



Plano ISD Staff Newsletter • Volume 37, number 13 • March 26, 2010



National Soccer Coach of the Year Bob Weir Built Popular Program with Humility & Discipline

Plano Senior High School Boys Soccer Coach Bob Weir is in a field all his own, having been selected 2009 National Soccer Coach of the Year by the National Federation of State High School Associations. Coach Weir earned the award by exemplifying the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, moral character and with the endorsement of his Texas soccer association. The award is based upon the 2008-09 school year, a season in which his team cornered the competition and brought home the state championship trophy, a prized possession. From his small town roots in Massachusetts to the big soccer leagues of Plano, Coach Weir has been an inspiration to students and adults alike. [Read more](#)

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employeeSpotlight



Health/PE Coordinator Melinda Smith Honored with Elks Citizenship Award

Growing up in Plano, when there were 10 schools and farm land as far as the eyes could see, Melinda Smith dreamed of becoming a teacher. "Every day, I experienced the positive influence of Plano teachers. They fascinated me. They cared so much about students."



Kathy Kuddes Honored by National Group for Outstanding Leadership

Plano ISD Director of Fine Arts Kathy Kuddes was presented with the 2010



72 Employees Nominated for Superintendent's 11th Annual Service Award

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto has announced 72 nominees for

OAKE (Organization of American Kodaly Educators) Outstanding Administrator Award at the group's national conference held recently in Dallas. Nominated by Plano ISD elementary music specialists for her advancement of Kodaly-inspired music curriculum in Plano schools, Kathy accepted the award at the conference attended by hundreds of music educators from across the U.S., Canada, Belgium and Hungary and where Plano ISD staff members held significant leadership roles and Plano students were featured performers.

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his 2010 Superintendent's Service Award. All nominees will be recognized by Dr. Otto at Plano ISD's 45th Annual Service & Retirement event to be held on April 8 at Southfork Ranch. In a culminating surprise announcement, Dr. Otto will present the award winners. These 72 outstanding employees are among nominees in Dr. Otto's 11th Annual Superintendent's Service Award, which recognizes members of the Plano ISD support staff whose dedication, commitment and effort rise above and beyond expectations. [Read more](#)

One of those teachers, Rita Barnes, the basketball coach at Plano Senior High School, pulled Melinda's parents aside a banquet and said, "Melinda will come back to teach in Plano."

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Since 1993, Melinda has made significant contributions as an elementary physical education/health teacher and, since 2002, as the district coordinator of health and physical education for grades k-12.

While in the classroom, Melinda was twice awarded Teacher of the Year: at Mathews Elementary School in 1993-94 and Skaggs Elementary School in 1997-98. She also received a district "Excellence in Elementary Teaching Award" while at Skaggs.

Melinda has most recently been honored for "outstanding and meritorious service to humanity" in the form of a "Distinguished Citizenship Award" presented to her by the Plano-Richardson Elks Lodge.

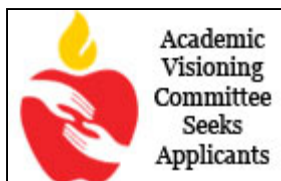
Melinda has been instrumental in the Elks Hoop Shoot, which draws hundreds of student participants each year, many of whom advance in the competition from school to district, regional, state and even national levels.

"In all of our health and physical education classes, at every school and through special activities like the Elks Hoop Shoot, we strive to instill in each student a desire to stay healthy through physical activity and proper nutrition," said Melinda. "Our goal is for students to

Around the district



Plano West Principal Kathy King and PTA President Mondrell Oz were among nearly 200 guests at the district's annual appreciation luncheon for PTA presidents. Guest speaker Paul Weaver,



Nominations are being accepted through Monday, April 5, for Plano ISD's new Academy Visioning Committee. The group will study the concept of an academy school for Plano ISD. Committee



Sigler Elementary School Principal Sandy Muzquiz (pictured with Mayor Phil Dyer and Superintendent Doug Otto) and her staff co-hosted a dedication ceremony for the Sigler community to celebrate

counseling director, thanked PTA leaders for being a "positive force" for students, parents and the district.

