



Principal Kenneth Cummings has been a part of the McDonald Junior High family since 2010

A Katy Magazine feature highlighting the hard work of Katy ISD principals

Principal Kenneth Cummings

McDonald Junior High principal leads with support and experience

Written By Holly Leger | Photography by Sara Isola



The administrative team of McDonald Junior High anticipates upcoming campus renovations as a result of the Katy ISD bond



Students Aaron Hoang and Mauro Justo with Principal Cummings

Walk into the principal's office at T.H. McDonald Junior High, and you're likely to feel more like you've stepped into a game day locker room. After coaching high school football for 18 years in Beaumont, Principal Kenneth Cummings kept one piece of equipment when he moved to Katy - a large white dry erase board, which is mounted to his office wall. Instead of offensive plays and strategies, there are now weekly agendas and reminders written in black marker.

"Most principals have some sort of scheduling board," Cummings says. "I had that other board taken out and this big white board brought in. That's what I was used to doing as a coach." He admits old habits die hard.

"My coaches will still come down here some days, and we'll start drawing up X's and O's on the board," Cummings laughs. "You never really get away from it." However, the team leadership skills he learned in his coaching years have been invaluable since he moved to the administrative side of education 12 years ago. When he was hired at McDonald in 2010, it was no different. Now Cummings uses those experiences from the field to help lead his team of students and teachers in the school setting.

Putting Teachers First

Coming from a smaller campus in Beaumont, the move to Katy ISD was a transition. At his previous school, he had one assistant principal helping him oversee 550 students. Now, he has four assistant principals helping him oversee about 1,050 students. Cummings says those larger numbers have definitely changed his role as an administrator. Rather than dealing with discipline, Cummings focuses more on the big picture aspects of the school. At McDonald, he believes the teachers are a huge part of that picture.

"We want to give our teachers as much voice in the decision making as possible," Cummings says. "My philosophy as a



Quick Facts About Kenneth Cummings:

- Married for 30 years
- Has one daughter who is a lawyer
- Loves to fish and travel
- Always roots for the Texas Longhorns
- Has lived in Katy for five years

principal is the most important adults on this campus are the teachers. Every other adult on this campus, their role is to provide support for those teachers."

Making Room for Change

The district may be hiring even more teachers in the near future. Because

of the new subdivisions being built in the district, McDonald expects substantial growth in the next two years. Katy ISD has plans for a new junior high and high school scheduled to open in 2017 for additional zoning.

"It will be a unique experience for us," Cummings says. "We're going to expand, and then we'll contract when these schools open." McDonald, which was built in 1991, will undergo renovations thanks to the recent 2014 bond election. Cummings says they will receive new carpet and paint, as well as a restructuring of the front office, career and technology spaces, art room, and concepts of engineering center.

"All those spaces are getting expanded and updated, and that's going to be a huge help for us," Cummings shares. "Those things have changed so much over the years, and the requirements and the expectations in those classes have changed. We're going to get new facilities to meet those demands."

Appreciation for Katyites

Cummings believes students at McDonald will truly benefit from the upcoming renovations, and he is grateful for the continued commitment of the community to its students' education.

"Whether I was the principal, a teacher, or a coach, that is one of the things I appreciate most about this district," Cummings says. "Our kids benefit so much from it because of the fact that they get everything they need to be successful. There are not many places in Texas, or anywhere in the world, that are like Katy." **KM**

HOLLY LEGER is a freelance writer who enjoys covering the hard-working individuals in the field of education.



More About McDonald Junior High

- Principal: Kenneth Cummings
- School mascot: Panthers
- Opened: August 1991
- Student population: 1,050