



San Antonio Independent School District
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Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

San Antonio Independent School District Supports Student Success Through Sports & Pro Athlete Mentoring

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – January 20, 2009

The San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) – the 13th largest in Texas – is first to implement the new STAR Literacy Program to support the success of its 55,000 students.

SAISD is proactive in seeking engaging programs that promote academic success, student motivation and good sportsmanship. Most recently, they discovered the STAR Literacy Program newly released by Learning Through Sports, Inc.

“Today’s students expect an engaging learning experience and we see the STAR Literacy Program as a great way to reach today’s computer savvy, video game generation to assist us in two very important at-risk areas,” said Deputy Superintendent Betty Burks.

First, the STAR Literacy Program functions as a dropout recovery resource in the critical window of grades 4-8.

Second, in junior high and high schools, the program intervenes in an escalating epidemic of poor sportsmanship among student-athletes.

The question is, how does STAR Literacy reach these students differently from anybody else?

The STAR Literacy Program combines interactive online curriculum (including TEKS-aligned Math, Reading and Character Education) with engaging sports video games and professional athlete mentoring to help students improve basic skills, motivation, character and sportsmanship.

“Our student-athletes are prone to mimic the poor behavior exhibited by sports figures they watch on television,” said SAISD Executive Director of Athletics Gil Garza. “The STAR Literacy Program’s mentoring solution is a great alternative, connecting student-athletes to positive sports role models.”

“The STAR Literacy Program perfectly complements our goals of developing the ‘whole athlete.’ As coaches, we want to see them ‘bigger, faster and stronger’ not just physically but also mentally,” Garza explained.

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In a recent mentoring session, former NFL quarterback Tony Banks asked, “How many of you come to school only to play sports?” An overwhelming 75% of students raised their hands.

SAISD Superintendent Robert Durón was taken aback. “I was shocked that so many of our students are motivated by sports and games,” he said.

Durón, a former high school baseball coach, is no stranger to the life lessons inherent in sports.

“Respect for self and others, discipline and hard work – all of these things can be carried from the playing fields and courts into the classrooms, homes and community,” said Durón.

Student responses to the mentoring sessions confirm Durón’s intuitions. Students are connecting to the personal experiences and obstacles overcome by STAR Mentor Tony Banks, a local hero who played for the Houston Texans.

“The STAR Literacy Program’s approach is something that is innate in every one of today’s students,” said Brian M. Shulman, President & CEO of Learning Through Sports, Inc.

“They are attuned to digital applications and games, and for them, sports is a microcosm for their lives. These elements work for them, and that’s why we’ve integrated these elements into the STAR Literacy Program,” Shulman said.

Videos of the professional athlete mentoring sessions now underway at SAISD will soon be available at www.learningthroughsports.com.

For more information on the STAR Literacy Program, contact Learning Through Sports toll-free at 1 (866) 552-9192, or visit www.learningthroughsports.com.

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