

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE AS

Returning home

Alumnus give back as district staff

If home is truly where the heart is, then several Chapel Hill alumnus have now returned to take their places among family

For Brantlee Bynum, in his first year at Chapel Hill as the ISS (In School Suspension) teacher and a coach, returning home to the district meant sharing in the same opportunity he once had.

“As a student, the district gave me opportunities to do what I wanted to do,” Mr. Bynum said. “I got a great education here and got to be involved with sports as an athlete and as a student manager which, along the way, helped me to realize that I wanted to come back here and be a coach.”

“In the position that I am in, I help students learn from their mistakes and make better choices as they continue their school career,” Mr. Bynum said. “As a coach, I try to give them the very best opportunity they can get out of the sport and to have a good time and have fun.”

“Chapel Hill is unique because even though we are a small school the students can get the same education they would at a bigger school,” Mr. Bynum said. “Our students are



Bynum

given numerous opportunities to go out and explore and better their education and that is all thanks to the great teachers, administration and staff that we have here at The Hill.”

Third grade teacher Shanna Nicholson has been a member of the Chapel Hill staff for 13 years. She attended Chapel Hill in her most formative years, through the second

grade, and returned to help her own students succeed.

“The most important thing for me is to build a relationship with my students,” Ms. Nicholson said. “Once they are mine, they are always mine. I love watching them grow and see what wonderful things they



Above are several of the alumnus who decided to return to Chapel Hill to help other students become future success stories just like them.

accomplish. I like to always remind them to make good choices and I don’t mind talking to them even when they are grown. I try to watch them in their extracurricular activities in and out of school. I push them hard to be successful and master whatever subject I am teaching, but I also just talk to them about being a ‘good person.’ I want them to remember they have someone who loves them and will be praying for them in everything they do.”

Ms. Nicholson has

idea what the “special sauce” is that makes Chapel Hill so unique.

“We care about each other as a campus, district and community. We support, pray and help each other. We care about all the kids and work together to make them successful. We really are a family!”

For Rebeca Soto, returning home to Chapel Hill has given her a chance to help others. Soto is an elementary teacher’s aide and has been a Chapel Hill employee for the past three years.

“Chapel Hill gave me

the courage and confidence in myself to pursue my goals in life so now I give my students

encouragement so that they continue to push themselves.”

“Chapel Hill is unique



Soto

because the staff goes above and beyond to make sure that their students are getting the best education possible. The community’s school spirit and support makes our school unique,” Ms. Soto said.

Stefani Craig graduated from Chapel Hill in 2007. With a master’s degree in social work, she has always had a desire to work with children and adolescents. She now gets the opportunity to do just that.

Read her story and those of other alumnus in the next edition.



## Chapel Hill serves as ‘public school district of choice’ for Northeast Texas

With a total student body of just over 1,000 districtwide, the single campus containing Elementary, Junior High, and High School is located just north of Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) on FM 1735 and CR 4660. With a focus on the success of each and every student, Chapel Hill is truly a place "Where Everybody is Somebody." This individual attention is found in intentionally smaller class sizes and through Chapel Hill's focus on the ability of students to pursue paths in the areas of Academics, Agriculture, Arts, and Athletics.

We are all about the As at Chapel Hill—not just the grades or the test, but Academics, Agriculture, Arts,

Athletics and Accountability. We are also focused on our growing number of alumnus who have returned to be a vital part of our district staff.

Chapel Hill's achievements in the Academic area are extensive. From the National Blue Ribbon recognized Elementary campus to the National Bronze Level High School ranked in the top 10% statewide by US News and World Report, Chapel Hill is consistently above state and regional averages for accountability measures.

In other areas of Academics such as University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitions, Chapel Hill has a strong history of outstanding student performance including a

See **CHOICE**, page 10



## THE ADVOCATE ASKS:

If you could change places with someone for one day, who would it be and why?



"LeBron James--so I can learn why an all-star athlete like him chose basketball!"

Kiera Hawkins  
5th Grade



"Johnny Depp--just to see how he got into what he does as an actor!"

Lilly Ellis  
8th Grade



"Mr. Ysasi--so I can learn how he does everything and what all he has to do as our principal!"

