

# NEWS RELEASE



Eanes Independent School District  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **WESTLAKE HS TEACHER NAMED EANES ISD TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

*Social Studies teacher Janet Espinosa crowned at last night's Employee Recognition Dinner*

**AUSTIN, Texas** – Westlake High School Social Studies teacher Janet Espinosa was named the 2011 Eanes ISD Teacher of the Year at an Employee Recognition Dinner held last night. Espinosa, who has been teaching 34 years, has been at Westlake HS for 10 years.

Espinosa teaches grades 10-12, including AP Human Geography and AP Comparative Government. She started her teaching career in Colorado, followed by The Woodlands, before coming to Westlake. Janet has been trained as a College Board consultant and in that capacity has facilitated summer institutes in Pre-AP World Geography. She has also attended College Board institutes in preparation for teaching.

She serves on the Campus and District Leadership Teams, Professional Development Steering Committee and the Long-Range Planning Committee. Her colleagues describe her as incredibly strong in the classroom, but point to her commitment to educating fellow colleagues that is equally impressive. As Department Head and Instructional Partner, Espinosa has been able to share ideas and strategies with fellow teachers that have made a difference in their own classrooms.

All nine campus winners for the Teachers of the Year were honored at last night's ceremony, as well as 25-year service recognitions and retirees.

The campus winners are:

Jamie Berrios	Forest Trail Elementary	5th grade
Claudia Carpenter	Eanes Elementary	Kindergarten
Janet Espinosa	Westlake High School	Social Studies
Jenna Holmes	Valley View Elementary	Instructional Partner
Marianna Ricketson-Husain	Bridge Point Elementary	Technology Instructional Partner
Linda Musci	Hill Country Middle School	Speech and HCTV
Rebecca Oates	Cedar Creek Elementary	1st grade
Kali Peichoto	Barton Creek Elementary	2nd grade
Danette Woods	West Ridge Middle School	8th grade Math

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The Westlake Rotary Club sponsors the award and Rotary members serve on the selection committee. Each Teacher of the Year receives a cash gift from the Rotary and Espinosa receives an additional gift from the Eanes Education Foundation.

The Eanes Independent School District spans 31.2 square miles of scenic Texas Hill Country in Travis County and serves approximately 7,700 students. Schools in Eanes ISD are Westlake High School, Hill Country Middle School, West Ridge Middle School, Barton Creek Elementary, Bridge Point Elementary, Cedar Creek Elementary, Eanes Elementary, Forest Trail Elementary and Valley View Elementary. In 2010, all nine campuses and the District were named Exemplary by the Texas Education Agency for the second consecutive year.

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### **Barton Creek Elementary**

Now in her fourth year at Barton Creek Elementary, Kali Peichoto teaches 2nd grade. She has served as a Team Leader, on the Campus and District Leadership Teams and currently is an Elementary ELA Leader. She has also served as a Positive Behavior Intervention System team member and on the Strategic Planning Team. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in Special Education through the Eanes Education Foundation's Partnership for Teacher Excellence Program (PTEP). She describes the rewarding part about teaching as being an advocate for students who are not able to identify or articulate their own needs for being successful in the classroom.

### **Bridge Point Elementary**

Marianna Ricketson-Husain has been teaching for 12 years, including seven years at West Ridge Middle School and two in her current position as Technology Instructional Partner at Bridge Point Elementary. She has helped teachers integrate their Smart Boards into their classrooms, helped them bring in and produce digital media, created training movies showcasing and highlighting best teaching practices, helped implement videoconferencing opportunities with classrooms all over the country and worked as a Science Day instructor to teach beginning computer programming. She serves on the Eanes Technology Vision Committee and the Technology vertical alignment team. She was awarded the Best Place to Learn Computers for Camp Wired by Austin Family Magazine.

