



BEST CARE ANYWHERE



2019 Catalog of Programs and Services for Mesquite ISD Students and Families





Cultivating Culture

One of Mesquite Independent School District's four core values is Cultivating Culture. The vision of Cultivating Culture is to develop in students a sense of belonging that inspires collaboration and loyalty—to create an environment so infused with empathy and integrity that bullying and dropping out of school are concerns of the past.

The formula for raising students who have integrity, empathy and grit begins and ends with **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**. SEL includes teaching self-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making so that students navigate the world more effectively. This catalog for students and parents gives an overview of the wrap-around services and programs offered by MISD.



Mesquite ISD

CARE Model of Social and Emotional Learning

Connection

SAFE RELATIONSHIPS
AUTHENTICITY
BELONGING

Awareness

SELF-REGULATION
AUTONOMY
EMOTIONAL IQ

FAMILIES • COMMUNITY
IMPACT
• WORLD •

Resilience

GRIT
DISCERNMENT
HOPE

Empathy

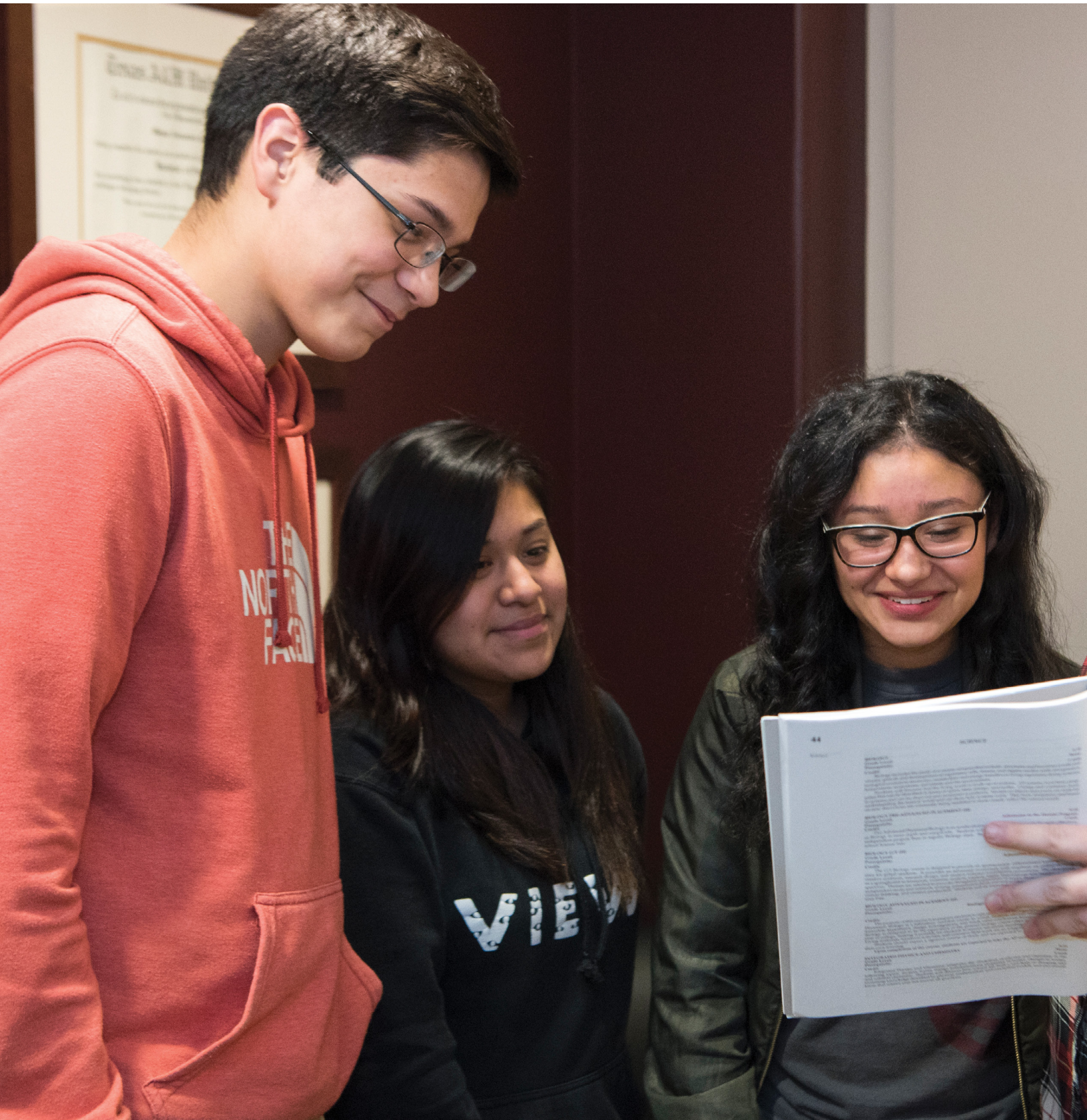
COMPASSION
PERSPECTIVE
RESTORATION

The foundation of Mesquite ISD's CARE model for social-emotional learning (SEL) is **Connection**. Everything begins with safe relationships and grows from there. MISD teaches age-appropriate language around self-awareness, self-control and resilience. Our students learn about their brains and emotions—how what is happening in their brain impacts how they respond when they are upset, excited, angry or frustrated. This knowledge empowers students with strategies

that help them stay in control of their emotions and impulses. MISD's social-emotional learning strategies are embedded in every classroom, in every school and in every interaction with students and parents. Research from more than two decades shows that SEL leads to increased academic achievement, decreased dropout rates and reduced behavior issues such as drug use, pregnancy, mental health problems and criminal behavior.



Learning to “Settle Your Glitter” (See “Social-Emotional Learning” on page 11)





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Connection

SAFE RELATIONSHIPS

AUTHENTICITY

BELONGING

Seniors

Before- and After-School Care

After-school programs bring a wide range of benefits to youth, families and communities. They boost academic performance, reduce risky behaviors, promote physical health and provide



“Right At School” provides before- and after-school childcare at the student’s home campus.

