

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

October 20, 2017



Welcome back to another exciting school year at the Innovation Academy! We are well underway and hope your student has had a great start to the school year. Our campuses have grown significantly with the charter expanding to include grades K-2 this academic year. We now serve students in grade K-11 in Tyler and 2-11 in Longview and Palestine, with a total of 702 students on the first day of classes.

Our Tyler campus underwent further renovations in the new building acquired last year. We now have two dedicated classrooms for high school Math and PLTW courses as well as a Professional Development workspace for teachers which doubles as Afterschool space in the afternoons. Our Palestine campus was relocated to the university's Mathis Hall due to the need for extensive renovations at the old site. We greatly appreciate the support of the university President and the staff of Mathis Hall for helping to accommodate our students this academic year as we work toward a long term solution for our Palestine campus. Our next project will be to install playgrounds in both Tyler and Longview and we are looking for community support to help fund this project. Please see further details later in the Newsletter.

Teachers and Administrators are working hard to provide Project Based Learning and Problem Based Learning lessons for our students, staying true and committed to our model of hands-on, 21st Century learning. They are always eager to begin another year of academic success in our classrooms and have many great activities planned for this year.

We look forward to partnering with each of you throughout the year and encourage you to become involved in your student's experience at the Innovation Academy. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns you may have.

Jo Ann Simmons, Ed.D.
Superintendent

2017-2018 SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDAR

The District Calendar has been posted on our Website under QUICK LINKS. You can access it at: <http://www.uttia.org/documents/2017/05/district-calendar-2017-2018.pdf>. Students are out of school on all days colored with blue (Student Holidays) or green (Teacher Professional Development Days).

UPCOMING EVENTS

CDA 1 – High School – **October 16-20**
End of 9- weeks Grading Period – **October 20**
Red Ribbon Week – **October 23-27**
First Term Report Cards Sent Home – **October 27**
Thanksgiving Break – **November 20-24**
Winter Break – **December 18 - January 1**
Teacher PD Day (no school for students) – **January 2**

PROGRESS REPORTS & REPORT CARDS

The Innovation Academy utilizes a 9-week grading schedule. Progress Reports are issued during the middle of the 5th week and sent home that Friday. While Report Cards are sent home the Friday of the week following the end of the grading period. School ends June 1 (June 4-5 with Bad Weather Days).

Progress Reports		Report Cards	
Grading Term	Sent Home with Student	Grading Period	Sent Home with Student
Term 1	September 22	August 21 – October 20	October 27
Term 2	December 1	October 23 – January 12	January 19
Term 3	February 16	January 16 – March 23	March 29
Term 4	April 27	March 26 – June 1 (4-5)	June 8 th (mailed)

NEW PLAYGROUNDS

Now that we have students in grades K-2, playgrounds are a necessity. We will begin with the Tyler campus because they have the youngest students and will then complete the Longview campus. Playground plans in Palestine will be on hold until a permanent campus location is finalized. We are looking for community donors to help fund the two projects. If you would like to make a donation, please go to:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/advancement/giving>

Use the 'Give Online' button.

In the 'Other Departments' drop down menu select **Other**.

Enter either **UTTIA Tyler Playground** or **UTTIA Longview Playground** in the 'If other (please specify)' field.

We appreciate any and all support.



DUAL CREDIT

We are now offering a vast array of dual credit courses to our high school aged students in both the Fall and Spring semesters through The University of Texas at Tyler. Eligibility is determined by the passing of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) testing in Reading, Writing, and eventually Mathematics.

We are extremely happy to report nearly 92% of our freshman, sophomore and junior students are currently enrolled in dual credit coursework. Freshman are enrolled in Music Appreciation while sophomores are taking U.S. History 1301 (and Music Appreciation if needed) this Fall. The Spring will find freshman taking their Speech requirement while the sophomores will take either Philosophy or Psychology and the second half of U.S. History in 1302. Juniors are taking US Government and English 1301 this Fall semester with TX Government and English 1302 in the Spring semester, as well as year-long courses in Pre-Calculus and Chemistry if they have passed their TSI Math test.

Through our dual credit program students can earn both their high school graduation credits while also working toward being core complete as they head into their first year of college. Our students will be at an advantage to not only be core complete, but have those classes necessary to pursue degrees in STEM related fields should they choose to do so. For more information on our dual credit programs, please contact our Counselor, Gayla Byrd (gbyrd@uttyler.edu).

PERFORMANCE RATINGS

The Innovation Academy is proud to announce we were one of the highest performing schools in the region, including other Tyler area charter schools, for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Overall, our schools scored higher than the state average in all areas.

Our campuses not only Met Standard, but also received a total of 8 distinctions, 4 in Palestine and 4 in Longview. Palestine received distinctions in ELA/Reading, Social Studies, Student Progress, and Closing Performance Gaps, while Longview received their distinctions in ELA/Reading, Science, Student Progress, and Closing Performance Gaps. Distinctions are awarded to those schools who rank in the top 25% of comparison schools with similar demographics.

