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**HEADLINES**

**HISD wants to 'Capture Kids' Hearts'**

Monday, February 08, 2010

**Andrea Waguespack**

Huffman ISD is currently working on a project that is dear to their hearts – and they hope to capture their students' hearts while they are at it.

"Capturing Kids' Hearts" is a program that aims to increase and maintain the relationships between students and the school staff. The theory is that a better relationship with teachers and staff will have a positive effect on attendance and discipline issues.

"If you don't have the students hearts, then you don't have their heads," said Cherrel Bocci, committee member and Huffman Middle School director of student nutrition.

"This program believes in the importance of making a connection with the students," Bocci added.

"HMS believes that every student should have a least one adult at school that they trust and who cares about them. It can be a teacher, food service personnel, or custodial workers," she said.

Teachers are given a variety of strategies, tools and opportunities to build a relationship with their students. The staff is also encouraged to be involved in student's lives beyond the classroom.

HISD plans to "capture kids' hearts" through classroom and school-wide activities, as well as clubs, organizations, parental involvement and incentives for attendance.

Knighting ceremonies are planned to recognize students who display good character and citizenship. New clubs have also been formed, and guest speakers have been invited to the campus to discuss good decision-making skills and staying safe.

The cost of training 50 professionals each year is \$26,450. The initiative is funded through district budgets and grants. A minimum of three years is needed to have all staff trained.

"This program is beneficial for veteran teachers as well as those who are new to the profession," said Bocci.

Committee members include Bocci, Jack Fillbrandt – co-chair/principal Ben Bowen Early Childhood Center; Karen Peddy – co-chair/assistant principal Huffman Middle School; Jean Isaly - assistant superintendent for curriculum and program services; Ed Garner, Transportation Director; Jaime Patterson, HMS Social Studies; Kristi Murray, HHS Counselor; Cindy Hoey - Copeland Elementary School and Huffman Intermediate School counselor; Debbie Taylor, parent; Jennifer Hinton, parent; and Teena Berryman, parent.

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