Dakotah White  
12th Grade

## Board SPOTLIGHT

### Shipp joins board as newest trustee

The Chapel Hill ISD Board of Trustees welcomed a new member at the March 2018 board meeting. Currently serving as Vice President of Priefert Steel Sales, Mr. Chris Shipp fills the position left by Mr. Jason Cox who moved to Longview.

Born and raised in Texarkana, Texas, Mr. Shipp joined the U.S. Navy in 1988 serving for 22 years as a cryptologic technician. Deploying on surface ships and submarines the majority of his career, he served on over 22 missions supporting the global war on terrorism and other military operations. His wife, Mrs. Shannon Shipp, also served in the U.S. Navy for 20 years. The couple retired from the Navy in 2010 and moved to East



At left, newly appointed trustee Chris Shipp is congratulated by board president Mike Edwards.

Texas.

Having served in the Navy since he was 18, Mr. Shipp was looking for a company to work another 20+ years. He found that company in Priefert Manufacturing. Mr. Shipp has served

in several capacities since joining the Priefert team working as a purchasing agent first and later as Director of Purchasing and General Manager before becoming vice president. He and his wife are the

parents of Chapel Hill students Dylan and Zachary Shipp.

"Chapel Hill is unique because it is a small school district with a family feel, but it offers big school oppor-

See **SHIPP**, page 10

## Superintendent Speaks...

### True accountability is not state imposed

Our vision at CHISD is to be the premier family-oriented school district of choice that provides a safe and exemplary educational experience and meets the needs of every student. Our daily mission focuses on interest-based learning inside and outside of the classroom as well as engaging, relevant and appropriate experiences for all students. Doing so allows the students to apply their new learning and knowledge in ways that will enable them to be a more productive human being and contribute to their well-being. Our students will then add value to the world they live in.

Our plan to accomplish this starts with



Levesque

the following question: for what am I accountable and to whom? The state of Texas has answered that question for every educator: accountability is to the state for high or rising test scores. This differs from how educators would answer that same question because a meaningful accountability system is community-based and

See **LEVESQUE** page 7



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[www.chisddevils.com](http://www.chisddevils.com)

The Advocate is a districtwide publication published at least four times during each school year. The inaugural edition was produced and distributed in April 2018. The Advocate is a FREE-to-reader publication featuring the celebrated accomplishments of Chapel Hill ISD students, staff and administration. This publication allows

### Publication's Purpose and Policy

students and staff to tell their own stories about the great things happening on The Hill. Every parent of every student in the district receives a FREE copy of this publication as well as all CHISD staff and key stakeholders with shared support of the district. Additional copies of The Advocate are also distributed throughout the com-

munity at various business locations and an electronic version of the publication is also available at [www.chisddevils.com](http://www.chisddevils.com).

Editorial columns printed in this publication are the expressed opinion of the individual and do not reflect the opinions of all Chapel Hill ISD students, staff and administration. For more information about

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# Mrs. Jessie prepares to retire after 40 years of service

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

She's not completely sure of her exact first year at Chapel Hill. What started as a governmental summer program called Manpower eventually turned into a four-decade career for Mrs. Jessie.

Serving sack lunches to students at Chapel Hill is how it first started and eventually she was hired on as staff.

"At the time, Chapel Hill ISD was a little building with K-8 all in one. Mr. (Jerry) Frost was the superintendent, principal and teacher all in one," Mrs. Jessie recalled. "He first hired me to just answer the phone for him. I would have to go the classroom and get him when someone called. There was a telephone outside his room that he would answer whenever I went down to tell him someone had called. I would sit in his office and watch as the kids would pass by and just look at me. I kept asking myself 'am I really supposed to be



Mrs. Jessie, as she has always been affectionately called by her Chapel Hill family, is preparing to retire after nearly four decades on staff.

here?" I went home and thought about it and decided I could do it. I went back the next day and never left."

In fact, Mrs. Jessie flourished in her new position doing just about whatever it took to help keep Chapel Hill running smoothly.

"I was Mr. Frost's runner," she said. "Whatever he needed while

he was in the classroom, I would get it. For a long time, things stayed the same, but then I noticed the district was starting to really grow."

And grow it did. As the enrollment increased, the need for more staff and facilities also increased. At one point, Mrs. Jessie almost left the district.

"One of the other staff members had taken a job at Mount Pleasant and asked if I wanted to come too. I thought I might be interested so I applied and got offered a job, but I just never went. By then, I had found my home and it was at Chapel Hill."