a safe, structured environment for the children of working parents. MISD partners with Right At School and the City of Mesquite to provide before- and after-school care that includes supervised activities, arts and crafts, snacks and homework time at the elementary schools.

Clubs and Organizations

School clubs and organizations connect students to their school and promote lifelong relationships. In addition to having a good time, students learn important values as well as team-building and organizational skills. Clubs offer a safe place for students to foster new friendships while encouraging constructive activities that help them become good citizens in the larger society. Research shows that students who participate in school clubs make better grades and are less likely to drop out of school. Mesquite ISD has more than 500 clubs and organizations at 49 campuses, in addition to career and technology coursework such as phlebotomy, cosmetology, culinary, animation, marketing, architecture, education and more.

PARENT TIP

In addition to counseling groups at schools, valuable resources regarding housing, food, medical, counseling, bullying and social media can be accessed at www.mesquiteisd.org/resources-services/counseling-services. (Click *Resources for Families and Guidance for Parents and Families*.)

Counseling Groups

Mesquite ISD counselors provide counseling groups for students that cover a myriad of concerns, including grief, making friends, kindness, anxiety and conflict resolution, as well as any other needs identified across the school year. These groups teach skills and build resilience with students and—most importantly—provide connection and support.

Feeder Patterns

Mesquite ISD has true feeder patterns—students advance through MISD schools with the same group of classmates all the way through high school. In other words, when students begin kindergarten, they know exactly which high school they will attend (provided they do not move to another attendance zone). This reinforces the district's core value of Commitment to Community. Campuses host pep rallies, spirit days and academic nights as feeder patterns, as well as have high school athletes and cheerleaders read to the elementary feeder students. The esprit de corps and sense of belonging are palpable.



Parent Involvement

Mesquite ISD schools provide a variety of parent opportunities to celebrate student success. Parents are encouraged to participate in PTA, parent education classes and campus-improvement groups such as Watch Dog Dads. Contact your student's campus to see how you can be a proactive part of your child's school.

Partnerships

Mesquite ISD partners with local businesses and organizations, such as the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce, as well as corporations to further student and teacher opportunities.

