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Lancaster ISD...More Than a Diploma

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In Lancaster ISD, Red Was the New Orange...For a Day

Lancaster, TX/Lancaster ISD – Red was the new orange for the first day of school in Lancaster ISD as the district literally rolled out the red carpet for their students. This is the third year for this grandiose welcome and the first year that the Texas Education Agency Commissioner, Michael Williams joined the team of county, city, and state volunteers who lined the red carpets at all of the campuses entrances to personally welcome students and their parents to the start of the new school year.



“There are no days more exciting than the first day of school, you see excitement and a little fear sometimes; but, they [the students] know that they are going to have a good year,” said Commissioner Williams who started the morning at the George Washington Carver STEM 6th Grade Learning Center.

In addition, to a grand welcome, Williams also noted the presence of many stakeholders and community members participating in this event. “When students see adults standing out here saying ‘good morning’ and ‘welcome back’, this has to get them off to a great start and they know that they are going to have a great year.”

Lancaster ISD is strongly committed to parental and community engagement. Commissioner Williams, took note of the various stakeholders during the red carpet event and spoke to the importance of such collaboration.

“Everyone has to be involved in the learning experience, whether they’re moms, dads, grandmas or grandpas, aunties and uncles, business and community leaders, it tells children how important learning is when they see the adults engaged.”

Lancaster ISD School Board President Ty G. Jones has participated in this event since its inception and was excited to meet students and their families face-to-face.

“Any time you can be out front and see the work that you are doing, it feels good,” began Jones. “For the last two years, all of our campuses met standard and it is good to see so many leaders, officials, parents here today recognizing the great things that we are doing in Lancaster ISD.”

Williams could not agree more.



“We want to see achievement all across the state and you want to see achievement in areas where it was thought that you may not see achievement,” he said. “So, it is fun to come into a district that is garnering success.”

The mission of Lancaster ISD, in collaboration with parents and communities, is to ignite learning that translates into sustainable success for all students in an ever-changing society. To accomplish this goal, the district has created and nurtured numerous

partnerships within the city and local areas.

Lancaster ISD Assistant Superintendent of Governmental Relations and Student Affairs, Dr. Lamont Smith has coordinated this effort since it began and similarly reflected upon the increasing impact of this event and the many partnerships that we have been able to establish and maintain over time.

“During the last three years, we have seen approximately 220 stakeholders engaged with this Red Carpet Back to School initiative that highlights the importance of the first day of school and the impact that it has on students. This demonstrates the community’s desire to maintain an active presence in the school community, expressed Smith. “Through this tradition, we have established a culture that affirms to our students that school is a great place to be and that education matters. Additionally, we letting our parents and community leaders know that their presence matters and we want them to stay connected.”

Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, the President of Cedar Valley College is proudly connected with Lancaster and very a proud participant in this event. “It important for students to feel welcomed and be in an environment to know that people care about them. As education partners, we must work to put our resources together so that our students are successful from cradle to employment.”

Parents such as Theresa Mitchell who has a 4th grader at Rolling Hills Engineering Academy is ecstatic about the welcome event.

“I’m in awe and happy to arrive to a school that took out time to have the community to come out to meet and greet us and make us feel excited about the school year.”

While the volunteers aimed at placing smiles on the faces of the students and offering a warm welcome to parents, UNT-Dallas President, Bob Mong, also took this as a time of reflection and to applaud Lancaster ISD successes, attributing much of it to the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Michael D. McFarland.

“I am proud of the progress. Lancaster ISD is one of the great news stories in Dallas County right now. Lancaster is one of the most exciting districts because of programs like Pre- K and STEM. They are about preparing kids for today’s fast moving world and just to think big.”

Through this initiative, Lancaster ISD has an increase in the number of students and parents excited about the first day and for this Mr. Jones is truly grateful.



“We Believe in Orange, in every one of the students here, their parents, and their ability to obtain More Than a Diploma,” he said.

The participants in this red carpet affair included the following dignitaries among other professionals, parents, and community leaders:

- Michael Williams, Texas Commissioner of Education
- Dr. Bob Mong, UNT-Dallas President
- Ty G. Jones, Lancaster ISD Trustee President
- Ellen Clark, Lancaster ISD Trustee Vice President
- Rhonda Davis-Crawford, Lancaster ISD Trustee
- La Rhonda Mays, Lancaster ISD Trustee
- Cynthia Corbin Jarvis, Lancaster ISD Trustee
- Robbie Johnson, Lancaster ISD Trustee
- Marion Hamilton, Lancaster ISD Trustee
- Hon. Marcus Knight, City of Lancaster Mayor
- Jennifer Wimbush, Cedar Valley College President
- Jeff Steele, Lancaster Area Chamber of Commerce President
- LaShonja Harris, City of Lancaster Councilmember
- Nina Morris, City of Lancaster Councilmember
- Carol Strain-Burks, City of Lancaster Councilmember
- Tracey Gulley, Chief Deputy for Constable Garrett’s office for Precinct 1 of Dallas County
- Zach Thompson, Dallas County Health Department

Lancaster ISD rolled out the red carpet and welcomed parents and students back to school in style. Please click [here](#) to view the slideshow.

<http://1drv.ms/1JgzJBG>

The Lancaster Independent School District serves more than 7,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 11 schools. Our vision is that all students achieve self-sustaining success and leave a lasting legacy. And our mission, in collaboration with parents and communities, is to ignite learning that translates into sustainable success for all students in an ever-changing society.

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