The soon-to-be retiree recalls how she came to be known as Mrs. Jessie by every single person on campus.

"I was working with the kindergarten class and the kids couldn't say my last name, Bratton, so they just started calling me Mrs. Jessie and it just stuck. Even the adults call me that to this day."

And to this day, Mrs. Jessie is a campus favorite among students and staff alike.

"I am crazy about everyone here at Chapel Hill especially the little ones. You'd be surprised what a little hug will do for a child and what it does for me too. I just love being around them."

See MRS JESSIE, page 11



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UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

24- 8th Grade Night on the Hill  
5:30 p.m (meeting to discuss high school courses)

26-Pre-K and Kinder Roundup;  
private consultations; call for an appointment

27-Senior Citizen Lunch

MAY

3-FFA Banquet 5:30 p.m. MPF

7-Athletic Banquet 6 p.m. MPF

10-8th Grade 4-on-4 Basketball Fundraiser 6-10 p.m.

10-UIL Academic Banquet 6 p.m. MPF

11-Junior High SEM Showcase

11-HS Band and Choir Concert 7 p.m. MPF

12-1st Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament 8 a.m. at Chapel Hill High School

14-Senior Trip to Six Flags

15-Red Awards (Theatre) 6 p.m. MPF

17-CHEF Banquet 6 p.m. MPF

18-Academic Blanket Presentation 8:45 a.m. MPF

18-Senior Citizen Lunch 12 p.m.

18-Seniors & Kinder Graduate Walk 1 p.m.

18-Senior/Faculty/Game 2 p.m. Gym

21-Kinder Graduation 6 p.m. in MPF

21-Junior High 9 Weeks Award Assembly-Cafeteria 9 a.m.

22-Senior/Faculty Softball Game 9 a.m.

22-8th Grade Trip to Pearly Gates

23-Baccalaureate at First Baptist Church 6 p.m.

23-Top 10 Percent Breakfast at Herschels 8:30 a.m.

24-Senior Breakfast/CPR Training/ Graduation Rehearsal 8:30 a.m. Cafeteria-Gym

24-8th Grade Parent Breakfast 9 a.m. MPF

24-Elementary Principal's Pride 9 a.m. Elementary Gym

24-School Board Meeting 6 p.m.

26-High School Graduation 7 p.m. High School Gym

26-Project Graduation all night

happening on the 

Transfer applications currently accepted

Chapel Hill ISD transfer applications are currently being accepted for the 2018-19 academic school year. Interested students should complete the following steps to be considered:  
Complete the application for

transfer currently available at [www.chisddevils.com](http://www.chisddevils.com). For questions about a section of the application, contact Dawn Lockaby by email at: [dlockaby@chisddevils.com](mailto:dlockaby@chisddevils.com) or (903)-572-8096 ext. 797.  
Along with the completed appli-

See TRANSFER, page 7

CHEF continues to provide support to district

Each year, the Chapel Hill Education Foundation offers teachers and administrators the opportunity to apply for grants to support innovative programs or projects that will enhance student academic performance and support the objectives, goals and initiatives of Chapel Hill ISD. Individuals or teams who are involved in the instruction of students or related support services benefiting students are eligible. Applications are generally accepted in April.  
The Chapel Hill Education Foundation

(CHEF) is a non-profit corporation formed in 2003.  
The purpose of CHEF is to promote scholarships in the Chapel Hill Independent School District by providing financial support, leadership and professional expertise for students and teachers to colleges, universities, and trade or technical schools and professional seminars. In addition, the foundation provides financial support through grants to the Chapel Hill campuses for qualified educational projectsThe founda-

tion's scholarship recipients are evaluated on varying categories for educational assistance. One of the factors in determining scholarship recipients each year is participation in events supported by CHEF.  
High school students receive points throughout the year based on participation. The foundation believes student participation is vital to the district's existence and allows Chapel Hill students to be a part of the development of the foundation for their classmates.



Tournament rescheduled

The 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 12.  
Registration will be accepted through Friday, May 4.  
This event is a fundraiser for the Class of 2020 and will help support the Junior Prom and Project Graduation. Registration is limited in each division. For more information on the registration form, waiver, rules, and sponsor information, email: [hamison@chisddevils.com](mailto:hamison@chisddevils.com) or [cgarrett@chisddevils.com](mailto:cgarrett@chisddevils.com).