MISD and Community Education also share a deep commitment to education and the development of individual potential. Community Ed is focused on engaging and encouraging the community to strive for personal excellence and lifelong learning beyond the classroom. New and relevant courses are continually developed for the community, including art, culinary and music courses. Visit www.communityedclasses.org to see what classes are currently being offered.





Don't miss Mesquite ISD's ReadPlayTalk Fair, held in the spring.

Read Play Talk

Research shows that students from poverty enter kindergarten, on average, two years behind their peers who are not from poverty due to limited exposure to vocabulary. Mesquite ISD is aggressively tackling this challenge through a multi-faceted approach involving teacher-designed strategies to address needs in pre-kindergarten through second grade. Through volunteers, Little Free Libraries and community partners, parents are being encouraged to read, play and talk with their children every single day.

Research has shown that children who have been read to are confident communicators, understand emotions better and form stronger relationships. The benefits of daily reading, playing and talking with children are far-reaching and necessary to creating citizens who make a positive difference in the world.

PARENT TIP

Visit www.readplaytalk.com
for more resources, tools and
information, including daily tips
on how to creatively read, play
and talk with your children.

Safety and Security

Safety is the top priority for any school district. MISD invests an extensive amount of time and resources in identifying, assessing and mitigating unsafe behaviors and situations. Safe relationships are taught through counseling and law enforcement partnerships. Facility security is addressed through continuous safety audits.

MISD has a fully functioning, multi-hazard emergency operations plan that includes the Standard Response Protocol, the Standard Reunification Method and campus crisis teams. MISD staff are trained in behavioral threat assessment, suicide threat assessment, Stop the Bleed, sexual harassment and bullying prevention and mental health first aid.

Twenty-two commissioned police officers are stationed at secondary campuses throughout the district as part of cooperative agreements with Mesquite PD and Balch Springs PD. Two more police officers work with elementary students district-wide in an early education program called LETS (Law Enforcement Teaching Students).

MISD was awarded recognition from Gov. Abbott for going above and beyond his recommendations in the Safety Action Plan, which included increased law enforcement, active shooter training, hardening of campus facilities, providing mental health evaluations, mental health first aid, using digital technology to prevent attacks and behavioral threat assessment.

The LETS program allows elementary students to learn directly from a Mesquite police officer.



Summer Camps

Mesquite ISD Community Education provides a bevy of exciting summer camps to keep students connected and engaged throughout the summer months. Camps include sewing, cupcake decorating, quilting, dancing, robotics, coding, animation and much more. To see a full list of options, visit www.communityedclasses.org/summer-camps.

Summer Food Program

The Summer Food Service Program ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. MISD offers breakfast and lunch free of charge at more than 20 campuses during the summer months. Children from birth to 18 years of age may eat with **no need to register or qualify**. Adults in the community may purchase a breakfast for \$1.50 and lunch for \$3 at most locations.

Summer Programs

Mesquite ISD has developed purposeful summer programs that keep students plugged in and engaged:

Kinder U is an introduction to school that aims to support at-risk students as they transition to the structured educational environment. The program focuses on helping students and their families develop a positive outlook on school through behavioral and social skill training, whereby students will learn predictable school routines, self-regulation and pro-social behaviors to support success in school.

Discovery Days is an enrichment program for elementary students focused on experiential and exploratory learning for grades 1-5, with supplemental focus on social-emotional learning, social skills, pro-social behavior and parent engagement. Students will

develop increased confidence in learning and academic exploration, as well as learn skills to better self-manage and self-regulate behavior in school.

The DEAL (Discovery, Empowerment, Altruism and Leadership) is a middle school transition program that provides support and meaningful connection for sixth-grade students through collaborative problem solving in a fun environment. Students and teachers explore learning, self-awareness and academic achievement through an ongoing case management model that reinforces positive behaviors and school success strategies. The goal is for students to seamlessly integrate into the new school environment, have a web of resources when in need of assistance or support and find avenues for success in school.

Fresh U is a high school transition program that fosters a growth mindset and increases skills for success in high school for new freshman students. The program focuses on discovery in learning and building a network of support to aid at-risk students during the first year of high school. An embedded mentorship model made up of teachers and student leaders educates program participants about strategies for academic success and reinforces positive behaviors throughout the entire freshman year.

