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Lancaster ISD Hosts Its 4th Annual Special Olympics Track Meet in the Best Southwest

Lancaster, TX/Lancaster ISD

High-fives, hugs, smiles and cheers permeated the Beverly D. Humphrey Tiger Stadium as Lancaster ISD hosted its 4th Annual Special Olympics Track Meet in April.

The event featured 287 students with special needs from neighboring schools including Waxahachie, Cedar Hill and Grand Prairie Independent School Districts competing alongside their peers all vying to be champions.

Ruby Batiste, director of the Lancaster ISD Special Education Department, shared the impact of this event.

"Watching the participants compete with confidence is life-changing. The students compete with passion and resiliency," Batiste said. "What we perceive as their disability is no longer a factor in them becoming an accomplished athlete."



Students from multiple grade levels and abilities participated in track race relay competitions throughout the day as teachers, family members, friends and other students cheered them to the finish line.

The Mayor of Lancaster, The Honorable Marcus E. Knight, and Lancaster ISD Executive Director of Accountability, Dr. Lamont Smith officially opened the Olympic Games after the ceremonial running of the torch, infamous Lancaster

High School Tiger March Band drum line and the parade of champions.

This event is a point of pride for Lancaster ISD and was the brainchild of Eddie Bratton, Lancaster ISD Special Olympics event coordinator, Physical Education and Adaptive Play Coach.

“Our journey has been a very interesting and tremendous experience,” he said. “In 2010, our goal was just to collectively bring the community, Lancaster ISD staff and students together in their First Special Olympics. We did not know the impact that it would have on those that attended.”

After the first year, momentum continued to grow and has blossomed into the area-rich event that encompasses as many neighboring districts as it can handle.

Bratton continued, “We were not only able to accomplish the goals of bringing those parties together; but we excelled in allowing our students as well as surrounding districts to have an incredible experience as student athletes.”

Batiste agrees that this event has tremendous value and purpose.

“The most valuable component of the event is students with disabilities are given the opportunity to feel valued and relevant. They are given the opportunity to showcase their talents in front of their peers and family in an environment where they are celebrated. I am truly blessed and happy to be a part of such a great event.”



The Lancaster ISD Special Olympics experience is a pure display of true courage, support in every aspect of this public, family fun event centered on the Special Olympics Athlete’s Oath: “Let me win; but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Click [here](#) to see Special Olympics track meet highlights.

The Lancaster Public Schools serve more than 6,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 11 schools. The mission of the Lancaster Independent School District, a leader in providing innovative, quality programs, is to educate every student with the knowledge; skills; and principles to succeed and contribute in a competitive and technologically advancing world by providing rigorous and engaging learning opportunities that promote diversity; create an environment of integrity and respect; and establish a commitment to continued improvement in partnership with families and community.

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