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Calendar

- Jan 9 Photos for Founder's Day Dinner needed
- Jan 15 Deadline to submit entries for School Bell Award
- Jan 17 SBISD Parent U (rescheduled date)
- Feb 3 Founder's Day Dinner, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Northbrook HS
- Mar 6 SBEF Crystal Awards, Westin Galleria

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mary Kemick, Council President

Happy 2009! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and are slowly getting back into the swing of things. SBISD Council is off to a busy start helping our new PTA's get up and running, and our existing PTA's up to date on new information.

Next up on our PTA agenda is founders Day. This event is a celebration across the United States honoring the founding of PTA on February 17, 1897. This celebration is an opportunity for us to remember that we are a part of a long history of parent involvement – congratulations on carrying on that tradition!

Our SBISD Council celebrates with a dinner honoring the previous year's Texas PTA Life Members. In addition, we present the School Bell Award nominees and winner. This award is presented to an outstanding SBISD educator who promotes the objects of PTA, and is an advocate for all children.

It is always such a joy to hear all the wonderful things our educators are doing for our students at each campus. Please be sure to attend this year-February 3rd. There are more details coming in the newsletter.

PTA believes all children deserve a quality arts education and, to that end, promotes students to participate in its annual arts Reflections Program. Thank you to all of you who participated this year. Thank you to our Reflections Chairman, Lisa Peterson, who did a wonderful job coordinating for Council. The entries forwarded to State for further judging are listed later in this newsletter.

All PTA's should be in the process of electing nominating committees. In addition, it's a great time to review your Bylaws and Standing Rules. Council is also in the process of nominating a slate of officers for next year. Please consider volunteering for a position at the Council level to continue your commitment to PTA. We really have a great time and learn more each time we meet! If you are interested in learning more about the different Council positions, please email our Parliamentarian, Lisa Lundquist. Her email address is lisalundquist@sbcglobal.net.

Looking forward to seeing you February 3rd at Founder's Day!

YOUR PHOTOS NEEDED FOR FOUNDERS DAY DINNER

We still need photos of your school events to be shown in a slide show during the Founder's Day Dinner honoring. Please email jpeg files to pam@txreynolds.com. Please submit these by Friday, January 16, 2009.

PRESIDENT'S CHECKLIST

- Submit your nomination for the School Bell Award. Deadline for entries is January 15.
- Make plans to attend the Founder's Day Dinner on February 6th. Send in your RSVPs to Misty Ellis. See article to the right.
- Send 2007-2008 Texas Honorary Life Membership names to Laura Casanover at lcasanover@yahoo.com so they can be honored at the Founder's Day Dinner.
- Contact Kay Kurisky at kkurisky@sbcglobal.net to nominate yourself or someone else for a position on Council for 2009-2010.
- Complete the SBISD PTA Council Awards applications. The packet can be found online at www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/awards.htm
- Make plans to attend the Crystal Awards with your campus Teacher of the Year on March 6, 2009 at the Westin Galleria.
- Establish Nominating Committees for 2009-2010 officers.
- Consider attending the Texas PTA Convention in Austin February 27-March 1. Information is found at www.txpta.org/

COUNCIL OF PTAs AWARDS

Each year, the PTA Council hands out numerous awards. Your PTA could be an award winner! But you can only win if you apply.

Applications for all Council awards can be obtained online at the Council website:

www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/pta.htm.

The deadline for those awards is March 31, 2009.

Check out next month's newsletter for a full list of awards.

SCHOOL BELL AWARD DEADLINE IS JANUARY 15

You need to submit your nominations for the School Bell award by January 15. The form is attached to the back of this newsletter for your convenience. The complete awards packet can be found at www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/awards.htm and click on Awards Forms.

The School Bell Award is an individually engraved brass school bell which is presented to an outstanding SBISD educator who promotes the objects of the PTA and is an advocate for all children. Any Local Unit PTA may nominate one educator. All nominees must be PTA members.

COME AND CELEBRATE FOUNDER'S DAY!