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# Destination Imagination

## Elementary students prepare for Global Finals in Knoxville

Several groups of elementary students are enjoying consistent successes in Destination Imagination competition. And arguably, the valuable lessons these young students are learning in the process will last them a lifetime.

Recently, nine teams competed at the regional Destination Imagination meet in Mesquite. Two of the teams competed in the Fine Arts challenge called Change of Tune.

For this year's challenge, the teams were given a \$150 budget. The task was to create and present a two-act musical that included a change in plans. Because songs are used in musicals to help advance the storyline, teams also used music and original lyrics to help tell their stories. They had to research different production techniques ranging from acrobatics to illusion to digital effects. The objective is to use two of the techniques to create a spectacle for their presentations. To top it all off, teams had to construct a set with background, scenery and/or props that would visibly transform live on stage all while using a technical aspect such as a pulley system to tell their story.

Along with their team challenge, each team has to compete in an Instant Challenge. Unlike the other challenge where teams have months to prepare, plan and create their solution, Destination Imagination participants have to solve an Instant Challenge in a matter of a few minutes. This is designed to help students build quick, creative and critical thinking skills. Think of it as mini-brain training.

At a tournament, Instant Chal-



Imagination Station, one of the successful Destination Imagination teams this year includes: back row (l-r) Ephram Vaseleck, Will Lake, Chloe Kimbro; front row (l-r) Kolby Turner and Denver Dennard.

enges are kept confidential and teams do not know the details including what type of challenge they have to complete (task based, performance based, or a combination of the two), until they walk in the room to solve it.

At the recent competition Chap-

el Hill Elementary was definitely up for both challenges. One of the teams took home third place out of 22 teams and the other team placed first and won a Renaissance Award for outstanding design, engineering, execution and performance.

The first-place winners then com-

See DI page 8



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# It's All About the As

AT CHAPEL HILL

## Students enjoy successful UIL season

It's been a season of Red Devil success for Chapel Hill students competing in UIL academic events. Participating in events from computer application to headline writing to informative speaking, Chapel Hill students 'rose to the occasion' and represented the district well.

Students recently competed at the UIL Regional Academic Meet placing fourth overall. Several students will now head to state in May. Those qualifying for a trip to Austin include: Divya Mistry, 1st Place-Computer Applications; Jacey McElveen, 4th Place, Computer Applications (state alternate) and Zachary Shipp, 1st Place, Computer Science.

In feature writing, Jayden O'Briant took 1st Place in Feature Writing; Ariana Vega, 3rd Place, Feature Writing; Jayden O'Briant, 1st Place, Headline Writing; Kate Matthews, 2nd Place, Headline Writing; Nathan Scolaro, 1st Place, Informative Speaking and Computer Science Team Regional Champions Zachary Shipp, Riley Perry, Divya Mistry and Ben Swiger.

"UIL competition, specifically speech and debate, allows students the ability to focus deeply on one subject area for a lengthy amount of time, develop arguments using critical thinking skills,



and speak in front of an audience to develop public speaking skills," said Mrs. Telly Hall, UIL Co-Coordinator. "To be successful in UIL, students must practice and perform. We begin working in the summer before the school year begins and then compete almost every weekend during the fall semester against larger schools in order to be the best in district, work our way through the region competition and

hopefully on to the state competition in May.

"My favorite moment of student success in UIL this season was hearing the names of our CX team (Santiesteban and Scolaro) called as advancing to Day 2 of the UIL State CX meet. We had worked so hard for that moment and then to know they were one of the top 16 teams in the State was such a great moment," she said.

Mr. P. Anthony Williams,

Co-Coordinator, sees so many rewards for students involved in UIL competition.

"I think it can give a student confidence," Mr. Williams said. "Often times, students think that can't make a name for themselves in high school in they aren't an athlete. UIL Academics will help students deepen their level of knowledge, set goals and achieve them through hard work. That builds confidence. It will also keep them on track during high school and help develop better study skills."

Mr. Williams offers advice on how to be successful at competing.

"To truly be successful in

See UIL, page 7



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UIL from page 6

UIL, it takes a student that it is willing to go well beyond the extra mile. It takes a commitment, not only with time, but with effort and preparation,” he said.

“One of favorite moments of the UIL season happened on Friday night after the Regional written test for Computer Science. One student gave another student a huge Hi-5 when they realized the student’s score put them in first place and gave them a chance to go to State.”