Tutoring

Tutoring strengthens subject comprehension, boosts confidence and builds important learning skills.

Mesquite ISD schools are dedicated to students succeeding academically—whatever it takes—and toward this effort, all campuses offer tutoring before, during and/or after the school day. In addition, MISD offers an online tutor request form to help parents find tutors outside of the school day.



Awareness

SELF-REGULATION

AUTONOMY

EMOTIONAL IQ

Bridge

Bridge was created in response to very young students who were unable to make academic progress due to maladaptive behaviors. Since its inception in 2017, MISD's Bridge program has successfully educated numerous students in the art of self-regulation and coping. Through the use of Boys Town strategies, Bridge helps students in grades K-2 develop social skills in a safe, enriching environment so that they may be successful in school. Behavior specialists carry strategies back to the student's home campus and assist parents in the development of appropriate social behaviors. Students who have completed the program have had improved behavior.



Positive Behavior Supports

Students come to school with varying levels of needs to achieve social, emotional and academic success. MISD utilizes positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) to bridge the gap for those students who need extra help. These multi-tiered supports focus on positive affirmation and improve social, emotional and academic outcomes for all students. The goal is to create a positive social culture in which positive behaviors are explicitly taught and reinforced so that all adults respond to problem behaviors in a consistent way.

Pre-Kindergarten

Pre-kindergarten helps ensure that children have a strong start in school and life. Pre-K helps students develop skills such as listening, sharing, waiting, taking turns and self-regulation. Studies show that children from low-income or disrupted households who are enrolled in early education perform better on social and cognitive assessments by age 5.

Visit www.mesquiteisd.org/academics/prek for a complete list of Pre-K locations, including bilingual locations and daycare partners offering free Pre-K for 3-year-olds.

Early educational experiences in Pre-K set up students for long-term success in the classroom.

PARENT TIP

To be eligible for Pre-K, students must live in Mesquite and meet one of the following criteria: limited English proficiency, economically disadvantaged, homeless, child of active armed forces or foster care. Call 972-288-6411 for more information.



Social-Emotional Learning

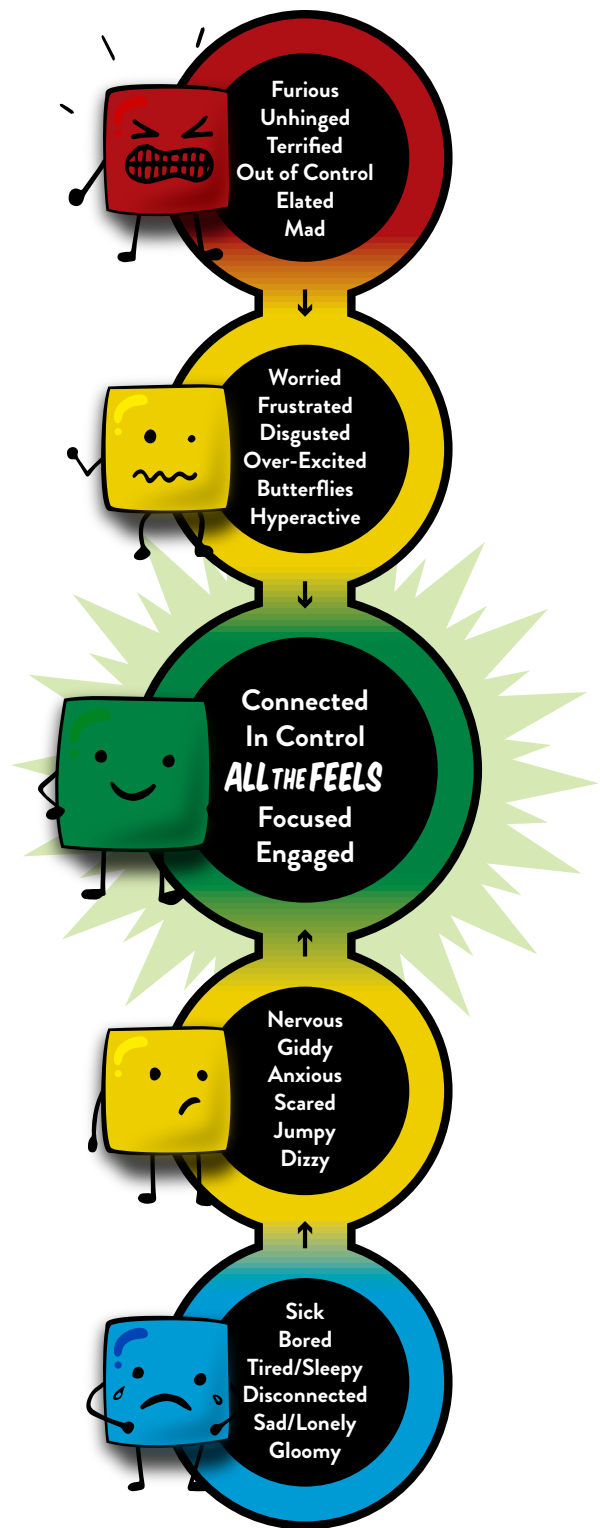
In 2016, Mesquite ISD counselors began a multi-year rollout of social-emotional learning (SEL) activities. The lessons were first introduced to students in grades PreK-2 and were focused on teaching students what is happening in their bodies and brains when they feel anxious or upset, and how to calm their bodies and brains with a bevy of tools focused on breathing and mindfulness. The goal of these SEL lessons and tools is to use age-appropriate language to teach young people how to manage their emotions and self-regulate, using a universal language that will extend across all grade levels.