Be star-struck. Join the Spring Branch Council of PTAs as we proudly recognize the superstars of 2008 at the annual Founder's Day Dinner.

Scheduled for Tuesday, February 3, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at Northbrook High School, this event honors all the 2008 Lifetime Membership Award winners as selected by every Spring Branch PTA throughout the district as well as the winner of the 2008 School Bell Award.

Dr. Duncan Klussmann, superintendent of SBISD, will be the keynote speaker at this special event recognizing the hard work and dedication of our outstanding volunteers. Dinner is provided by Ciro's Italian Grill and will feature a delicious chicken and pasta entrée.

Tickets are \$25 if bought by January 25 and \$30 thereafter. All tickets must be purchased by Friday, January 29, 2009 through your local PTA President or by contacting Misty Ellis at misty.ellis@hotmail.com. Watch your PTA mail box for more information on this wonderful star-filled evening.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 81st Regular Session of the Texas Legislature convenes on January 13th and will include a range of education issues. Probable issues include K-12 funding, rising college tuition, and the accountability system. However, there will be many more issues addressed including topics ranging from middle school reform to eliminating food items with trans fats from school cafeterias.

Hot Topics for SBISD:

School Funding: Dr. Klussmann stated in a Houston Chronicle article that school funding is the biggest challenge for 2009 and beyond. The problems are that funding revenues are set at the 2005-06 levels and don't cover inflation and that increases from rising property values go to the state instead of staying in the district.

Accountability System: Dr. Klussmann also noted that he would like to see legislators change the system, which he said relies too heavily on high stakes testing and how schools are rated.

Stay Informed:

SBISD website: www.springbranchisd.com

- Home page: Read more about School Financing in "Children Are Our Bottom Line" brochure. Also check out SBISD TV for videos pertaining to issues.
- Policy Administration/Governmental Relations Department page (Departments/Administration & Personnel). Includes links to:
 - * SBISD Board of Trustees Priorities and Positions for this Legislative Session.
 - * Texas Legislature Online
 - * Updates (during the session)

Other Sources:

- Texas PTA www.txpta.org
- Texas Legislature Select Committee on Public School Accountability <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/c835/c835.htm>
- Mike Falick's blog where he highlights one or more of the proposed bills that relate to education. See "Bill of the Day" http://mikefalick.blogs.com/my_blog/bill_of_the_day/
- Texas School Alliance: Dr. Klussmann, 2008/09 President
- Raise Your Hand Texas www.raiseyourhandtexas.org
- Moak Casey www.moakcasey.com

Mark your calendar: Dr. Klussmann will be addressing Stratford HS PTSA on **February 25th** at 7 pm regarding many of these issues. The community is invited. Details to come. Stay tuned for additional opportunities for presentation of information on these and other topics.

Voice Your Opinion:

- Contact your legislators: Link from SBISD Policy Administration/Governmental Relations Department page to "Who Represents Me".
- Your PTA President and/or Legislative Liaison can help you with salutations and pointers. Contact me or refer to Texas PTA Legislative Chair Handbook for additional assistance.

Diane Swan. Council Legislative Chair

 ★ **COUNCIL NEEDS YOUR TALENTS** ★
 ★ The Nominating Committee for the 2009-2010 Council of PTAs Officers has been formed. If you are ★
 ★ interested, have any questions about a position, or would like to nominate someone, please contact ★
 ★ Kay Kurisky at kkurisky@sbcglobal.net. ★
 ★ *****

FRANCHISE TAX ALERT FOR PTAs; OBTAINING AN EXEMPTION

All PTAs, incorporated or unincorporated, are now subject to the State of Texas Franchise Tax; provided, however, that your PTA may apply to be exempt from this tax as noted below.

Entities that have not yet applied for the exemption may do by first filling in the following questionnaire (and faxing or mailing to the to the Exempt Organizations Section of the Texas State Comptroller): <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/ap-114.pdf>

The discussion of exempt organizations is found here and please note the link for "application for exemption". http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/franchise/faq_exempt.html

Franchise Tax status generally can be checked from the box marked "Franchise Account Status" on this link: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/franchise/>

For questions, call David Davenport at 713-984-1385.