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work will begin this spring and continue through fall. A link to the nomination form can be found on the district website. [Read More](#)

the school's brand new building. Read a story about the March 11 event and view photos on the district website.

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Teacher Recruitment Open House March 27

Plano ISD's annual Recruitment Open House for teachers, counselors and librarians will be held on Saturday, March 27, at Renner Middle School. Teachers who are considered to be "Highly Qualified" under "No Child Left Behind" will be admitted to the event, which will be sponsored once again by Ebby Halliday REALTORS and the Plano ISD Education Foundation. Read more on the district's [employment website](#).



**Proud annual sponsors
of Plano ISD's Teacher
Recruitment Open House**

Register Now for May 1 'Thrill of the Grill'



Ahhhh, spring time in Texas, the perfect time of year for a barbeque with friends and family. It is also the best time of year to get outside and burn off some of those extra winter pounds with a nice walk, jog or run. Why not do both? That is exactly what the Plano ISD Education Foundation is

doing at its 2nd Annual Central Market Thrill of the Grill. Plano ISD employees, students and community members are invited to join the Foundation for a great day of food, beverages, music, art and more, all kicked off with a 5K fun run designed for all levels of walkers, joggers, runners and hot doggers. Event proceeds will benefit Plano ISD students and staff through the programs of the Plano ISD Education Foundation. Groups and individuals are encouraged to register now on the [Thrill of the Grill website](#).

To read Notable Notes, Achievements and Board Briefs, please select the blue buttons at the top right of this newsletter.

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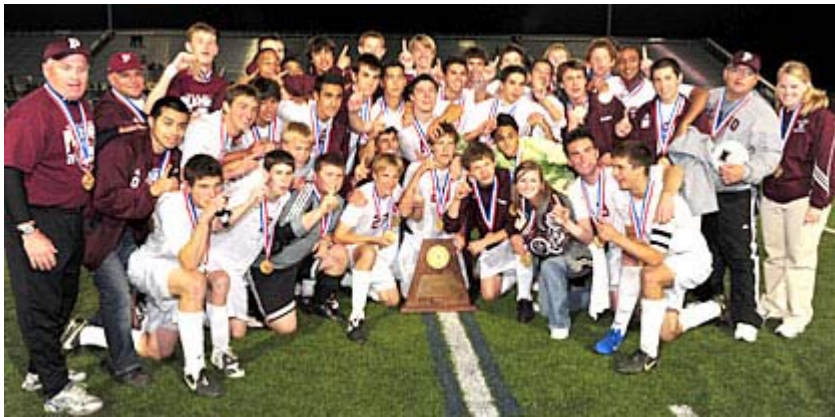
Melinda has fond memories of athletic activities from her grade school years, when she attended Meadows Elementary School, Cox Junior High School (sixth grade), Bowman Middle School, Plano High School and Plano



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Coach Bob Weir (continued)

During his illustrious, 33-year career as Plano Senior High School's (PSHS) head soccer coach, hired by then Athletic Director John Clark, Coach Weir's advantages on the playing field have resulted in six state championships and numerous regional and district victories. His current team is in the playoffs, defeating Cedar Hill 3-1 this week and heading to the area playoff game against Flower Mound on Friday at The Colony.



Coach Weir (left) is pictured with the 2009 state championship team.

Plano ISD Athletic Director Gerald Brence said, "Coach Weir has a tremendous handle on strategy of the game and the management of his players. He is extremely popular with all his players both past and present. He is one of the best of the best."



Popularity has assisted the Plano Senior High School soccer program in maintaining a tradition for a bigger, better, competitive group of young men who have swept the competition during many seasons. Once Coach Weir's boys are in "the zone," they don't quit. "Maybe one or two young men have left the program mid-way," he said. "But

most of our freshmen continue through to their senior year because they enjoy the sport and they love representing their school."

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Coach Weir and Assistant Coach Doug Adams proudly displayed the 2009 championship game trophy with Athletic Director Gerald Brence, PSHS Athletic Director Jaydon McCullough, Assistant Coach Mark Marshall and Principal Dr. Doyle Dean.