Students in grades PreK-5 learn how to “Settle Their Glitter” as way to self-regulate and express their feelings in a safe environment with people they trust, without losing control. In grades 6-12, students learn how to “Get to Green” (see right), which teaches them how to create a safe place to feel and express those feelings while remaining in control. MISD’s mindfulness and self-regulation teachings are founded in safe relationships and meaningful connections. This proactive and preventative approach plants seeds in students as young as 4 years old that will blossom as mental health benefits for years to come.

Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention (Stay Here)

MISD Counseling Services is committed to working with staff, students and families to be a support and a resource for students who struggle with thoughts of harming themselves. Counselors are trained to intervene and refer students to appropriate psychiatric evaluations and follow-up care. MISD wants students to remember that they are loved, that they are valued and that the world needs them to stay here.

MISD Counseling Services was recently recognized by Texas State Safe Schools Center for positive school climate and prevention programs, including Best Care Anywhere, Stay Here and wrap-around counseling services.



"Get to Green" Model



Resilience

GRIT

DISCERNMENT

HOPE



Academy

Mesquite Academy expedites student progress toward performing at grade level and completing the requirements for high school graduation. The Academy serves secondary students who are not on track to graduate from high school in four years, offering a flexible learning environment that is driven by the case-by-case needs of individual students. Customized interventions and weekly meetings monitor students' individual progress for meeting the requirements for graduation. The Academy also offers an avenue for students wanting to accelerate their coursework and graduate early.

Acceler8

The goal of Acceler8 is to promote student re-engagement with school and to provide a pathway to graduation. Acceler8 serves overage eighth graders who will complete eighth-grade core classes in the first semester and accumulate high school credit during the second semester. This dropout-prevention program offers students with multiple risk factors the opportunity to recover coursework at an accelerated pace and focus on building self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth in a small community of learners.

Dropout Prevention

Dropout prevention is a year-round endeavor. The process begins on the first day of school, when campus staff check to see which students did not show up. Dropout Recovery Teams across the district deploy to find these students and get them re-enrolled in school. Phone calls are made, social media is



searched and homes are visited until all students are accounted for—to the greatest extent possible. Earning a high school diploma adds 33 percent more income into lifetime earnings and opens the door to a brighter future. MISD is committed to all students being un-droppable.

Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Mesquite ISD is dedicated to educating students and parents about the pitfalls of alcohol and drug use, as well as keeping parents informed of drug trends adversely affecting our youth. Red Ribbon Week is the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the country, and MISD participates by encouraging students to make a personal commitment to live drug-free lives.