For Ms. Courtney Wilkins, UIL math coach, the benefits of competing are far reaching.

“UIL competition allows our students the ability to take their academics to the next level,” Ms. Wilkins said. “I have seen my kids win and I have seen them lose, but I have never seen them just quit. Competing in UIL academics affords our students the opportunity to develop some

grit, determination, and perseverance. It takes a lot of guts to compete again after a tough loss. However, they make mistakes and learn from them, and my students are always hungry for the next competition knowing they are not competing against other schools but themselves. They measure their success by their improvement, not in the final standings. And whether we are 1st in district or 16th (and we have been both in the past two years) they return weekend after weekend proud to represent our school and cheering each other on.”

Ms. Wilkins believes practice makes perfect—or at least better proficiency.

“I believe to be successful at UIL competition, the coach and the students need to have the ability and the willingness to put in the time to practice, practice, practice,” she said. “Our kids are talented but sharpening up that



TRANSFER from page 4

cation, all applicants must also provide the below listed documents to the superintendent’s office. The application and documents can be emailed to [dlockaby@chisddevils.com](mailto:dlockaby@chisddevils.com) or sent via USPS mail to Chapel Hill ISD, Attn: Dawn Lockaby, 1069 CR 4660, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, 75455. Additional required documents to accompany the application for transfer include:

- Copy of last report card
- Copy of last test (appropriate state/grade level testing)
- Copy of attendance record
- Copy of behavioral record
- Written statement from parent/guardian requesting transfer of student(s) stating the reason for the transfer request

raw talent takes countless hours and our students are involved in multiple activities.”

For Ms. Wilkins, one UIL moment in particular still stands out this year.

“My favorite moment from this UIL season has to be when I told Saul Martinez that he placed first in the district in Calculator Applications,” she recalled. “It took everything I had not to run up to the holding room where every student in the district competition was being held. When I got there he saw me walk in the door and he just stood there like a deer in headlights - he later said he knew I either had really good news or really bad news. When I told him he was first he was jumped up and down in disbelief and the team started clapping for him, then the rest of our school started clapping for him, and quickly the whole room erupted in applause. I was so proud of him and proud to be his coach.”

After final submission, the Transfer Committee will review the documents and take in to account class size etc. When a decision is reached as to the approval or disapproval of transfer, the applicant will be notified. The approximate timeframe for this process is dependent on the time of year the application is submitted.

If approved, the transfer fee per semester is due on the first day of that semester.

- 1st child-\$1,000 per year-\$500 per semester \$1,000 cost for family
  - 2nd child-\$250 per year-\$125 per semester \$1,250 cost for family
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# Little Dribblers continue successful partnership with district

While it's unclear just how long the Little Dribblers organization has been a part of Chapel Hill, what is clear is its continued impact to the district and its participants.

"Little Dribblers is truly an extension of Chapel Hill ISD," said Keith Strickland, Little Dribblers Chapel Hill president. "We are honored to have been a part of this district for many years. It's been a great partnership from the very beginning."

With 112 students participating, the league is made up of 12 teams which includes two girls junior teams, three boys junior teams, three girls major teams and four boys major teams.

"We look at Little Dribblers as a feeder program into Chapel Hill's junior high and varsity basketball programs," Mr. Strickland said.

"With Little Dribblers, we work to develop the interests of our kids and to also allow them to find out if this is what they really want to do. The ultimate goal is to teach them the basics of basketball, how to work together as a team and to learn to be responsible. Sure, it's great if we also win games, but at the end of the day, Little Dribblers is about teaching children life skills. They learn to work within the rules and not outside of them. They also learn that they have to be committed to this which means being at practice and games unless they have a good reason not to be."

With limited gym space, Strickland credits the Chapel Hill coaching staff for helping to coordinate practice times and games.

"It has truly been a joy to work with Coach Garrett, Coach Grissom and Coach Williams," Mr. Strickland said. "They have always been very supportive of Little Dribblers."

Strickland also credits another group of individuals for the organization's success.

"We are so fortunate that we have such supportive parents," he said. "Many of the parents volunteer to assist with summer league programs traveling most weekends to tournaments. We are fortunate a lot of our parents are willing to do that to help our kids get even better."

Strickland, who has children in the district, also serves on several other Chapel Hill boards. He has been Little Dribblers president since 2015.

