found a way" to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Homeland Security with American Military University and a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry with Liberty University.

"Set your goals, make a list, and charge forward!"



Photo Courtesy of Steve Morris

Alief ISD graduate Steve Morris, LCDR, is the new Commanding Officer of the United States Coast Guard's Galveston Unit.

Know a proud Alief ISD graduate who is making a difference?

Email Alief ISD Web Specialist Tracy Lau at TYLAU@aliefisd.net with information about the Alief ISD graduate deserving of spotlight!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Superintendent

Board meetings are scheduled the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Alief ISD Administration Building, 4250 Cook Road.

All meetings are open to the public.



Independent School District

P.O. Box 68 • Alief, Texas 77411

<http://www.aliefisd.net>

Alief ISD, in collaboration with parents and community, will provide an exemplary education for all students in a safe environment.

Nonprofit
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This is a publication developed by the Alief Independent School District's Communications Department (281-498-8110, ext. 2240). The Alief Communicator is written/edited by Tracy Lau (Web Specialist). For cost efficiency, the newsletter is bulkmailed by zip codes and mail routes; it is possible that some households outside of district boundaries may receive it.



2014-2015

Alief Independent School District Calendar

JULY 2014						
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STUDENT HOLIDAYS/
STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS
August 18 – 22, 2014
January 5, 2015
February 16, 2015
June 5, 2015

HOLIDAYS
Labor Day – September 1, 2014
Columbus Day – October 13, 2014
Thanksgiving Holidays – November 24 – 28, 2014
Winter Break – December 22, 2014 – January 2, 2015
MLK Holiday – January 19, 2015
Spring Break – March 9 – 13, 2015
Good Friday – April 3, 2015
Memorial Day – May 25, 2015

FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION
August 25, 2014
LAST DAY OF INSTRUCTION
June 4, 2015

Grading Periods
August 25 – October 17 38 days
October 20 – December 19 40 days
January 6 – March 20 47 days
March 23 – June 4 52 days
Total Days: 177 days

- Legend
- ⊕ First/Last Day
 - ◀▶ Begin/End Grading Period
 - Student Holiday/Staff Development Day or Staff Workday
 - Student/Staff Holiday
 - * Bad Weather Day