

Casis Elementary School 2007-2008 Highlights

As we bring this school year to a close, I wanted to share with you some of the major accomplishments of which we – faculty, parents, students, and community members – can be particularly proud. Of course, so many great things happen over the course of a year, both large and small, seen and unseen, that we can highlight only a few. We have worked hard to build on Casis' outstanding record of achievement and continue its tradition of excellence. As we prepare for the next school year, we thank you for your support of Casis Elementary and our commitment to excellence. Have a great summer!

ANOTHER GREAT YEAR

TAKS Scores

Casis students continue to perform exceptionally well on standardized tests that are a part of the state's accountability system. During this school year, all 3rd, 4th and 5th graders took the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests. Below are the percentages of Casis students passing the different tests. Congratulations to everyone for such great TAKS scores!

As a campus, our students again performed very well. Here is a summary of our passing rates:

3 rd Grade Reading—100%	4 th Grade Reading—99%	5 th Grade Reading—100%
3 rd Grade Math—97%	4 th Grade Math—99%	5 th Grade Math—100%
	4 th Grade Writing—99%	5 th Grade Science—95%

Casis Anthology

For the 5th consecutive year we published our campus-wide anthology, which features the authentic, creative writing of each Casis student. Thanks to the generosity of the Casis PTA, each student and teacher also received a copy of his/her grade level book. Casis is a school where student writing is honored and celebrated.

Author Visits

In February, award-winning author Michael Buckley spent a day visiting our campus, talking with students, teachers, and parents about the writing process. We were inspired, entertained and educated by his stories and presentations. The authors that visit Casis love to come here because our students and parents are appreciative readers. Again, the financial and volunteer support of the PTA helps to make the authors' visits happen.

Leadership Casis

The Leadership Casis students would like to thank the Casis families for making each of our community outreach programs a huge success. This year the 5th grade Leadership students adopted the motto "Leadership in Action" and exceeded every expectation set for them. This is a list of our accomplishments this year thanks to all of our Casis families: New Student Reception, Pop Tabs Collection to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, Change for Change, Coats for Kids, Cards for the Troops, Reading is Fundamental of Austin "RIF," Make-A-Wish, and Hard Hats for Little Heads. LC also assisted during Kindergarten Round Up and Fun Run. Thank you to Leadership Committee chairs and to all the parents who participated in these very special events.

Music and Spanish Open Houses

Students had an opportunity to demonstrate what they do in Music and Spanish during Music In-Class Performances and Spanish Open Houses. To find out more about Spanish at Casis, you can visit the Casis Spanish website at www.casisspanish.com.

Casis Cares/Read Aloud

Casis Cares/ Read Aloud is now in its 7th year at Casis. As our community grows and changes so must our programs. The original goals of Casis Cares are to provide character education for our students and planning time for our teachers. We continue to value these goals as well as our wonderful parent volunteers. For the 2008-2009 school year Casis Cares and Read Aloud will remain the same for Kindergarten, and Read Aloud will be held each week for 1st-5th grades. The Casis staff will provide character education so that concepts and common language can be reinforced in a more cohesive and comprehensive manner across all areas of our campus. We appreciate the more than 200 parent volunteers who come to our school each year to provide support for this program. We look forward to your support in the future.

Technology Update

Our technology instruction and integration continues to improve. Thanks to the financial support of the PTA, we have a technology teacher who teaches students each week and a technology specialist who supports the operations of the computer lab, LCD projectors and maintenance and upgrades of over 250 computers at Casis.

Study Trips

5th grade students went on the 9th annual overnight study trip to Port Aransas, where they investigated various marine habitats up-close and hands-on. The trip serves as a culminating interdisciplinary activity, since each grade level at Casis learns about a different marine habitat every spring. This year, the 5th grade received funding from the annual Fun Run. As a part of their study of Texas history, our 4th grade students visited the Institute of Texan Cultures and the Alamo in San Antonio, as well as the Texas History Museum in Austin. Thanks to generous parent support, all students at Casis take a variety of curriculum-related field trips to make learning relevant and meaningful.

Casis Organic Garden

This year with great effort from the Casis PTA, parents, and our school community, we have added the Casis Organic Garden to our campus. Special thanks goes to Martin and Marika Milliken and to Robbi Cooper for their leadership and vision. We are in the process of developing lessons to support our science curriculum through gardening. This exciting venture will provide long-term benefits for our students. The human sundial is also a part of the gardens, which was dedicated to Casis as a gift from the 2007-2008 5th grade class.

A Learning Community

Teachers attended a variety of conferences and workshops in order to learn more about their field and returned to campus with new information and insight to share with their grade-level teams and the entire faculty. Many Casis teachers were also selected this year to present professional development sessions, and to write curriculum for Austin ISD. This summer, many Casis teachers will spend much of their time studying and learning, increasing their own knowledge and skills so that they can better teach their students. We are proud of the extra efforts of our faculty and truly believe that improving their own learning contributes to students' success.

Staffing Changes

We would like to congratulate Joan Hilgers on her retirement and would also like to honor and thank departing staff members for their hard work and dedication: Mia Roldan, Anna Castelleja, Erin Stangland, Jose Martinez, David Morales and Colleen Carr. We wish them the best of luck on their future endeavors.

We want to thank the many parent and community volunteers that make this school special.
We recognize the creativity and hard work that you dedicate to Casis.

At Casis, we'll continue to learn and improve. The positive partnership between home and school and parents and teachers, continues to be a significant factor in the quality of education at Casis. Our PTA executive board members, committee chairs, and volunteers work closely with the school to foster enhanced learning opportunities for students and to supply teachers with needed instructional resources, professional development, volunteer assistance and time for planning. We'll continue to strive for the delicate balance between the academic, social and emotional needs of each Casis child. We'll remain committed to creating an environment where students, faculty, parents and community members feel welcomed and encouraged to discover, teach and actively participate in a thoughtful learning community.

We look forward to seeing you in August, ready to begin another productive and exciting school year at Casis Elementary.