### **Cedar Creek Elementary**

Rebecca Oates has been a 1st grade teacher at Cedar Creek Elementary for seven years. Previously she taught 1st grade in Coppell ISD for two years. She has served on the Campus Leadership Team, was the first grade team leader and created and implemented the Mentor Program for New Teachers. One of her colleagues wrote, "When I think of the kind of teacher I want for my own personal children, Rebecca Oates' face always come to mind. She loves children -- all children. She is prepared to go above and beyond to do what is needed to serve each individual student's needs. She is a fearless advocate for her students and is motivated to help her students progress by whatever means necessary! Learning is fun in her class, I think because she takes the time to see things from a kid's perspective. She is a team collaborator, trusted by her colleagues and respected by many district-wide!"

### **Eanes Elementary**

Claudia Carpenter has been with Eanes ISD six years and has been teaching for eight, including more than two years in Asia. She began her career in Eanes ISD as a 2nd grade Special Education Teacher's Assistant at Eanes Elementary before becoming a Kindergarten teacher. She currently serves as Kindergarten Team Leader and previously was a member of the Campus Leadership Team, Science Curriculum Team and Sunshine Committee. Claudia strives to make sure her Kindergarten students understand what is expected as they enter into a new school, while also helping them to fall in love with learning and enjoy their experience.

### **Forest Trail Elementary**

Jamie Berrios has been teaching 5th grade at Forest Trail Elementary for seven years. She has also taught in the Georgetown, Round Rock and Austin school districts in both 5th grade and Kindergarten. Jamie holds the distinction of being a graduate of the first PTEP class. She is very active in organizing the Forest Trail science fair and also serves as the science curriculum writer for the District and is on the District textbook selection committee. Jamie found out she was Teacher of the Year the day before she left on maternity leave. She and her husband welcomed their second son two weeks ago.

### **Valley View Elementary**

A Westlake HS alumnus, Jenna attended Eanes Elementary grades K-2, Cedar Creek Elementary 3-5, Hill Country Middle School 6-8 and graduated in the top 10% from Westlake High School. She began her teaching career in Austin ISD teaching 4th and 5th grade before joining Valley View Elementary. In her five years at Valley View, Ms. Holmes has taught 5th grade, has served as an Intervention Teacher and is currently an Instructional Partner. She serves on the Campus Leadership Team and has previously served as a 5th grade Team Leader. Principal Jennifer Dusek shared an example of Jenna's kindness that happened one year during Staff Appreciation week. A student noticed Jenna did not get flowers like the other teachers were getting (at the time she was an intervention specialist with only a few students) so when the student plucked off the flower and handed Jenna the bare stem, Jenna was equally as thrilled to receive it. She proudly put the flowerless stem in a vase of water, not for her benefit, but to show the student how much the act of kindness meant.

### **Hill Country Middle School**

Linda Musci has been teaching for 18 years, including 11 as a Speech teacher at Hill Country MS. She began her career in San Antonio and also taught in Marble Falls ISD and Austin ISD. Ms. Musci has served as a National Junior Honor Society sponsor for seven years and was on the Middle School Vision Committee. She currently serves as a Positive Behavior Intervention System team member. She describes her most rewarding moment in teaching as the work she did with the National Junior Honor Society students and the Book Buddies program. Hill Country students gave books to kids in Del Valle and it was very rewarding to both her and the students. Principal Kathleen Sullivan says, "Linda Musci is an amazing innovator. She started our HCTV television channel a number of years ago and now we have two live productions of a news show weekly that is completely student run!! Talk about 21st century teaching!!"

### **West Ridge Middle School:**

Danette Woods has been teaching for 15 years, including five at West Ridge Middle School. Previously, she taught in San Marcos CISD and Pflugerville ISD in pre-Algebra, Algebra I and Algebra II before landing at West Ridge MS to teach 8th grade Math. Ms. Woods has served on the Campus Leadership Team and the Middle School Vision Committee and serves as a sponsor of the National Junior Honor Society. Principal Karl Waggoner says, "Parents call me every summer to make sure that their child is placed in her class! Danette always has a smile on her face and has such a pleasant, positive demeanor-her positive attitude is contagious."