"We feel important to the overall process and we get great support from the district all the way up to Mr. Levesque. That really means a lot to us."

Last year, Chapel Hill had the honor of hosting the National Little Dribblers tournament.

"The only way we could have pulled it all off was because of the



**Both the boys and girls Chapel Hill Little Dribblers teams finished second place at nationals held April 20-22 in Franklin, TX. The girls team missed winning by one point from a basket at the buzzer.**

support of the district and neighboring schools," he said. "We had to close school for 2 ½ days because we needed our students and staff to make this all work. We even enlisted the help of Mount Pleasant and Harts Bluff because the only way we could pull this off was with additional gyms. Each of those districts allowed us to use two of their gyms to host the event."

In all, games for 78 teams were spread throughout six Titus County gyms. More than 800 players, bringing parents, grandparents and coaches with them, descended on Mount Pleasant last April.

"It's difficult to measure the impact to the local economy, but we know that hotels and restaurants greatly benefited from the tournament because all of those players and their parents and friends had to eat and they had to sleep."

Strickland sees the impact of Little Dribblers to the district as far reaching.

"This is much bigger than basketball," he said. "I believe we are helping to change lives through this program and I'm honored to be a part of it."

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DI from page 5

peted at the State Destination Imagination Competition in Mansfield, Texas. The Chapel Hill students had the distinction of being the only elementary team to win a DaVinci Award for outstanding creativity. The team again took home the first-place trophy.

With two first place wins, Chapel Hill Elementary is now looking forward to competing at Global Finals for Destination Imagination in Knoxville, Tennessee for the second year in a row.

Global Finals is the culminating event for Destination Imagination season and is the world's largest celebration of student creativity.

Each May, more than 1,400 of the top-scoring DI teams from 45 U.S. states and 14 countries gather at the University of Tennessee to showcase their innovative challenge solutions.

More than 17,000 people attend the event each year and the competition consists of interactive exhibits, pin trading, skills workshops, international events and more.

"DI helps provides a sense of belonging and fosters teamwork, confidence, problem solving skills, public speaking and much more," said Ms. Misty Lake, Chapel Hill Elementary Principal.

"I have seen students who enter the program, outside of their comfort zone, build confidence to speak in front of people and conquer their fears. The friendships that these students develop through the DI program are ones that will last a lifetime."

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Everything is awesome, everything is cool when you're part of a team;  
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Everything is better when we stick together;  
Some have said you and I are gonna win forever.

Just as the characters in The Lego movie sang in 2014, the students at Chapel Hill Elementary are taking the role of imagination very seriously and applying it to AweSEM learning. The elementary SEM lab focuses on allowing students to experience learning and creativity using a different approach from the traditional way of teaching. The idea behind utilizing the SEM lab is to take the strategies used in gifted education to improve the learning of all students on campus.

Mrs. Caren Fielder, SEM coordinator, has been at the helm of this unique lab for the past nine years. "What I love about the AweSEM lab is that it makes the students better problem solvers and team players," Mrs. Fielder said. "They learn to think critically and work well with others. Like The Lego movie, we promote the idea that everyone is good at something. We want our students to know that they can make an impact in the world."

SEM stands for Schoolwide Enrichment Model which was first developed by Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli in 1978. His idea behind the SEM Triad was to have three different types of learning that could engage stu-

dents of all academic abilities and interests. These different types of learning can be achieved by hands-on activities, exploration and group work that students are always very responsive to and enjoy.

The first type of learning that the students get to experience in the SEM lab is the general exploratory type of activities. This type of learning mainly targets students on the Pre-K, kindergarten and first grade levels because they are still learning about and exploring things like their environment and cause and effect. Some of the activities the SEM Lab features on this level include manipulating objects to create anything the students imagine, using figures to build models, computer coding games and learning to work as a team.

The second model type is group-training activities and project-based learning. This model is geared toward students in grades 2-3. Because these students have explored and learned the first part of the SEM lab, they get to take a survey to find out what their interests and abilities are. Students in these grade levels are exposed to STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) and STEAM (Science Team Engineering Arts Math) learning. Students get paired with groups that have similar interests and get to work together to achieve an activity. Engineering and building are the biggest components of this part of the triad. Students get to learn how things are made and how the math



and science behind it all works. This opens up numerous ideas and opportunities for students to create something they never have before and to be a part of "the brains behind the operation".