UT Tyler Innovation Academy	Index 1 Achievement	Index 2 Student Growth	Index 3 Subpopulations	Index 4 College Ready	Distinctions
State Target	60	22	30	21	---
Tyler IA	80	35	33	45	0
Palestine IA	87	44	55	52	4
Longview IA	89	45	56	60	4
<i>District</i>	85	38	45	45	<i>n/a</i>

LAB SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Innovation Academy (IA) is not only designated a T-STEM Academy by the Texas Education Agency, the IA is also designated a Laboratory School and a Core Research Facility for the University of Texas System. One of the roles of the IA is to create new research-based instructional strategies that can be disseminated to traditional schools. The IA is also an important tool for UT Tyler in the preparation of new teachers.

The IA works with the School of Education in developing teachers. This includes the UTeach Tyler program that is working to develop STEM Teachers. UTeach is a unique university-based secondary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) teacher preparation program that answers the critical need for qualified STEM teachers in Texas and across the country. UT Tyler is one of the national universities working to produce teachers who are educating tomorrow's scientists and engineers to play a vital role in America's economic growth. Since UT Tyler replicated the program we have doubled the number of STEM teachers we graduate annually. 11 current Innovation Academy Teachers are graduates of the UTeach program.

In addition to UTeach, the Innovation Academy is a clinical placement site for the Elementary Teacher preparation program at UT Tyler. We are also a Texas Residency teacher preparation site as part of a joint initiative with UT Tyler Ingenuity Center, UT Tyler School of Education, and Texas A&M Commerce funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The Teacher Residency program at the Innovation Academy prepares teachers through a year-long mentoring program. All Teacher Residents must already have a Bachelor's degree or higher in their content area. Participants include student teachers working on certification or certified teachers in their first year of teaching. UT Tyler and the Innovation Academy are developing a national reputation for innovation in STEM education. In October we have personnel from the following universities and

countries coming to see our initiatives. They include: Texas Tech University, Oklahoma State University, University of Alabama, Baylor University, Texas Christian University, Texas A&M Commerce, University of West Georgia, North Carolina State University, and the Thailand Ministry of Education. There is considerable interest in our model.

TECHNOLOGY

Each student is responsible for ensuring the safe keeping of their school-issued electronic devices. Devices should be kept in a protective cover/sleeves. It is highly recommended parents/guardians also purchase insurance to help reimburse them for repair costs in the event of a breakage. **All repair charges are payable at the time the repair has been completed and is ready to be returned to the student. Parents/Guardians are responsible for all transactions with their insurance company, including the filing of all reimbursement claims.** No insurance payments will be accepted by the Innovation Academy.

For technical support contact itsupport@uttia.org, be sure to include your name, campus, phone number and a complete description of your issue. In the event of a breakage, the device should be turned into the Front Office **immediately**. Students should not continue to use devices with broken screens because they can injure themselves.

We take misuse and mistreatment of school property seriously. If your student is found to be misusing technology or has had multiple breakages, their device privileges will be suspended, meaning they will not have a device to take home. Parents/Guardians will then be responsible to ensure the student has a means to complete homework assignments. For more information visit:

<http://www.uttia.org/departments/technology>

HAIKU LEARNING

Haiku Learning is the interactive software our teachers utilize to build coursework for students. This software allows for students to see their assignments for each teacher/course and track their progress throughout the grading period. By logging-in at home they can complete their flipped assignments, collaborate with classmates, and contact their teacher for assistance. It is of the utmost importance that flipped assignments are completed each night to ensure students are prepared for the application of the concepts in class the following day.

Parents are also provided their own log-in to Haiku which allows them to see their student's progress at the parent level. We want to ensure parents are utilizing this valuable resource and not simply looking at the student's account. By logging in, teachers can see the parent is actively engaging in the student's learning and is providing at-home assistance and monitoring for comprehension and homework completion. Account information was sent home with your child. If you need assistance with your Haiku accounts, please contact the Front Office.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH

The Innovation Academy currently serves "grab-and-go" breakfast only, no lunches.

- Served from 7:40 - 7: 55 a.m. daily.
- Cost is \$1.50 per meal.
- We participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). You may submit an application for free or reduced breakfast at any time. A new application must be filed each school year. **You may download and submit an application at any time.**

Students will be provided a lunch period each day. Vending machines are available which contain items that are in compliance with the NSLP Safe Snacks Guidelines. Items include various types of chips/crackers, granola bars, fruit snacks, and other whole grain products. There is also a machine which dispenses bottled water. Items range in price from \$0.70 - \$1.00. **Please know these products are not intended to replace the need for providing your student with a sacked lunch each day, we are providing this as an option to supplement their lunch and provide healthy snack options.**

There will be no use of microwaves by students, please do not send them with microwavable foods.

Additionally, there will be no drop-off of lunches except for extenuating circumstances. All lunch drop-offs must be cleared by contacting the Front Office first. Please be sure your student(s) arrives to school each morning with their lunch in hand.

