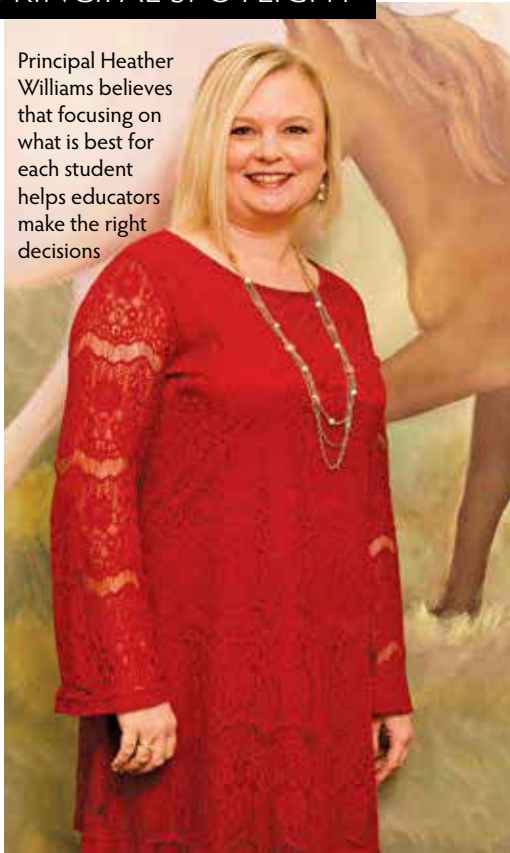


Principal Heather Williams believes that focusing on what is best for each student helps educators make the right decisions



A born-and-raised Houstonian, Stanley Elementary School (SSE) Principal Heather Williams is no stranger to education. “I have wanted to be a teacher my entire life,” says Williams. She had three younger brothers who were her first “students.” “I made them sit alongside my dolls while I replayed the lessons my teachers taught me in school,” says Williams.

After graduating from Stephen F. Austin State University with a degree in interdisciplinary studies, she got her first job as a teacher in Alief ISD. “That was where I learned teaching was not just about academics. There was more to the job than lesson planning and lesson delivery,” says Williams. “The students needed me to be their cheerleader, believer, hugger, encourager, and supporter.”



School namesake Stan Stanley and his wife Patsy, participate in many school activities and events

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

# Principal Heather Williams

**Stanley Elementary School principal celebrates nearly 20 years in education as the leader for the Stanley Stampede**

*Written by Kennan Buckner | Photography by Sara Isola*

## A Call to Serve

Years later she helped open Frost Elementary in Lamar Consolidated ISD where she taught for eight years. In 2008, she joined Katy ISD as the assistant principal at Kilpatrick Elementary School and became principal of Stanley Elementary in 2012. “Being a principal at Stanley Elementary is my dream job,” says Williams. “I wake up every morning excited about seeing the smiling faces of the kids and staff.”

She believes there is no higher calling than education. “Education is a call to serve. We serve people, not scores,” says Williams. “When you keep your eye on what matters the most, your students, then the right decisions become crystal clear.”

## Stanley Stampede

Williams’ favorite part of the day is walking through classrooms and watching students engage in learning, which is just one example of the campus climate. The school’s

namesake Stan Stanley and his wife Patsy are a huge part of what created that campus culture. “As a community, we feel blessed to have our school named after such an incredible role model,” says Williams. Stan and Patsy continue to make a difference on campus by visiting the students and taking part in various school functions.

Every six weeks Williams gathers the staff for Kid Chats, where the SSE team meets to discuss the progress of their students. Williams also meets with each teacher in the spring to discuss each student’s overall progress, compiling the data for hand-placing each student in their class for the next school year. “There is power in matching kids’ strengths and areas of concern with the strengths of a teacher,” shares Williams.

## A Mind for Growth

“At SSE we talk a lot about growing,” says Williams. “We want our teachers and staff to learn and grow right alongside our students.” They do this by vertically aligning their teaching

in kindergarten through fifth grade in all subject areas. "This continual growth mindset is what is fueling our academic success," she says.

Some of that success includes several students who have had their artwork chosen to be displayed in the Texas State Capitol as part of the Texas Art Education Association Governor's Gallery, the 13 teams who participated in Destination Imagination last year, the first-grade team who received a grant to buy classroom iPads, a campus-wide grant to build green houses, and the Great Outdoors grant from the Katy ISD Education Foundation.

### Paying It Forward

Their success wouldn't be possible without the SSE parents. Last year, nearly 30,000 hours were volunteered for their campus. "When a call goes out that someone needs assistance at SSE, our parents volunteer in large numbers," shares Williams. "Every year, we strive to make SSE better than the year before. The home and school connection is a huge part of that legacy." **KM**

*KENNAN BUCKNER won her first essay contest written on the importance of trees while in elementary school.*



The Stanley Stampede had over 30,000 hours of parent volunteer hours last year

## Stanley Elementary Stats

- MASCOT** Stampede
- COLORS** Brick red, black, and silver
- YEAR OPENED** 2009
- ENROLLMENT** 1,100
- VICE PRINCIPALS** Erika Edmond and Bethany Cunningham
- LOCATION** 26633 Cinco Terrace Dr.
- MOTTO** "What starts here changes the world"
- TWITTER HANDLE** @SSEKATY



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