Lastly, the grades 4-5 students are part of the third type of learning in the enrichment triad. These students are experienced in working as groups and get to assist each other during activities that are being performed in the lab. Activities in the SEM lab for these students include cooking, coding/programming, working to produce a product for a real audience, investigation of real problems and visiting different parts of the community.

"Some exciting places the students have gotten the opportunity to visit with our SEM lab include the Mount Pleasant Airport, the Mount Pleasant Animal Shelter and Northeast Texas Community College," Mrs. Fielder explained. "Visiting these different places in our community provide for a different learning experience that our students appreciate. They get to learn about the airplanes used at our airport and the history behind some of them. They also learn how animals in the shelter are taken care of and efforts they can make to help

the shelter in our community. They also get to see, first hand, all of the different things our community college has to offer. In getting to visit all of these places, the imagination and dreams of our students soar higher than ever before. They learn about the things they can achieve and different career paths they could possibly follow. It is so neat to watch their "wheels turn" as they learn new and exciting things each week."

At Chapel Hill Elementary, the mission of the SEM lab is to provide a unique experience for students that will assist them in applying learning and knowledge. The ultimate goal of the SEM lab is to nurture more productive human beings who contribute to not only their own well-being, but to the well-being of others. Implementation of the 3 Es (Enjoyment, Engagement and Enthusiasm) in the SEM lab is assisting in achieving those program goals for the students at Chapel Hill.

"Watching our students get to experience this type of innovative learning makes us super excited for the future of our students," Mrs. Fielder explained. "We can't wait to see what kind of AweSEM things our students will achieve for their community in the future."





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**CHOICE** *from page 2*  
a second place overall statewide trophy, first place teams in speech and debate, and state champion teams in computer applications and journalism.

Students with the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) have also consistently placed well at state competitions and competed in national competitions in multiple events. Several students have been recognized at the national level for their abilities with business software.

Teams have competed and placed several years at Destination Imagination competing at the Global level.

Students throughout the district are given opportunities to pursue interest-based learning outside the regular classroom through the School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM). Students have pursued interests as diverse as non-profit support and fundraising for issues, scrapbooking, medical and veterinary job

shadowing and business development. Many of these interests have become programs at the school including: cosmetology, robotics, outdoor education, and bass fishing. At the elementary level, the SEM Lab provides students guided experiences in many different interest-based areas throughout the year. In junior high and high School, more specific focus through interest groups allows students to explore a single area more in-depth.

Mr. Marc Levesque said, “We don't make the mistake of asking a student what they want to be when they grow up. We ask questions like what problems do you want to solve and how?”

Students at the high school have opportunities along academic and career paths including the potential to earn college credit from NTCC while in high school.

Many Chapel Hill students graduate with 24 or even more hours of college credit having

completed the equivalent of an entire year of college at the highly reduced, dual-credit cost of \$70 per credit hour or \$210 per class.

Some students are even now graduating having completed the basic requirements of 42 hours transferable to any Texas public university as 'Core Complete' or having completed an associate's degree of 60 or more hours. Chapel Hill also provides tuition paid, work-ready certification programs through NTCC in industrial maintenance, robotics, cosmetology, auto tech and pharmacy tech.

Chapel Hill's outstanding agriculture program provides leadership and skills development for a broad group of students of all ages. Programs offered include raising livestock, public speaking, agricultural mechanics and career/leadership development events. Chapel Hill's Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Jr. FFA members consistently

compete well at competitions locally and across the state.

Chapel Hill FFA members have also served as area and district officers, attended state and national FFA events and placed well in Leadership Development Events (LDEs) and Career Development Events (CDEs).

The Chapel Hill Fine Arts program continues to expand a tradition of great talent and performance. With a history of state placing One-Act Play (OAP) teams and outstanding musical theatre, drama at Chapel Hill continues to create opportunities for students to develop and display their talents.

Music in many ways is also learned by students at Chapel Hill with classroom instruction and performances for elementary students and classes in band, choir, ensemble and Applied/Lab Music for junior high and high school students.

Art is highlighted at Chapel Hill with classroom time for elementary students

and classes for junior high and high school students. The Fine Arts Department now offers monthly 'Club Red' activities to offer performances and displays from all areas in the Arts as a combined program.

