

# The Resource

A monthly publication of the  
Human Resources Department  
Northside Independent School District, San Antonio TX 78238



## Retirement reminder

An NISD Retirement Seminar will be conducted 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. March 17 at the Northside Activity Center. Attendees will receive information about retirement and instructions on how to complete the paperwork required by *Teacher Retirement System* (TRS) and NISD.

If you cannot attend but still plan to retire this school year, please contact TRS at (800) 223-8778 to obtain an Estimate of Retirement Earnings. After receiving this package from TRS, you may schedule an appointment to meet with an NISD Retirement Specialist by calling 397-8620.



## SBEC certificates are going virtual

Beginning April 1, the State Board for Educator Certification no longer will automatically mail hard copies of teaching certificates.

Instead, “virtual certificates” will be available on the *SBEC web site*. To print the virtual certificate, teachers can login to their SBEC account and click on the “SBEC Online for Educators” link or “Official Record of Educator Certificates” link at the top of the home page.

Hard copies still are available, but must be specifically requested on the certificate application.

**Also effective April 1**, educators who hold a standard certificate will receive a renewal reminder by email six months prior to the expiration date. It is of utmost importance for educators to check their *SBEC account/profile* to make sure a current email address is on file.

## Schools for “schoolers”



We’re all in the education business, right? So don’t forget about **your** education or certification needs. The Human Resources web site includes a page that provides lists of colleges, universities, and other agencies or institutions that offer programs of study for almost any NISD employee. Click on the links below if you’re seeking:

- [high school completion](#)
- [college education](#)
- [teacher certification](#)
- [advanced degrees or additional certification](#)

As you consider your educational needs, remember to save a few steps in the journey by viewing the opportunities listed on the *HR web site*. (NEXT MONTH: Tuition Assistance for Paraprofessionals)

## Size matters – know your food portions



It’s always a good time to commit to losing weight. The good news is that you don’t have to give up what you love. Knowing what portion sizes you should be eating daily is a great way to take control of your diet without giving up food you love to eat. But because restaurant portions now are so large, many of us have lost sight

of true portion sizes. You might be overeating and don’t know it!

The following are tips to measure portions based on common everyday objects:

- 1 ounce of meat = matchbox
- 3 ounces of meat = deck of cards
- 1 fresh fruit or vegetable serving = fist
- ½ cup pasta, rice or baked potato = computer mouse
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter = golf ball
- 1 snack serving = cupped hand
- 1 ounce of cheese = 4 dice
- Between 1 teaspoon and 1 tablespoon of Butter = 3 dice



## Use It or Lose It

Flexible Spending Account balances from calendar year 2008 must be claimed by the end of March. Any balances as of April 1 will be forfeited.

## Income tax help is available

Free income tax filing assistance is available from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at Ross MS. Preference is given to people with less than \$45,000 annual income and who are likely to be eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit. Assistance is available through April 15. Bring your tax document to the school or call Irene Alvarez at 397-6398 for additional information.

## Do you see what I see: All about vision care



Employees who enroll in the *SafeGuard Vision Plan* may use the benefits of the plan for one eye exam and the purchase of one pair of glasses or contact lens every 12 months. In other words, you must wait at least 12 months from your last eye exam before the plan will pay for a second exam.

The same is true for purchase of glasses or contact lens. So, if you have an exam and purchase your glasses in June 2009, then it will be June 2010 before the plan will pay for another exam and new glasses.

Employees enrolled in a Humana health plan also receive a discount vision benefit. This benefit includes a discount for eye exams and purchases of glasses or contact lens at EyeMed Vision stores. It also includes a discount for LASIK surgery at Tru Vision providers. These discounts cannot be used in conjunction with the SafeGuard benefits, but do provide an alternative to employees not enrolled in SafeGuard or who desire more frequent exams.

### Allow us to relay the following

The American Cancer Society Relay for Life will be held 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. April 10 at the UT Health Science Center Track. Information can be found at the *Relay for Life web site* or by calling Darlene Willis at (713) 706-5644.

*The Resource is electronically published nine times a year by the Northside ISD Human Resources and Communications departments to help keep employees informed.*

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## A $R_x$ bailout for your medicine cabinet



With prescription drug costs rising, generic alternatives to brand-name medications may help members increase savings. Generic drugs are safe, effective, FDA-approved – and less expensive.

According to the FDA, a generic drug is identical to a brand name drug in dosage, form, safety, strength, quality, performance characteristics, and intended use. *The Humana web site* offers helpful information, such as:

- 50 most frequently prescribed drugs and their generic equivalent
- Frequently asked Q&A regarding generic drugs
- A cost-comparison generator
- Charts that illustrate generic vs. brand name savings

## Everything you need to know about Evaluations

Every employee in NISD, including the Superintendent, is evaluated at least once annually by their immediate supervisors. Any employee may be evaluated more than once a year.

Teachers are evaluated using the state-recommended system, known as Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). This appraisal includes a minimum of at least one 45-minute observation or mutually agreed upon segments. Under PDAS, additional walk-throughs and observations may be conducted at the discretion of the supervisor. The PDAS appraiser must be the teacher's supervisor or a person approved by the Board of Trustees, hold a valid teaching certificate, and have at least three years of teaching experience. After receiving a written copy of the evaluation, a teacher may request a second appraisal by a different appraiser or may file a written rebuttal to the evaluation (under PDAS rules, the rebuttal must be filed within 10 working days or 15 working days with the supervisor's approval).

The Alternate Teacher Appraisal Record (ATAR) is implemented as a locally developed instrument. Teachers observed using the PDAS, who are on a continuing or two-year term contract and who agree in writing, may be placed on a three-year cycle if their rating on the most recent PDAS evaluation meets all the following criteria:

- No domain score less than "proficient"
- Four out of eight domain scores are "exceeds expectations"
- At least two of the first four domain scores are "exceeds expectations"

School administrators also must be evaluated annually. School districts must either use the Commissioner of Education approved appraisal form or one that the District has adopted. NISD has developed its own appraisal form, which includes consideration of campus performance on the academic excellence indicators TEC 39.051 and the campus objectives under TEC 11.253.

In addition to evaluating teachers and administrators, NISD has developed evaluation systems for other employees such as central office administrators, coaches, librarians, counselors, secretaries, custodians, maintenance, food service and transportation employees, just to name a few.

All administrators must have their evaluations completed by the February Board meeting. All teachers, professionals, and all other employees should have a complete evaluation prior to the end of May.

All employees are asked to sign their evaluation. A signature means only that the employee has received the evaluation.