Hailing from the small town of Westboro, Massachusetts, 30 miles from Boston, Coach Weir played all the sports he could tackle as a youngster, including football, basketball, baseball, track, gymnastics and tennis. By his junior year, he touched down on the soccer field, playing mid-fielder ("A creative position," he said), which he was also tagged to play at Worcester State College in Massachusetts. He landed at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas, at the beckoning of his hometown friend and fellow soccer coach Howard Patterson. He earned his master's degree there and has called Texas "home" ever since.

According to PSHS Athletic Director Jaydon McCullough, "Coach Weir has definitely been a rock star around Plano Senior High School...I've come full circle with Coach Weir. I was his student, then his co-worker (Jaydon coached for Weir during the soccer teams' 1995 and 2000 state victories) and then one of his parents (son Tex played for Weir).



Coach Weir with senior David Stitts before this week's victory over Cedar Hill.

"The kids really want to achieve all of their goals, not only for themselves but

for Coach Weir," said Jaydon. "He's a guy of vision. He's already thinking about what he wants before he does it, and he communicates that well to his coaches, players and parents. He has a servant's heart, and he has the kind of karma that causes dreams to come to him because he has such a positive way of doing things."

PSHS Principal Dr. Doyle Dean said, "Coach Weir values the individual students and the team. It is never about the coach. This is why he is able to work successfully with students who play on the school team as well as club teams."



Co-Captain and Senior Forward Zachary Balthazar (pictured during this week's victorious game against Cedar Hill), said "Coach Weir never gives up on the team and, in return, the team never gives up."

Zachary Balthazar, one of four team captains, said, "Coach Weir never gives up on the team and, in return, the team never gives up. I gained my confidence back while playing for the Coach Weir. I had the best experience ever by winning the state championship last year. He lead us to state and he has an exceptional record in getting the Wildcats to playoffs and winning championships. Coach expects the best from us which makes us try to live up to his expectations. He has taught us the responsibility of being good leaders. These are life leasons."

Michael Darrow, co-captain, said of Coach Weir, "He continues upon tradition, which is the huge theme of our school," said Michael.

"He has the ability to be a serious coach but, at the same time, a joking, fun guy. He makes practice enjoyable. And, he encourages his captains to be positive. He lets us



come to him with ideas, and he really listens and considers our opinions."

Soccer teammates are inspired daily by a trophy case filled with decades of district, regional and state championship memories.

Sean Cote, co-captain, appreciates how, "Coach Weir pushes us to be the best we can be. He always makes us laugh and we always enjoy playing soccer for him. He has made my experience at plano outstanding."

Coach Weir's program has helped develop hundreds of young athletes over the past three decades. He's coached 20 sets of twins, one set of triplets and a father and son, Chris and Brian Amos, respectively. Brian is currently assistant soccer coach at Duke University, where 2009 state championship twins Chris and Ryan Brown are now playing soccer.

Also on the 2009 team were Dillon Powers, Gatorade National Player of the Year, who now plays for Notre Dame; Ryan McDuff, who is playing for Brown; Danny Hahn, who signed on at the University of Chicago; Andrew VanWoescik, playing for Northern Illinois and a host of other players who signed on at smaller universities. Dillon, Danny and Ryan were also teammates on the national boys soccer championship team, playing with their Andromeda Club, coached by Dillon's father Mike Powers of the Dallas Sidekicks.



Coach Weir gives the team pointers before their game this week. PSHS Athletic Director Jaydon McCullough said Coach Weir is "a guy of vision. He's already thinking about what he wants before he does it, and he communicates that well to his coaches, players and parents."

A combination of talent, academic eligibility, low injury, desire to represent their school and a pride in tradition combine to form a state championship winning team, reflected Coach Weir, who believes that soccer is unique in that it takes a

combination of hand, eye and foot coordination and endurance to be at the top level.

"You're playing on a big field. You can be creative with the ball. It fascinates me how there are three lines working hard to get the goal," he continued. "There's a front line, middle line and goal keeper, who is the one teammate with individual responsibility. You have a lot of characters who you meld together to make a team."

