



Principal James Cross has been in education for over 20 years, seven of those at Cinco Ranch High School



Principal Cross engages on social media to stay connected to students, parents, and the community

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

Principal James Cross

Cinco Ranch High School principal leads the Cougars with purpose, passion, and pride

Written by Brittany Bluford | Photography by Sara Isola



With over 20 years of experience as a teacher and administrator, James Cross is no stranger to education, and he found a home in Katy ISD 14 years ago.

Known around campus as J.C., Cross entered Cinco Ranch High School seven years ago. The father to two daughters instantly adopted over 2,000 students, several challenges, and the vision to create a culture where kindness matters. "Our goal is to prepare young people for the next stage of their lives. We want to teach them how to serve their school and community," Cross says.

The Kindness Movement

In his effort to produce young adults that are compassionate and brave, Cross and his staff step outside of the box to create programs that ignite change. During the Cougar Challenge, teachers and students get personal with the team-building exercise, "if you really knew me," where students and teachers get to know each other on a first-name basis. It's in this circle that students are able to connect with James, and not just Principal Cross. The students even come up with challenges, which consist of small and big acts of kindness.

Inspired by the quote, "We shout anger and whisper kindness," he encourages teachers to extend their reach beyond the students in their classroom and to make smiles a mandatory accessory.

With thousands of graduates a year, Cross is lucky to see many return. Sometimes with a token of appreciation, and other times they visit with an admirable update on their new accomplishments. In his office, a Kindness Matters plaque from a former student serves as daily reminder of his vision.

Cougar Pride over Everything

Not many students use the word "cool" to describe their principal, but it's pretty accurate for Cross who successfully plays Guitar Hero, tweets on Twitter, posts on BlogSpot, and completed the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.

Although social media can be a challenge, it allows him to reach the surrounding community and students. Cross created the Celebrating Cinco blog as a platform for students and staff to share their voice by submitting a blog post to be featured each week.

“This blog is about the community of Cinco Ranch. So many great things happen here. Some of which you know, some of which you never hear. There are also challenges and struggles. My goal is to celebrate those great things and give voice to our struggles,” Cross writes in his first blog post.

The blog title *Daring Greatly Together* elaborates on the vision for this school year. Cross doesn't just focus on the development of his students, but he keeps himself and staff accountable through personal development. A book reading list by each staff member's room is a common sight in the Cinco Ranch High School halls. The list shows books currently being read by the staff member.

Caring for Cinco

With Cinco Ranch High School named 478th out of America's top 2,000 public high schools, UIL Lone Star Cup Winner, a top high school in America by *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*, and a list of other accolades, it's arguable that the only thing left for Cross to accomplish is to remember the names of all 3,200 students. To this Cross replies, “Even if I didn't get to know them, it's my loss and they've always been cared for.” KM

BRITTANY BLUFORD is a Houston born and raised content creator who loves to travel locally and internationally.



Cinco Ranch High School

Cougar Fun Facts

PRINCIPAL James Cross
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL Patti Smith
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS Jane Baker, Kay Fenn, David Calfee, Cheryl Morrison, and Teri Faigle
MOTTO Purpose, passion, and pride.
YEAR OPENED 1999
CURRENT ENROLLMENT 3,200
HASHTAG #cpoe - cougar pride over everything
TWITTER HANDLE CougarNation_JC

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