DUNCAN AND DONUTS

Discuss the state of the school district and education with Spring Branch ISD Superintendent of Schools Duncan Klussmann. Admission: An auction donation for the Crystal Awards Gala. For an invitation or more information, call 713.365.4781



Thursday, January 22, 11 a.m. Hostesses: Pam Goodson, Jennie Baker & Yvonne Rathgeb

Friday, January 30, 11 a.m. Hostesses: Connie Sherwood, Patty Busmire & Bernadette Prakash

Thursday, February 5, 11 a.m. Hostesses: Jill Heinrich, Wendy Moreland & Janis Smith

Texans now have a new way to support higher education in the state with the purchase of **College for all Texans** specialty license plates. \$30* will get you a set of two plates. \$22 of that will go to a fund to match scholarships for Texas students. Go to www.CollegeForAllTexans.com for details on how to order yours. Show everyone that you support opportunities for all Texans to attend college and a way to help them pay for it.



**This cost is in addition to your annual auto registration fee. \$22 is tax deductible.*

The license plate
that pays for college

www.CollegeforallTexans.com

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The newsletters are published about the 1st of every month. Copies of published newsletters along with upcoming deadlines, can be found at www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/newsletter.htm.

PTAs – feel free to send articles on your campus events. We welcome your information. Email your articles to pam@txreynolds.com. Thank you.

SBEF GRANTS AWARDED

At its November Board meeting, Spring Branch Education Foundation approved \$108,387 in grants that will be used for diverse education-enhancing projects throughout Spring Branch Independent School District.

The Foundation awarded \$10,000 to the Spring Branch Council of PTAs. The funds will be used for scholarships: \$7,000 for Spring Branch ISD college-bound students (one scholarship for each SBISD high school) and \$3,000 for teacher professional development scholarships.

The balance of the money, \$98,387, was designated for district-wide and SBISD campuses. Twice a year, the Foundation calls for grant applications, up to \$5,000 each, from any of its 47 school campuses and district departments. Both faculty members and volunteers are encouraged to apply.

Grants that will benefit students on a district-wide basis are:

Arts Partners – Field trips for all SBISD fourth graders to the Altharetta Yeargin Art Museum

Collegiate Challenge – A mentoring program to assist first-generation or disadvantaged college-bound students achieve higher education

Girl Power Conference – A program addressing positive alternatives to challenging issues for all 1,175 district seventh-grade girls and their mothers; date to be determined

SBEF Character Without Question Award – Recognition for a student from each SBISD campus who demonstrates that trustworthiness, respect and honesty are accepted values

Grants for individual campuses include:

Bendwood Elementary – A program to help increase verbalization skills in autistic children

Cedar Brook Elementary – A document camera and projector will project students' work and guided readers
Edgewood Elementary, Terrace Elementary, Treasure Forest Elementary, and Woodview Elementary – A cross-age tutoring program to improve reading skills in younger students and leadership skills in their older mentors

Landrum Middle – Field trips to Houston Museum of Natural Science and hands-on labs for eighth-grade students

Lion Lane School – Field trips for pre-kindergarten students to the Houston Zoo, Houston Museum of Natural Science and more

Meadow Wood Elementary and Memorial Drive Elementary – A field trip to Austin to culminate a year-long study of Texas for fourth-graders

Northbrook High – Calculator-based laboratories for advanced placement and dual credit chemistry students

Nottingham Elementary – Fourth-grade field trip to Washington-on-the-Brazos to study Texas history

Ridgecrest Elementary – An after-school world music program for fourth- and fifth-graders

Rummel Creek Elementary – An interactive learning program to incorporate art, music, and health fitness

School of Choice – Web-enhanced learning programs that students can access any time, any place

Spring Oaks Middle – Spring Oaks Middle School Girls Ensemble will perform in Washington, DC and tour the nation's Capitol

Thornwood Elementary – Instructional activities and manipulatives to encourage creative and innovative thinking

Valley Oaks Elementary – After-school mentoring for at-risk students

Westwood Elementary – Students Offering Academic Relationships (SOAR), an after-school enrichment program with middle-school mentor interaction

"We encourage PTAs, principals, and teachers to apply for these grants," says Cece Thompson, SBEF executive director. "We will have another call for grants in February, and the recipients will be announced in May."