Athletics at Chapel Hill is an active opportunity for students. With teams consistently making district playoffs and beyond, student athletes learn about life on the court and off the field. Chapel Hill continues to expand Athletic opportunities into developing areas like soccer, powerlifting and swimming.

Basketball is huge at Chapel Hill for all ages beginning with Little Dribblers and leading to a strong secondary program.

Baseball, softball, volleyball, track and cross country are also available to junior high and high school students with golf and tennis also offered at the high school level. Elementary students regularly have physical education activities and playtime on the covered play areas.

Chapel Hill accepts transfers with students attending from across Titus, Camp, Franklin, Morris and Upshur counties. Transfers are accepted on an application basis with attention paid to discipline concerns, academics, attendance and parental involvement.

Mr. Marc Levesque, superintendent, said:

"We want students that will add value to Chapel Hill and that gain value from Chapel Hill." Currently about 32 percent of Chapel Hill students are transfers.

Approved transfer students pay an annual tuition fee of \$1,000 for the first student in a family and \$250 for the second and third student with no charge for additional students in the family.

The tuition fee is roughly equivalent to the average property tax on a household in the district. Transfer packets may be obtained in the Superintendent's Office or call (903) 572-8096 x797.

To advertise in *The Advocate*, call Mike Hall at (903) 572-8096 ext 789

**SHIPP** *from page 2*  
tunities,” Mr. Shipp explained. “If you have an interest, Chapel Hill most likely has a place where you can explore that interest and excel. Having served in the U.S. Navy; our children attended a few different schools in Hawaii and Maryland prior to Mount Pleasant. We had some good and some bad experiences with these schools. Ensuring our children were able to attend great schools was a primary consideration to where we would settle upon retirement. While we knew the general area we would settle in, we wanted to find the best school in the area to find a home. We researched the school districts within a 30-40 mile radius of Mount Pleasant and Chapel Hill shined as the best one.”

Shipp looks forward to his tenure as a Chapel Hill board member.

“My drive is to see the district make the future and not wait for it,” Mr. Shipp said. “As a CHISD board member, I want to be involved in doing all I can to ensure our children have the tools and resources needed to make it in the future; to be successful and to excel in life.”

If asked, Mr. Shipp knows exactly what he would tell a friend considering Chapel Hill for their children.

“The first and most important thing {I would tell them} is how wonderful the staff at Chapel Hill is,” he said. “The children at Chapel Hill are blessed with loving, support-

ive, exciting teachers and staff who take the time to put every individual child first. Nothing is more important than knowing that you are leaving your children in the hands of good people who genuinely care about them. The second thing would be that Chapel Hill does everything they can to not only teach the three Rs, but to offer many areas of study to appeal to many types of children. From C-Team to ag to drama and debate, from band to choir to journalism and almost anything else you can think of, Chapel Hill finds a way to reach the heart of your child and their interests. Additionally, Chapel Hill's ability to provide a strong educational foundation for children is evident by all the different areas in which Chapel Hill is sending kids to state and national competitions as well as giving them opportunities to travel and grow into responsible adults.”

Mr. Shipp's passion for the continued and future success of Chapel Hill is quite evident.

“Many schools in this country are neglected by the federal and state level,” Mr. Shipp explained. “Chapel Hill sets itself apart by being focused on the education foundation at the school. I want to do my part as a member of the school board to continue that success in providing the best education we can for our children as we continue to prepare our children to make that future.”



**LEVESQUE** *from page 2*  
local needs and conditions.

We believe in community-based accountability at CHISD and that is why we are all about the As (Accountability in Academics, Agriculture, Athletics and the Arts). We believe Accountability is the means by which CHISD determines its success at providing a quality education to all of our students. True accountability should be designed such that every educator supplies evidence as to his or her effectiveness. It should support the professionalism of teachers where most of the educational decisions about students are made. It should guide improvement along the way and not be derived from a single data-collection point (state testing) at the end of the school year. True accountability is shared. It assigns each task to the appropriate stakeholder with the authority to see it through. It is about improvement. It meets each student wherever he or she happens to be and then moves him or her toward a compelling future.

While it is very likely the state of Texas will continue to define schools with high stakes testing (A thru F ratings), CHISD recognizes the disconnect. True accountability is not state based but community based.

*Mr. Marc Levesque has served as Superintendent of Schools for Chapel Hill Independent School District since 2000.*









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