

LOOK BACK

THE SEALY NEWS

is Charged in County

Fire Assembly at Industrial

Development Study Monday

County Hwy Show is

Set for September 3

LOOK BACK IN TIME  
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SPORTS



AREA SCHOOLS MAKE IT TO  
EA SPORTS  
PAGE 5

# Sealy ISD denies homeschoolers in UIL, tightens code of conduct

BY ALLISON DRINNON  
ALLISON.DRINNON@COLORADOCOUNTYCITIZEN.COM

Sealy Independent School District voted against allowing homeschoolers to participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL), updated the student code of conduct and discussed other changes during its meeting on Wednesday, July 30.

**UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE**  
The school board unanimously voted to deny non-enrolled students, such as homeschoolers, from

participating in UIL and other extracurricular activities. The UIL administers a majority of athletic, musical and academic contests and activities for public schools in Texas. Numerous community members spoke in favor of allowing homeschooled students to participate in UIL. Sports journalist Terry Carter said that homeschool students are as much of the community as the rest of students.  
“Junior high and high school are crucial times... because we develop and fine tune our self-image, our habits, our physical and mental health, who we are and what we become,” Carter said. “...Interaction is a big part of that. Home-

school kids may not get nearly as much interaction as someone in the UIL who is competing...Those interactions help them to grow up to be competent, self-reliant, independent and leaders in their community.”  
Other speakers also reasoned that their non-enrolled children gained socialization opportunities; participation is good for student health; non-enrolled families pay school taxes; and the small amount of participation would not trigger staffing increases. However, Superintendent Dr. Bryan Hallmark recommended denial.  
“I sincerely appreciate y’all coming and advocating for your chil-

dren. I’m more than willing to sit down and talk to you about what your situation looks like and as it pertains to participation in the future,” Hallmark said. “With that being said, I also feel like as superintendent, I have to make the recommendation that is best for our school district. I’m going to recommend that Sealy ISD continue to not allow participation of homeschool and private school students in all extracurricular activities.”

**CAFETERIA LUNCH PRICES**  
Chief Financial Officer Lisa Svoboda introduced updated pricing for student cafeteria lunches that the board approved unanimously.

“That increase for all levels, both lunches and breakfast, will be a 25-cent increase for the 2025-26 school year. That is for all paying students,” Svoboda said. “They’re going to categorize anyone that qualifies for reduced [pricing] for free lunches as well.”  
Svoboda said the changes will go into effect on Sept. 3 and that updated adult meal pricing is pending information from the Department of Agriculture (USDA).  
Code of conduct and discipline  
Executive Director of Special Programs Mary Gajewski presented  
See **SISD**, page 10

## Sealy, Brazos set for new school year

**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL – WEDNESDAY, AUG. 13**  
**MEET THE TEACHER**

Selman and Sealy Elementary – Thursday, Aug. 7 from 5-6:30 p.m.

Sealy High School – Monday, Aug. 11 from 4:30-6 p.m.

Sealy Junior High – Monday, Aug. 11 from 5:30-7 p.m.

**REGISTRATION**  
Both new and returning student registration will be through the Ascender Parent Portal. To complete new student registration, parents must provide the following documents: parent/guardian ID, child’s birth certificate, social security card, immunization records and Proof of Residency. Proof of Residency includes utility bills, voter registration and homeowners’ or renters’ insurance and must be dated for July or August 2025. All returning students must be registered.

**PHONE NUMBERS**  
Sealy High School 979-885-3515  
Sealy Junior High 979-885-3292  
Sealy Elementary 979-885-3852  
Selman Elementary 979-885-6659  
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### BIBLE VERSE

"The Lord is faithful to all His promises."  
- Psalm 145:13

WEATHER	
DAY	H/L/RAIN
Thursday	97/74/10%
Friday	97/74/10%
Saturday	94/75/10%
Sunday	95/74/10%
Monday	94/75/20%
Tuesday	97/75/20%
Wednesday	97/74/10%



415 Main Street  
Sealy, TX 77474  
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# EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GIRL WITH NERVOUS SYSTEM DISORDER HONORED AS QUEEN AT NEWMAN’S CASTLE