Pregnancy-Related Services

MISD offers support services, including home instruction, to pregnant students to help them adjust academically, mentally and physically and stay in school. Services may include counseling, health services, transportation, job readiness training, child care, schedule modifications and case management. These services are delivered to a student when the student is pregnant and attending classes on a district campus or when the pregnancy prenatal period and/or the pregnancy postpartum period prevents the student from attending class. These services are in place to keep students in class and graduating on time from high school.

Truancy Intervention

The goal of the MISD Attendance and Truancy Program is for all students to attend school regularly and graduate on time—ready for the college or career of their choosing. Poor attendance is the single-most practical indicator for identifying students who will fail coursework, do poorly on state tests and drop out of school. MISD is committed to getting to the root causes of absenteeism and helping students and families get back on track. MISD notifies all parents of compulsory attendance laws in Texas and fosters a culture of good attendance. Administrators and teachers meet with parents early and often to ward off continued absences. Prior to filing truancy, schools utilize all interventions at their disposal to determine root causes and offer support, including home visits, Pathways to Success, tutoring, behavior contracts and free counseling.

PARENT TIP

Attending school regularly helps students feel better about school and themselves. Start building this habit in elementary school so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day, is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college and at work. For more information, visit www.attendanceworks.org.





Empathy

COMPASSION
PERSPECTIVE
RESTORATION



Anti-Bullying Programs

Mesquite ISD goes to great lengths to create a culture of kindness and inclusivity where every student feels a sense of belonging. Creating true feeder patterns was a significant step in building loyalty amongst students. The most important elements of bullying prevention are: students who feel connected to their schools, involving the entire school community in creating a culture of respect, and encouraging students to get help when they are involved in bullying or know others who need help. To that end, MISD implements the bullying protocol and prevention training, Choices Shaping Individuals, cultivating culture lessons, mentoring programs, proactive behavior programs (e.g., The Leader in Me) and national celebrations such as Bullying Prevention Month and Kindness Week.

PARENT TIP

Parents are encouraged to have their students download the **P3 app** (available on the **Apple App Store** or **Google Play**) in order to submit anonymous tips regarding bullying, threats and other crime or safety-related information. This new technology is part of MISD's commitment to keeping our schools and community safe. Visit www.mesquiteisd.org/resources-services/bullying for more information about Mesquite ISD's bullying policy and the P3 app.

Behavior Framework

Mesquite ISD's Behavior Framework (below) focuses on getting to root causes of misbehavior rather than exclusively viewing discipline management punitively. Administrators and teachers put positive supports in place so that students can achieve long-term success. MISD educators are committed to utilizing prevention, intervention and restoration before implementing repercussions.

Get Down to Root Causes for Long-Term Success

PREVENTION

Clubs and Organizations • Positive and Proactive Classrooms and Campuses • Mesquite United • Relationships and Mentoring • Choices Shaping Individuals • R-Time • Classroom Circles • Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)



INTERVENTION

Problem-Solving Teams • Parent Visits ("Tune Up" or "Drive Up") • PBIS • TLC Cadres • Behavior Specialists • The Bridge • In-Team Suspension • Out-of-Team Suspension • Rotating Supervision ISS • Family Support Center • Reverse Suspensions • Responsive Classrooms • Behavior Contracts • Response to Intervention • Circles



RESTORATION

Restorative Circles and Practices • Restore relationships between students or between student and teacher • Parent-Student Conferences • Use ISS time for social-emotional needs • Peer Mediation • Restorative Discipline • Community Service • Family Support Center



REPERCUSSION

Detentions • ISS • OSS • DEAP • JJAEP



MESQUITE ISD FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER



MISD Administrative Annex
405 East Davis St • Mesquite 75149
Across from Mesquite High School

(972) 882-7776

Family Support Center

In order to address a deficit in mental health resources in Mesquite, MISD recently partnered with Texas A&M-Commerce to open a counseling center for students and their families that provides **free counseling and mental health support**. The Family Support Center is dedicated to improving the quality of life for students and families by providing therapy, support and resources to address the growing numbers of mental health concerns that present at school and interfere with learning. The Family Support Center offers evening hours and is continuously adding services (such as play therapy). More than 1,000 families have taken advantage of this life-saving resource since its opening in 2018.