Community members who wish to support a specific program at a designated campus can make a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation and earmark it for that school. Call 713-365-4781 or visit sbef@springbranchisd.com for more information.

SBEF is committed to helping SBISD realize its mission of providing every student a quality education in a safe environment by providing additional funds to help enhance the educational experience. The Foundation provides donors with a vehicle for making tax-deductible gifts to the district. In 15 years, the Foundation has raised more than \$6 million and received the Houston Business Promise Award from the Greater Houston Partnership.

2009 CRYSTAL AWARDS
MARCH 6, 2009
WESTIN GALLERIA



The 2009 Crystal Awards Gala – An Evening to Honor Teachers, Our Homegrown Heroes – is planned for Friday, March 6, at the Westin Galleria. Six outstanding Gulf Coast teachers will be recognized, along with the 2008 Teachers of the Year from 46 SBISD schools.

Congratulations to Mark Plunkett, sixth grade language arts and technology teacher at Cornerstone Academy, for his selection as one of the Crystal Awards winners!

Event Chairs Wendy and Ben Moreland are planning a fun and lively evening. They encourage each PTA to honor and celebrate the achievements of their Teacher of the Year.

- ◆ Purchase a table and host your school's Teacher of the Year, principal and their guests. Tables for 10, normally \$1500, are offered to PTAs for \$1000. Or purchase two tables and include additional faculty and PTA members.
- ◆ Sponsor your Teacher of the Year, principal and their guests by underwriting the cost of their seats (4) at \$100 each.
- ◆ Visit www.springbranchisd.com/sbef for other underwriting opportunities.
- ◆ Participate in Duncan and Donuts events (see page 5).
- ◆ Volunteer by calling 713.365.4781.

The awards dinner is presented by the Spring Branch Education Foundation (SBEF) and the Houston Chronicle. Wal-Mart is the Platinum Crystal Underwriter. All proceeds benefit SBISD's 32,000 students (see article on SBEF Grants).



Texas PTA Launches SMART

Start Meeting And Reading Together in 2009!

Start Meeting And Reading Together

As part of Texas PTA's Centennial Celebration in 2009, Texas PTA is launching a new literacy program called SMART - Start Meeting and Reading Together. All Local PTAs are encouraged to create and decorate school book collection bins for new and gently used books for children in disadvantaged and difficult circumstances. PTAs can enter contests for prizes and special recognition (spring and winter) for the most creative bin and most books collected. E-mail photos of your collection bins and the total number of books collected to smart@txpta.org. The spring deadline for the most creative bin and most books collected contests is May 15, 2009, with the winter deadline being December 11, 2009. Choose spring or winter or do both! Visit www.txpta.org/SMART.html for more info.

Let's get Texas reading more in 2009!



Parents Have Questions – SBISD’s Parent U has the Answers!

Be there!
Saturday, January 17, 2009
Spring Woods High School
2045 Gessner
8 -9 a.m. -- Registration and Continental Breakfast
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. – Learning Sessions

Being a parent in tough these days – from preparing healthy meals to preparing your kids for college – there’s so much to know! Spring Branch ISD’s Parent U is here to help!

In this half-day conference style event, choose from over 100 classes in English and Spanish designed to help you answer questions ranging from how to help your pre-schooler learn to read to how to help your high school student apply to college. How can I communicate better with my kids? How many AP classes should he take? How can I get my kids to stop watching t.v. and do something productive? The answers are waiting for you at Parent U!