While state championships are a valued accomplishment, Coach Weir tells his players to make academics their first priority. "I tell the boys that academics and family come first. They can miss practice for tutorials and family emergencies." In fact, Coach Weir's boys know that if anything happens to his dog "Tyson" (a nine-year-old boxer), he'll be taking care of his best friend first. "He walks me every morning and evening," he joked.



In addition to coaching Plano soccer, Coach Weir serves as the physical education teacher at Harrington Elementary School. "Teaching elementary school is very enjoyable," he said. "The students are so excited to learn and to see you every day." He did learn during his first day on that job 13 years ago not to have the students remove their shoes for any

of the games. "I remember tying all the second graders' shoe laces in a big hurry at the end of that first class period," he chuckled.

Harrington Principal Ann Aston said that Coach Weir brings enthusiasm and a love for young children to each and every day that he coaches at Harrington. "All students are actively participating throughout the entire PE session," she said. "Teamwork and good sportsmanship are life skills imparted in Coach Weir's kindergarten through 2nd grade classes. The entire faculty and student body cheer Coach Weir on every soccer season to victory."

Coach Weir and his wife Pam, who is Frisco ISD's secondary instructional technology director, have two sons, Jason and Matthew. Jason is an elementary physical education coach at Frisco's Ogle Elementary School. Jason's wife Jaalla is a kindergarten teacher at the same school. Son Matthew is a recent graduate of Oklahoma University and is pursuing a career as a graphic designer in Dallas.

Photos are courtesy of John Pippard, Plano ISD photographer (2009 state championship photos), and Bill Youngblood, Rose Haggar Elementary School CTA (this week's game photos).

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Melinda Smith (continued)

Melinda's sports of choice while a student at Plano Senior High School were basketball, volleyball, track (shotput and discus), and she played on softball leagues in the summer.



Melinda visited Barksdale Elementary School's fitness room this week where students rotated through a circuit of fun physical activities. Health/PE Teacher Cheryl Kool updated Melinda on the school's programs.

Among her favorite teachers who "had a positive influence" on Melinda was Diane Davey, then track coach and the longtime and current girls' soccer coach at Plano Senior High School. "Melinda is the catalyst and motivator for excellence in physical education, health and wellness," said Coach Davey. "She has charted a thorough and well planned map to tie in with the needs of our staff, students and diverse community member in Plano ISD."

Melinda is an "artist" at heart who enjoyed being the official "break through" sign maker for the Plano Wildcats Football Team when she attended the school. "I was an honored guest at the football banquet," Melinda fondly recalled. "That is a special memory." Melinda's first college pursuit was as an art major. Cartooning was her pastime. Later, as a teacher, she used cartooning in many of her classroom lessons.

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Melinda is pictured with fifth graders at Barksdale Elementary School, one of six campuses to receive new, multi-functional pedometers through a grant from Presbyterian Hospital of Plano and the Plano ISD Education Foundation.


After high school, Melinda "detoured" a bit on her path to teaching. She traveled with a softball league and worked in various jobs. Once she decided to pursue her teaching degree, she enrolled in Richland Junior College where she also played basketball. She continued studies and basketball at Navarro Junior College in Corsicana, eventually transferring to the University of Texas at Arlington where she earned her bachelor's degree in exercise and sports studies. When she crossed the stage at graduation, she became the first member of her family to earn a college degree.

Melinda quickly began racking up teaching awards, first earning "Student Teacher of the Year" in Dallas ISD for initiating new physical education programs for students at Gaston Middle School. Her exceptional teaching abilities followed her back home, to Plano ISD, where she taught at Mathews, Skaggs and Sigler elementary schools.

In 2002, when she took the helm at central office, she immediately formed a district leadership team of physical education and health instructors to bring the curriculum up to new levels of excellence.



Digest: What makes Plano ISD health and PE so successful?

Melinda: We have such a strong, dedicated group of health and PE teachers and teaching assistants. They make my job so easy. They welcome change. They want to be successful and take programs to the next level. And, they work closely with the athletics staff to ensure student success there. (Melinda presented on Plano ISD's health/PE curriculum at the school board's February 16, 2010, work session. [View her presentation](#) )

[Melinda is pictured with her son Logan at a recent Marathon Kids event.](#)

Digest: How has your leadership team made a difference?