BY ALLISON DRINNON  
ALLISON.DRINNON@COLORADOCOUNTYCITIZEN.COM

Audriana Ashinhurst, 8, was crowned queen during a royal celebration at Newman’s Castle, hosted by Make-A-Wish to honor her fight against a tumor, Sunday, Aug. 3.  
Ashinhurst celebrated with friends, family and Make-A-Wish staff a month after finishing 12 rounds of chemotherapy for Neurofibromatosis. Neurofibromatosis is a disorder that results in the growth of tumors on nerves throughout the body. In Ashinhurst’s case, a tumor appeared on the intersection between her optical nerves. Ashinhurst was first diagnosed in June 2024 through an eye exam and has since been working with a neurology team at M.D. Anderson. Ashinhurst said she was happy to spend time with friends and family.  
“I thought [being queen] would be super, super fun,” Ashinhurst said. “...It feels really good to have my wish come true.”  
Audriana Ashinhurst’s mother, Lorena Ashinhurst, said that Audriana has handled the condition well. After chemotherapy, Lorena said that her tumor has stabilized and even shrunk a small amount, leaving her vision unchanged in the last year.  
“It was a lot to process, but she has taken it. I’m so surprised she does better than most adults,” Lorena Ashinhurst said. “She’s very brave, and for the most part, she has a super good attitude about things. She asks a lot of questions which I think is a good thing. I think getting her questions answered helps her cope.”  
Lorena and Audriana Ashinhurst relocated to Houston from San Antonio to receive treatment at M.D. Anderson. Lorena said that the hospital’s social workers connect-



Above: Chris Flores walks his sister Audriana Ashinhurst down a sparkly blue carpet into Newman’s Castle for her royal celebration hosted by Make-A-Wish, Sunday, Aug. 3, in Bellville.



Left:Ellie Porazzo (middle right) and Miranda Chaves (far right) crown Audriana Ashinhurst (middle left) next to Dave French (far left) for her royal celebration hosted by Make-A-Wish, Sunday, Aug. 3, at Newman’s Castle in Bellville.

See **QUEEN**, page 10

## Old Family Recipes collected by the Sealy Area Historical Society

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING RECIPES**  
The Sealy Area Historical Society is preparing a very special cookbook featuring favorite family recipes from the kitchens of generations of Sealy area cooks. Historical photographs and information will also be included.  
This cookbook will be professionally published and will certainly become a prized keepsake. Please help us by submitting a favorite family recipe that has been passed down through the years, so that your family can be represented in this historical journey through the kitchens of the Sealy area’s best cooks.  
Your name will be printed with your recipe along with any brief comments or special memories about the recipe you wish to include. Please limit your submissions to five recipes. Not all



recipes submitted will be used to avoid duplication.  
Recipe forms may be downloaded online at sealyhistoricalsociety.org/cookbook. The forms are fillable pdf forms.  
The completed recipe forms should be sent by email to info@sealyhistoricalsociety.org or mailed to Sealy Area Historical Society, P O Box 585, Sealy, TX 77474.  
Printed forms may be picked up from Angela Leschper at The

See **RECIPES**, page 10

## Recipes needed for ACI

Calling all home cooks! The peak season for entertainment, from Halloween through Christmas, is almost here and we want your best appetizer recipes to feature in Austin County Insider magazine.  
We’re looking for the best seasonal appetizers. Whether it’s been handed down for generations or you invented it yourself, we’d like to hear about it. We’ll publish some of the most creative crowd-pleasers in the fall issue. Photos are a must. The deadline for submissions is Aug. 10. For more information contact Edie at ezuvanich@gmail.com.

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## QUEEN

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ed her to the Make-A-Wish Texas Gulf Coast and Louisiana chapter. The chapter was established in 1984 and has granted over 11,500 wishes since its start. CEO Shelly Millwee said the wish team tries to get to the heart of a wish.

“These [unique wishes] are probably my most favorite because it brings an entire community together to create a really special experience for a kiddo,” Millwee said.

Millwee said her team wanted a castle to fulfill Audriana Ashinhurst’s wish to become a queen. After searching, the team found Newman’s Castle in Bellville. Mike Newman started construction on his castle in 1998 after exploring Europe in his early 20s. Construction was completed around a decade later and featured a moat, a working drawbridge, a chapel, five corner turrets, a court-

yard and a central keep. Newman’s nephew Chad Welty and his wife currently manage the castle. Welty said Ashinhurst’s celebration was the first time he managed this kind of special event.

“We were on board pretty fast when they asked us to utilize the space,” Welty said.

The celebration featured face painting, balloon-animal making, a DJ, lunch, a candy bar and arts and crafts. Actors from the live-action roleplaying group EDORALIVE! dressed as knights and noble ladies to form Audriana Ashinhurst’s royal court. Lorena Ashinhurst said the event had a two-fold purpose.

“[Make-A-Wish] found ways to make some things fun and ways to make her feel special, especially like this event,” Ashinhurst said. “It gives her something to look forward to and bring awareness to people who are not familiar with that type of condition.”



Donna Hughey paints a pink floral design on Audriana Ashinhurst’s face during Ashinhurst’s royal celebration hosted by Make-A-Wish, Sunday, Aug. 3, at Newman’s Castle in Bellville.

## SISD

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updated changes to the 2025-2026 student code of conduct for personal communication devices, artificial intelligence (AI), e-cigarettes, discipline alternative education program (DAEP) placement, expulsion and antisemitism.

To comply with Texas House Bill 1481 from the most recent legislative session, Sealy ISD will prohibit the student usage of personal communication devices on school property during the school day.

“The school day we are defining as when school doors open in the morning until dismissal at the end of the day,” Gajewski said.

