



Lone Star High School Case Study

Texans love football. That may be one reason why the state has some of the largest high schools in the nation. Frisco Independent School District, located 30 miles north of Dallas, strives to be different. Its mission is “to know every student by name and need.” And, Lone Star High School, a diverse, top rated public school with a little over 2,000 students, takes that mission to heart.

“Our district has what we call the ‘small school model’. At least we are smaller than many of the other districts in North Dallas. All our high schools are 5A with between 1,800 and 2,100 students. This gives our kids more opportunity to do what they want to do. We have 12 different football teams, 12 different drill teams, 12 different theatre arts programs. Having smaller schools also enables us to know our students better and give them the support they need,” explained Assistant Principal Jody Brown.

In our district, Lone Star is known as the ‘relationship school’. That’s what we hang our hat on. We think we do that better than any other school. We embed questions in our interviews to make sure we hire teachers who know how to build strong relationships,” he said. “Each staff member has what we call a ‘Round Up Group’ with 10 to 15 kids. We follow the students in our group from their freshman through senior year. During a normal school year, we meet every Monday and give our kids an opportunity to talk and tell us what we could do better. This lets us get to know each student in our school personally. If any of them are having problems, we uncover those issues and can work together to solve them. Because of COVID, many of the high schools in our district had lots of families opt out of graduation. Our high school had over 95% attendance.”

To help everyone in the school community get to know one another, the high school showcases the stories of students, teachers, and staff who “make our family great” through a weekly “Faces of Lone Star” series. This series is broadcast through social media and on TV monitors located throughout the school using The Scholastic Network. Upon entering the school visitors are greeted by friendly staff and see the Faces of Lone Star displayed on a large monitor in the reception area.

"We have The Scholastic Network throughout our school. We have it on monitors in the reception area, library, and counselor's office and we just added one TV near the gym for passing periods," Mr. Brown said. "When games are on, they will turn on the TV in the gym. Soon we'll be adding TV screens in the band, orchestra and choir room and the field house. If I can find a place to put it in our cafeteria, I want our messages to be broadcast there."

"Communication is always something we are trying to improve on. Kids were missing morning announcements as they transitioned to our CTE [Career Technology Education] Center. And, they really don't listen to announcements anyway. They were missing important information but now they see it throughout the day," Mr. Brown said. "I really like that we can show live events on the Network. Now kids don't have to miss seeing all the events that go on while they're in school." "I like that a student can take a video of something that's happening, edit it and upload it to the system. One of our 7th graders can be at a track meet and immediately upload the video for the teacher to post. We can show live content from anywhere, any time and display it on any or all of the televisions."

Inspiring students to prepare for life after graduation is another reason Lone Star High School chose The Scholastic Network. "When you talk to our lead counselor, she is most excited that students are getting information from the Network's post-secondary college and military sponsors about the programs they offer and about how to enroll," Mr. Brown said. "Something that's going to be tracked this year is how many students get accepted to college or enlist in the military. We just hired someone to manage our CCMR [College, Career, and Military Readiness] program. She'll also want to use the Network to share information about SAT prep and other ways we can help our kids get accepted to college."

As he plans for the 2020-21 School Year, Mr. Brown is considering how to fully utilize The Scholastic Network to support his students. "I know that we don't use Scholastic Network to its full potential. I'm over our CTE program and several of my kids would be very interested in creating videos to put on the Network. They are incredibly talented and some of them have won awards for video production and short films," he said. "We're meeting on Monday to make sure we're ready to keep kids safe from COVID when they return to school. I'm going to suggest that we use the Network to display health and safety messages and reinforce our new procedures."

As one of the leaders of the "relationship school", Mr. Brown knows how important it is to be able to count on your business partners. He counts The Scholastic Network as one partner who is always there for him. "Anything that we ever need gets taken care of immediately," Mr. Brown said. "The tech support we get from John [John DeLaGarza, Manager of Customer Relations and Technical Support] is amazing. He's always ready to help me even before I need it."