

TEAM SWAGBEAM



Since the term was first coined in 2014, SWAGBEAM has grown into a community-wide initiative



One of SWAGBEAM's goals is to bring awareness to bullying in schools



Adriana Medina, Batchlor Johnson, Patty Gomez, Oliver Laws, and Abigayle Kelly are members of SWAGBEAM

Student leaders from Katy ISD's high schools join community-wide initiative to combat bullying and foster positive attitudes

Written by Elizabeth Padgett | Select photography by Amy Salvato



There is a new hashtag trending on social media, and it was born in Katy ISD schools. #SWAGBEAM, which stands for Students Will Achieve Greatness Because Everyone's Attitude Matters, was coined in September 2014 during Katy ISD Superintendent Alton Frailey's student roundtable meeting. Since then, it has grown into a community-wide initiative.

Katy ISD is bringing more awareness to bullying and has recently experienced their lowest incident report of 15. #SWAGBEAM is an evolution of the BEAM initiative, which has already been in effect the past six years. The BEAM initiative was developed during the Critical Issues Symposium in 2008 where the community expressed their hopes for future Katy ISD students - a safe and orderly environment that would create a better learning climate.

Frailey says, "There are a growing number of community members who understand that with our fast growth there is a greater risk of losing our culture and all of the attributes that make Katy a destination community and school district." He describes the BEAM initiative as "an umbrella concept to capture and promote the important work already taking place. We want not only a decrease in destructive behavior, but also a recognized increase in constructive efforts and interactions." During the superintendent student roundtable meeting, the students inspired Frailey to utilize #SWAGBEAM to better connect through social media.



SWAGBEAM students participate in a student leadership conference with Katy ISD Superintendent Alton Frailey



Adriana Medina and other students engage in group activities

THE ROTHCHILD TEAM

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Constant Kindness Month

Since the adoption earlier this year, #SWAGBEAM has already been realized across Katy ISD campuses. Abigail Kelly, a senior at Taylor High School, says her campus has a month of constant kindness where students write encouraging notes in the bathroom and eat lunch with a new person. Kelly also notes that in February #SWAGBEAM will tie in with Taylor's Teacher Appreciation Week and Counselor's Week.

Tompkins High School also has big plans to spread the #SWAGBEAM initiative even further. Senior Oliver Laws says, "Every day in February there will be an activity and goal the students have to reach, such as giving five compliments to people you don't know. In return, the student will receive self-fulfillment and create a habitual positive attitude."

While there is plenty of focus on changing the community as a whole, for Katy High School junior Patty Gomez, "Being able to see the impact even made on one person is very enlightening and encouraging. During one meeting we actually encouraged a student whose mind was filled with doubts. He kept saying 'No, y'all. I can't!'" With teamwork, the student's spirits were lifted and his mind filled with a newfound confidence.

Laws points out #SWAGBEAM is an initiative that doesn't just focus on current events, but on the big picture as well. Frailey adds, "We all depend on each of us to embrace actions



SWAGBEAM leaders are representatives of their respective high schools



SWAGBEAM students started a special initiative in February to promote positive attitudes

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"All it takes is to be the one person to stand up and say, 'No,' to a bully."

- Patty Gomez



"I am a student who wants to see a change for the better."

- Adriana Medina



"Our main goal is to focus on the Katy community and have this initiative further developed and embraced locally."

- Alton Frailey, Katy ISD superintendent

"It takes an open heart and open mind."

- Batchlor Johnson



"With successful students come successful leaders."

- Oliver Laws



that promote, uplift, and encourage others to create and sustain a learning environment that is safe and nurturing for all children."

Joining the Movement

While several student leaders have spoken about the initiative already, what does it really take to be a part of #SWAGBEAM? Seven Lakes High School senior Batchlor Johnson says all you need are two things, an open heart and open mind. "Anyone can be a part of #SWAGBEAM. It is completely nonexclusive, all that is asked is to have a positive attitude," says Sarah Kent, senior at Mayde Creek High School.

If you want to start utilizing #SWAGBEAM in your daily life, try starting a friendly conversation with someone new at work or making positivity cards to hand out to classmates with encouraging statements on them. The #SWAGBEAM initiative isn't about doing great, gregarious acts to get attention. It's about the little, everyday interactions that matter most and will help shape the community for a brighter future. Mayde Creek High School senior Adriana Medina says, "I would like the whole community to adopt the idea and implement it into everything they do. I am a student who wants to see a change for the better." KM

ELIZABETH PADGETT is a professional writer and always offers part of her lunch to coworkers who have forgotten theirs. #SWAGBEAM

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