For more information about Food Service, please see: <http://www.uttia.org/food-service/>

IMPORTANT FOOD ALLERGY NOTICE

UT Tyler Innovation Academy is not a Nut Free environment. However, we will follow the Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis to implement Senate Bill 27 (82nd Legislative Session). We will address food allergies on an individual basis. Parent Awareness letters will be sent out to families within classrooms that have students with food allergies. Information will be posted in these classrooms for awareness purposes.

The Innovation Academy faculty and staff at large is committed to becoming educated in ways to support and assist students with food allergies. Awareness is our goal! **Please help us keep our students with food allergies safe. Reading food labels and abiding by any food restrictions listed for your child's classroom can prevent a life-threatening reaction!!**

The links below are a good resource for choosing healthy, nut free snacks:

<http://snacksafely.com/tools-for-schools/>
<http://allergence.snacksafely.com/site/welcome>

For more information contact:

Cori Mackey, RN
UTTIA District Nurse
cmackey@uttia.org

A LETTER FROM THE NURSE

Hello Parents and Guardians!

Can you believe it's already October and fall is just around the corner?! This year is already going by so fast! As many of you know with fall coming, the weather will be changing soon, and with that comes flu season. I wanted to take this time to remind parents to help your children practice good health habits to help prevent the spread of illnesses such as the flu. Washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when you are sick are all great ways to help prevent your child and yourself from becoming ill.

The State of Texas requires schools to exclude students with certain illnesses for a period of time. This includes, but is not limited to, any student who has been running a fever greater than 100 degrees, must be kept home until fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT fever reducing medication. This ensures that what is causing your child's fever is no longer a threat to the surrounding students and will not create a cycle of re-infection. We would also like to remind parents that this information is outlined in the Student Handbook, under the "Health-Related Matters" section.

Please keep your child home until symptom free for 24 hours without medication if they have the following symptoms:

- *Fever >100 degrees Fahrenheit
- *Vomiting
- *Diarrhea
- *All other illnesses that are deemed contagious by a physician

Students will be sent home if they present to the office with any of the following symptoms:

- *Fever >100 degrees Fahrenheit
- *Vomiting
- *Diarrhea
- *Red eyes with discharge
- *All other illnesses that require further medical attention

Thank you for your help in keeping our students happy and healthy!

Cori Mackey, RN

IA District Nurse

cmackey@uttyler.edu

903-730-3988



ATTENDANCE

Section 25.085 of the Texas Education Code states that a child who is required to attend school under this section shall attend school each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided, unless exempted by law.

Students must be in attendance 90% of the school's instructional days to receive course credit. Read more about attendance requirements at <http://www.uttia.org/documents/2014/05/truancy-policy.pdf>

In order for us to properly record the reason for your child's absence, we ask that you supply a note each time your student is not in session, this includes partial day absences as well. Absences can be reported via email, but must be sent using an e-mail address on file for a parent/guardian.

Tyler –
tylerabsence@uttia.org

Longview –
longviewabsence@uttia.org

Palestine –
palestineabsence@uttia.org

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Each campus has an After-School Program where students can go to complete homework and participate in enrichment activities and clubs. Each campus has various programs they run throughout the school year such as Yearbook, Piano Lessons, Robotics, etc. The program runs from 2:15pm – 5:30pm. To learn more about After-School activities at your campus and to register, visit their Webpage at www.uttia.org --> Schools --> Select Your Campus --> Select Afterschool tab. To register, email:

Tyler –
tylerafterschool@uttia.org

Longview –
longviewafterschool@uttia.org

Palestine –
aleontrevino@uttyler.edu

PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Each campus have established a Parent/Teacher Organization over the past year. This parent led organization hosts various fundraisers to aide them in providing support to the students and staff of the Innovation Academy. Through efforts such as the providing of teacher appreciation luncheons, student STAAR snacks, Trunk-Or-Treat, Field Day and other events, they have served a large role in making our campus atmosphere one to be proud of. To learn more about the PTO at your campus, please see our webpage at: <http://www.uttia.org/parent-teacher-organization/>

REMIND 101

The Innovation Academy wants to ensure all parents/guardians are signed-up for our Remind 101 account when school begins. This is a one-way text messaging service which allows us to send out important messages to all of you at once. It will primarily be utilized to communicate delays/closures due to inclement weather. We have found this option is much faster than our email or phone system. To sign-up, please follow the instructions for your campus located below.

Tyler –
Text Message to: 81010
Message: @uttiat

Longview -
Text Message to: 81010
Message: @ialongview

Palestine –
Text Message to: 81010
Message: @uttiapal

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The UT Tyler Innovation Academy consists of 7 Board Members. They meet the first Thursday of every other month in order to discuss and vote on important items pertaining to our district. For more information about the Board, including scheduled meetings, Agendas, Minutes, and past recordings, please visit: <http://www.uttia.org/about/school-board/>

Next Board Meeting:

Thursday, November 2, 2017