

Craft touts school academics, programs, students, savings

Boerne school superintendent cites gains; says district size will double in next decade

BY JEFF B. FLINN

Managing Editor

From her dream of becoming a Spanish teacher to the day she was handed the keys to the Boerne Independent School District, Dr. Kristin Craft has stuck with a principle educational belief.

"I believe every child deserves to be in



Boerne ISD Superintendent Dr. Kristin Craft delivers her "State of the District" speech on Feb. 29. Star photo by Jeff B. Flinn

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Boerne ISD Superintendent Dr. Kristin Craft, right, tells of her first week of school, where she encountered Van Raub Elementary School pre-K student Bethany Tang during a bus ride. During Craft's "State of the District" speech Feb. 29, Bethany signed a pledge to devote herself to graduating from Boerne ISD, under the watchful eye of her father, Travis Tang.

Star photo by Jeff B. Flinn

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the presence in the classroom of a high-performing teacher," Craft said Thursday during her "State of the School District" presentation at the Cana Ballroom. "Every teacher needs to be part of a high-performing team. The work of a teacher is hard, and we do need to work together as a team."

Craft, Boerne ISD's first female superintendent, has been an educator for more than 28 years. She most recently served as associate superintendent of academics and chief academic officer in Spring Branch ISD in the Houston area for the past six years, administering to 32,000 students in 46 schools.

She spent 20 years serving in district leadership roles, including 12 years as a principal.

Dr. Craft has served as a principal at every level, rising from elementary to intermediate and then to high school, between 2003 to 2015.

Principals, she said, "set the tone and culture for all that happens in that building, to create that culture of a high-performing team."

She takes over a district of 11,000 students served by nearly 1,300 staff members, a district well-known for its academic prowess.

Craft presented slides that showed Boerne consistently outperforms the region and state in academics at all levels. Among those, she said, is Boerne's 99% graduation rate from its two high schools. "Getting to this number is a lot of hard work all throughout the system."

Such academic performance will be key during her tenure – while

she touted the district's impressive academic standings, she talked about continuing that achievement, even in the face of expected growth.

"Our enrollment projections show us almost doubling in the next 10 years," she said, calling the growth factor "both a privilege and an opportunity."

"We are well positioned to build upon what makes Boerne so unique to ensure we can face the realities of today and the demands of tomorrow," the superintendent said. "We are committed to ensuring all students are prepared for the future."

Craft has been highly visible in the district since her arrival nine weeks ago -- from reading to children in classrooms, to filling cafeteria trays during lunch and to riding on the bus with students. "I have been on a mission to learn the heart and soul

about Boerne and Boerne ISD."

Addressing its educational future, Craft outlines some plans for program growth in the coming school year.

The district will add three early childhood pre-K units, a fifth dual language program, and open a Spanish immersion program in two Cibolo Creek Elementary classrooms.

The district's tax rate of 0.9932 is the lowest it has ever been, she said. She thanked her predecessor, Dr. Thomas Price, and the staff for their diligence in debt management.

"Our bond debt management reflects a commitment to fiscal responsibility," she said. "The district has been aggressive in paying down principle while maintaining a consistent tax rate. The ISD has saved over \$57 million of your tax money, demonstrating remarkable fiscal responsibility."