



Raines High School provides an alternative educational environment for students with hands-on, project-based learning

Amazing Things are Happening at Raines High School

Project-based learning offers an alternative way for Katy students to succeed

Written by Shetye Cypher | Photography by Kristofor Rodriguez

Raines High School (RHS), named after Martha Raines who taught mathematics in Katy ISD for many years, is a small high school in comparison to Katy's eight others who are the educational home to thousands of students. With just under 200 students, RHS is able to use their low student-to-teacher ratio and smaller environment to each student's educational advantage by offering two alternative instructional models.

Engaged Learning

RHS principal Becky Bracewell-Tucker feels passionate about how the school operates. "It is our mission to graduate students who are college ready, work ready and community ready. In our project-based learning environment, we teach the state and district curriculum that prepares kids for college, but we go one step further - we teach our students how to apply that knowledge to a real-life situation," says Bracewell-Tucker.

RHS uses the Engage Learning Model for designing and executing project-based learning. According to Bracewell-Tucker, as project designers, teachers design relevant projects using the Katy ISD and state objectives that focus on researching to answer a driving question. It can take up to 15 hours to develop a project that may last up to two weeks in the classroom.

"Teachers train, coach, facilitate, and provide unique learning experiences for all students. RHS students not only learn content, they learn to manage themselves and others. They learn to collaborate and communicate to solve problems," says Bracewell-Tucker.

Working as a Team

She explains that the process takes place in steps. The first step is to launch a project that includes a "hook activity" to pique interest in the topic or problem. The second step of the launch is to provide the teams of three to four students with a challenge brief that provides information relevant to the driving question, project requirements, research questions, a calendar, and a rubric. The team members assign roles for each member, which include a project manager who works to lead and organize the work of the team. The team then analyzes the project requirements, the rubric, and the learning objectives to determine what they already know and what they need to learn.

This "know and needs to know" document, along with the teacher-provided research question, drives the work of the team. Prior to the launch, students complete a pre-assessment, which allows the teacher to facilitate immersive, meaningful training workshops where students learn any content or skills needed to complete the project.

Mastering Objectives

Teachers continue to coach students not only in the researching and problem-solving processes, but also in the processes of time management, planning, executing the plan, integrating technology for the purpose of making their work easier, and collaborating with others to complete a task. Each project concludes with students demonstrating mastery of the curriculum objectives through a presentation or written product. RHS students also demonstrate mastery of the objectives through the traditional assessments as well.

"RHS students learn how to learn. They acquire the 21st century workplace skills that employers are looking for.

They begin to see themselves as valuable and understand that life is not about a grade on a report card or a credit on a transcript. Learning is about not only knowing stuff, but knowing how to use that knowledge in a meaningful way," says Bracewell-Tucker. "Students and staff learn about the power of a relationship through project-based learning."

Finding Success

"I think one thing common among all Raines students is their lack of success or lack of engagement in the traditional learning model. I believe one of the reasons for success at RHS is that due to our small class size and the make-up of the staff - we are able to meet the learning styles of all students," she says. "I know that we are often misunderstood by the community. We are not the school for the 'bad' kids. We are no longer a credit recovery school, nor the school for

the drop-outs. Now, we may accept those kids who are on the verge of dropping out, the kid who has made some poor choices, or the kid who needs to recover credit, but none of these defines who we are. Raines is a school that offers an alternative instructional model."

Students attend four courses and one advisory period each day. The classes are longer than those found on a comprehensive campus in order for them to have nine-week semesters. The school also offers an online learning environment for seniors who have met graduation expectations on all state assessments. The online software is the Odyssey Program, which is a self-paced curriculum. This program is also obtainable in a night school program. The online learning program was the first of its kind at RHS when it began in 2002.