Relational Practices

Relational Practices (RP) are a framework for building community and for responding to challenging behavior through authentic dialogue, coming to understanding and making things right. Traditional discipline consequences focus on the “rule that was broken” and the punishment required. RP instead focuses on the “harm that was caused” and the accountability that is needed to make amends, build community and restore the relationship between the student and teacher or the student and another student. In the second year of implementing RP, schools saved hundreds of days of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by offering the option of repairing the relationship between the offender and the offended. More than half of Mesquite ISD campuses have been trained in Relational Practices and Talking Circles.



Talking Circles are one of the most effective ways to build resilience and empathy in students. This forum is a place where students can safely talk to each other, especially when they are struggling. Circles give students a sense of belonging, decrease feelings of isolation and promote personal growth and resilience as students gain perspective and new ways of thinking about their struggles.

Student Support Services

Mesquite ISD provides support and services to the children and families identified as homeless, military-connected or in the care of child protective services. MISD employs two full-time social workers and a trained liaison at each campus to assist in obtaining clothing, food, shelter, vaccinations and outside support.

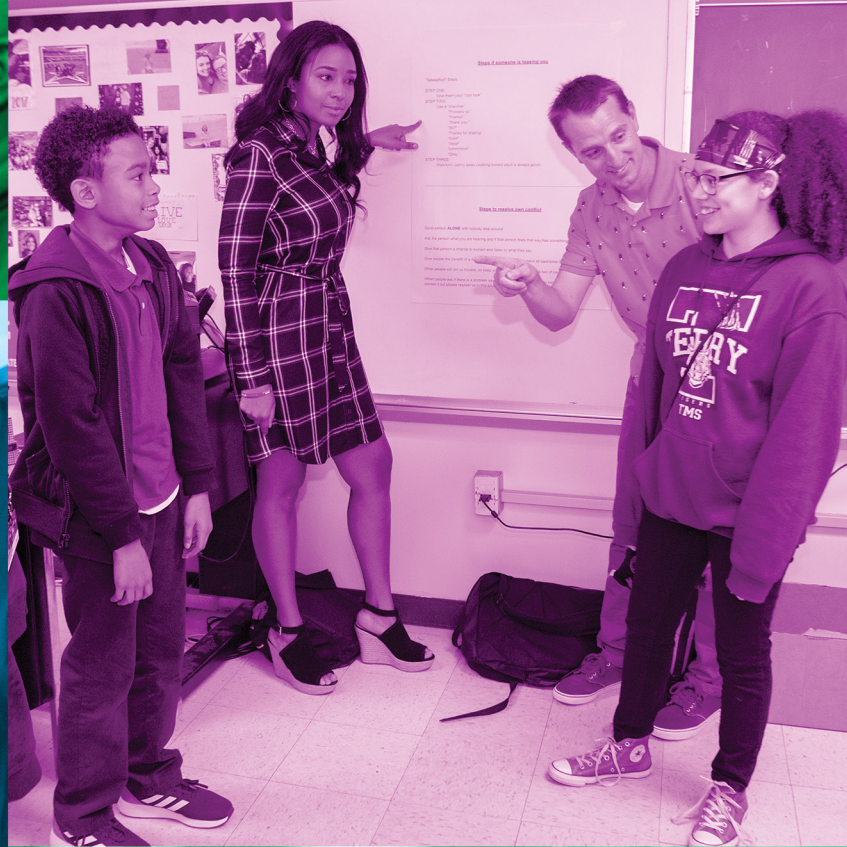
In addition, MISD has a dedicated Foster Care Liaison who helps students and families navigate enrollment processes, free meal programs, records transfer, extra-curricular activities, credit recovery, graduation and post-secondary opportunities.

Local nonprofit Sharing Life provides many services including: a food pantry, clothes closet, utility assistance, skills training and more.

PARENT TIP

Caring adults play a significant role in successfully educating children in the foster care system. Guardians can access Foster Care and Student Success at the Texas Education Agency website for tips and resources.





#MISDbestCAREanywhere