Six learning tracks and courses specially designed for all ages and stages assure that you’ll come away with great information to help you help your kids succeed! Choose from:

- Academic Success
- Parenting Skills
- College Readiness
- Health and Wellness
- Safety
- Special Needs

Registration is Easy!

Registration is \$10 and scholarships are available. View the course catalog and register online at: <http://www.springbranchisd.com/partners/parentu/parentu.htm> . You may also print a Registration form ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) and return to your campus office or SBISD Community Relations, SBISD Administration Building, 955 Campbell Road.

Thank you Parent U underwriters!



Council of PTAs Calendar of Events 2009

Date	Time	Location	Program
Tuesday February 3, 2009	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Northbrook High School	Founder's Day Dinner
Friday March 6, 2009		Westin Galleria	Crystal Awards
Tuesday April 7, 2009	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	General Meeting; Lunch will be provided by Council
Saturday May 2, 2009	8:00 a.m.	Memorial City Mall	Running for the Arts 5K Walk/Run
Tuesday May 5, 2009	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	General Meeting; Lunch will be provided by Council
Wednesday May 6, 2009	6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	Council Awards Night 6:30 – 7:30 pm Elementary 8:00 – 9:00 pm Secondary
Tuesday May 12, 2009	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	Executive Meeting; Council Officers/New President's Orientation and Luncheon

Council of PTAs Executive Board 2008-2009

Officer	Name	Email
President	Mark Kemick	mkemick@comcast.net
1 st VP Programs	Camille Tarics	cnt4456@aol.com
2 nd VP Leadership	Lindy Tennet	ltennet@yahoo.com
3 rd VP Membership	Laura Casanover	lcasanover@yahoo.com
Secretary	Kay Kurisky	kkurisky@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Mike Story	storytunes@aol.com
Parliamentarian	Lisa Lundquist	lisalundquist@sbcglobal.net
Historian	David Davenport	hodad1969@aol.com

HELPFUL WEBSITES

SBISD PTA Council Website - www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/pta.htm

Check out the Council website – it has been updated and includes more information about Council and PTA in general. One of the additions provides links to resources about PTA and parenting in Spanish. Check it out.

Texas PTA Web site - www.txpta.org

Be sure to visit the members' site – you will need the user name and password from the back of your membership card. Find officer and chairman guides, membership information and more.

National PTA website - www.pta.org

Check out the "PTA Great Idea Bank" under Leadership Resources – Local Leaders (you will need username and password here as well)

Spring Branch ISD - www.springbranchisd.com

SBISD COUNCIL OF PTAs
2008/2009 School Bell Award

ENTRY FORM

DEADLINE: January 15, 2009

The School Bell Award will be presented at the Council's
Founder's Day Dinner on Tuesday, February 3, 2009

The School Bell Award is an individually engraved brass school bell which is presented to an outstanding SBISD educator who promotes the objects of the PTA and is an advocate for all children. Any Local Unit PTA may nominate one educator. All nominees must be PTA members.

COMPLETE YOUR ENTRY AND MAIL, E-MAIL OR DELIVER TO:

Pam Reynolds
11803 Fidelia Court, Houston, Texas 77024
(713) 977-7172
pam@txreynolds.com

NAME OF LOCAL UNIT PTA: _____

TYPE OF PTA (check one):

Elementary _____ Middle School _____ High School _____ Combined _____

PERSON

SUBMITTING ENTRY: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NOMINEE'S NAME: _____

NOMINEE'S SCHOOL: _____

Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Explain how your nominee has exceeded the expectations of his or her job description in promoting the objects of the PTA. (The objects of the PTA can be found on the back of the PTA membership card, in your Local Unit PTA bylaws and on the Texas PTA website - www.txpta.org).
2. Your essay should be double-spaced, typed, no more than two pages in length, have 1" margins at top and bottom, have 1/2" side margins and use font size 12.
3. All entries should include this completed form.
4. The time frame for your essay is one school year.

PLEASE NOTE: ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE TO BE ELIGIBLE.