Raines High School principal Becky Bracewell-Tucker is passionate about giving her students the tools to succeed



RSA **RISING STAR ACADEMY**
A Private Preschool

- Advanced Academic Curriculum
- Experienced Staff
- Low Teacher to Child ratio
- Computer lab
- KISD Partnership
- Web cameras

We offer Gymnastics, Spanish, and Music & Movement Classes

1/2 OFF REGISTRATION with this ad

© 2014 Katy Magazine

Infants ★ Toddlers ★ Preschool ★ Pre-K ★ After-School

920 S. Peek Rd. Katy, Texas 77450 www.RisingStar-Academy.com 281.391.KIDS



SkinCare by Janell

- Facials- Women, Men, & Teens
- Waxing- Face & Body
- Microdermabrasion
- Chemical Peels
- Brow & Lash Tint

We carry Rhonda Allison skin care products

"Janell has been doing my facials for 8 years and I constantly get lots of compliments on my skin. It took just one facial with her and I was hooked."
- Helene B.

Janell Haddad is a licensed Aesthetician who has been providing top quality skin care for 12 years



© 2013 Katy Magazine

22167 Westheimer Parkway, Suite 4 (Inside Sola Salon Studios)
Call 713-557-8836 or book online at www.SkinCareByJanell.com

Mention this ad for **25% OFF** your first visit

Gift certificates available

WESTSIDE PEDIATRICS

We love Katy Kids!

Dr. Kisch and Dr. Rahman are happy to see you at our new location 😊

- ♥ Continuity of care through each phase of life
- ♥ From newborn to teens
- ♥ Caring, compassionate pediatricians
- ♥ Child-friendly atmosphere & staff
- ♥ IsoLaz[®] acne treatment

Voted Best Pediatrician
Katy Magazine Readers' Choice Awards

AGNES KISCH, MD
Board Certified Pediatrician



Well child & sick child areas Caring staff

Welcoming new patients Board Certified Physicians



Grow up with us

© 2014 Katy Magazine

20903 Kingsland Blvd. Katy, TX (at Westgreen) www.DrKisch.com 281.578.5788

Building an Environment

“Project-based learning is a way of life at Raines. The relationships between students and staff members are unique. This is the result of having a small student-teacher ratio. Students are called by name in the hallways and at lunch. Many of our students talk about how cool it is to have relationships with staff members who are not their teachers. Students also have a voice [here]. They feel that they have control over their own learning and that their opinions matter,” says Bracewell-Tucker. “Being a small environment that is focused on team work, students become work partners and friends with other students they would not have chosen to be friends with in a larger learning environment.” **KM**



SHETYE CYPHER is a freelance writer and the journalism teacher and publications advisor at Tompkins High School.



The “Branching Out to New Beginnings” mural represents students who have graduated from Raines



“We are no longer a credit recovery school, nor the school for the drop-outs. Now, we may accept those kids who are on the verge of dropping out, the kid who has made some poor choices, or the kid who needs to recover credit, but none of these defines who we are. Raines is a school that offers an alternative instructional model.”

- Becky Bracewell-Tucker, Raines High School principal



Schokolad[®]
Chocolate Factory
Chocolates to live by.™

*Hand-made European
Style Chocolates*



Fresh, European-Style Chocolates • Gift Baskets, Corporate Gifts,
Wedding Favors, Baby Shower Favors,
Italian Gelato, Birthday Parties, Sweet Night Out,
Custom Logos on Chocolate

2020 S. Fry Road
Suite D
Katy, TX 77450
(832) 321-3580
www.schokolad.com

**Bring in
this ad and
receive one
free truffle.**



Legal & Mediation Services for Katy



**THE SPRINGER
LAW FIRM, PLLC**
Attorneys & Mediation Services

We are a team of experienced lawyers in Katy ready to assist you with your legal matters.

- Family Law
- Estate Planning, Wills, Trusts
 - Probate
- Guardianships
- Immigration
- Mediation



© 2014 Katy Magazine

COURTNEY CHERRY Attorney at Law	SARAH SPRINGER Attorney, Mediator, FORMER JUDGE	MAKENNA POWELL Attorney at Law
------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------

We will be moving to our new building in October
 21815 Oak Park Trails Dr. (Off S. Mason)
 21218 Kingstand Blvd. Katy, Texas 77450 281-646-0644
 www.katytxattorneys.com