Melinda: We have a core group of leaders from across the district who wrote Plano ISD's own "Coordinated School Health Program." Only two districts in Texas have written their own state-mandated programs. The health lessons are integrated with science and social studies. The components include classroom, PE, food and nutritional services, parental, guidance and counseling and school health. I also co-chair, along with a parent, our district's School Health Advisory Committee.

Digest: What is your motto?

Melinda: "Practice what you teach." I encourage teachers to promote their programs, get involved with their schools' enrichment programs, to get involved with physical education activities outside of their schools and to model what they teach.

Digest: What is unique about being a health/physical education teacher?

Melinda: We see every student in the building. We service all students. That's the great part about our job. My feelings get hurt if students don't say it's the best part of their day.

Digest: What programs have you introduced to Plano ISD?

Melinda: I initiated the "partner challenge" concept in which students buddy up with a friend and compete in 40 or so activities on field days. They keep track of events and encourage each other through trust, responsibility and skill. They get to show off what they've learned all year at field day. I also initiated 3-on-3 soccer so that students learn more about the game by honing their skills and playing games with just six teammates. Also, campus wellness teams are a successful addition at our schools in which the campus develops goals and involves the entire family, like "walk-to-school" day or health fairs and family fitness nights.

Digest: What programs have you tried to duplicate from your great memories in the early Plano ISD health/PE programs?

Melinda: Coach Ron McNeil was my elementary PE teacher. We had what was called a "Little Olympics." This was a district event, and I'm trying to duplicate district and family involvement through this program and programs like Marathon Kids, Hoop Shoot, Speed Stack Tournaments and others.

Digest: What do you want students to take away from the Plano ISD program?

Melinda: The premise of our program is variety. We try to capture students' interest by exposing them to many activities. We have to challenge them to discover activities that they enjoy, so that they will continue those activities and build upon them throughout their lifetimes.

Quotes About Melinda

"Melinda is a passionate advocate for quality physical education opportunities and experiences for all students. She has led or participated in many efforts to further this cause, including developing partnerships within our community and acting as a spokesperson for important legislative issues. Melinda gives endlessly of her time and effort to establish the very best physical education experience for the boys and girls of Plano ISD. She is a passionately strong advocate for building life-long habits in our students which will result in healthy life styles and interests throughout their lives."

~Susan Modisette, Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction

"Melinda is very dedicated and works hard for the students and teachers of this district. During the last few years, she has developed the health curriculum and is currently working on a physical education curriculum to help strengthen the programs. She has also taken time to order up-to-date equipment that can be "checked out" and used for a short time at any school. This helps the health and physical education teachers keep their programs running smoothly."

~Benjamin Pirillo, Hughston Elementary School PE Teacher

"Melinda has an unending passion for the health/physical education fields. She enables us to create a fun and varied yearly plan with rotation equipment and is

constantly looking for new equipment and ideas to enhance our programs. We are very lucky to have her leadership in our district, not only for the staff but for the families as she heads the School Health Advisory Council and strives to keep Plano ISD in the forefront with curricular changes and technology advancements."

~Patti McAlpin, Rasor Elementary School PE Teacher

"Melinda's greatest gift is her passion for what she does. When she has a vision that she or her staff feels will benefit the students of Plano ISD, there "ain't no mountain high enough..." She will find a way to get it done. She has broken through barriers that physical education and health have never gone. All of this is for the benefit of our kids. The health and wellness of the students of Plano ISD is not just her job but most importantly, it is her passion! She has a clear vision of how we are to move our children in a positive direction, and she goes after it with enthusiasm, heart and knowledge. She will not rest until it is done right. Because of Melinda, Plano ISD has risen to the top as a model for reaching kids through health and physical education."

~Cheryl Kool, Barksdale Elementary School PE Teacher

"Melinda's genuine concern for a decline in overall student performance led her to set a high standard of expectation for herself and her instructional staff to provide necessary tools for instruction. She has modernized and transformed an average physical education program into a model program from the elementary through senior high school levels.

~Diane Davey, Plano Senior High School Soccer Coach

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