Gajewski said that stu-

dents and parents can reach each other through the office and by using school phones. The code of conduct outlines progressive disciplinary action for elementary, junior high and high school students at the level of office referral but may be subject to change.

“We like to collect feedback from people, and this was made this summer with administrative feedback. We didn’t have parent or student or teacher feedback,” Gajewski said. “If we start the school year and our best laid plan goes off track or there’s something really inhibiting teachers, students, families, we do have the ability to come back to [the school board] and ask [the board] to reconsider the code of conduct as it was published and make a revision.

You don’t know how it’s going to go until it goes.”

An updated reference to AI usage in the classroom prohibits the use of AI “in a way that would constitute academic dishonesty or as a means of engaging in any other prohibited conduct.”

The codes for first time offense of possession or use of a nicotine delivery product, or e-cigarette, were updated in compliance of House Bill 6 from the most recent legislative session. HB 6 removes the mandate for DAEP placement and allows schools to choose to instead give suspension for first time offenders. Sealy ISD’s updated code of conduct leaves the choice up to the discretion of “an appropriate administrator.”

For further compliance with HB 6, the code of con-

duct updated its discretionary and mandatory guidelines for DAEP placement and expulsion. Under HB 6 and Senate Bill 569, an expelled student may alternatively be enrolled in a virtual education program that meets the same requirements as an in-person DAEP.

A new addition to general conduct violations for mistreatment of others focuses on antisemitism and originates from Senate Bill 326. The addition prohibits students to “engage in any behavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct and is motivated by antisemitism.” The code of conduct follows the definition of antisemitism of Government Code section 448.001: “a certain perception of Jews that may be expressed as hatred

toward Jews [that] includes rhetorical and physical acts of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals or their property or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

The 2025-2026 student code of conduct can be found under parent resources on the district’s website.

### UPDATING BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FACILITIES

The board approved the authorization of a donation to be directed towards the improvements of the baseball field, presented by Director of Maintenance Mike Zapalac. Zapalac said that the donor did not want recognition. The improvements include removal of the galvanized

netting and parts of the existing frame, painting the poles black, installing a stone wall and putting up new vinyl netting. Hallmark spoke in favor of improving both baseball and softball facilities.

“I’ve talked to the donor, and we’ve had some internal discussions, and we’ve got some needs at both the baseball and softball facility,” Hallmark said. “...Over the course of the next couple of months, I would like for us to have conversations about maybe doing some work at both facilities.”

Board member Katy Grigar echoed Hallmark’s statement and said she wanted the project to begin soon in preparation for the upcoming spring season. Zapalac confirmed that the project would start in October.

## SCHOOL

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### COMMUNITY ALERTS

If any campus is closed, has a delayed opening or has restricted access to a building, the district will alert the community through the following programs:

School Messenger Parent Alerts  
Campus Level Remind

app  
Sealy ISD Facebook page

### NO CELL PHONES

In accordance with House Bill 1481, Sealy ISD prohibits student usage of personal communication devices on school property during the school day. Sealy ISD defined the school day as when the doors open until dismissal. The 2025-2026 student code of conduct outlines progressive disciplinary action based on age level.

### E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING

House Bill 6 from this most recent legislative session removed mandatory discipline alternative education program (DAEP) placement for first-time offenders of possession or use of a nicotine delivery product, or e-cigarette. School districts now have the option to instead suspend first-time offenders. Sealy ISD’s leaves discipline up to the discretion of a school administrator.

### FOOTBALL

The entire football season schedule can be found on the Sealy Tigers’ website. First games for each team:

Sealy varsity will open the season away against Taylor, Friday, Aug. 15 at 7 p.m.

Season ticket renewal ends Friday, Aug. 8. Unique renewal codes were emailed to previous season ticket holders.

### BRAZOS ISD

#### FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL – WEDNESDAY, AUG. 13

#### MEET THE TEACHER

Brazos Elementary, Monday, Aug. 11, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Brazos Middle School, Monday, Aug. 11, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Brazos High School,

Monday, Aug. 11, 6-7 p.m.

All current high school students can pick up their yearbook at the high school’s Meet the Teacher event. Elementary and middle school students will receive their yearbook during the first full week of school.

### ORIENTATION

Brazos Middle School, Monday, Aug. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Brazos High School, Monday, Aug. 11, 7-7:30 p.m.

### REGISTRATION

Both new and returning student registration will be through the Ascender Parent Portal. To complete new student registration, parents must provide the following documents: parent/guardian ID, child’s birth certificate, social security card, immunization records and Proof of Residency. Proof of Residency includes utility bills, voter registration and homeowners’ or renters’ insurance and must be dated for July or August 2025. All returning students must be registered.

### PHONE NUMBERS

Brazos High School 979-478-6832

Brazos Middle School 979-478-6814

Brazos Elementary School 979-478-6610

### COMMUNITY ALERTS

If any campus is closed, has a delayed opening or has restricted access to a building, the district will alert the community through the following methods:

The district website  
Brazos ISD and campus Facebook pages

School Messenger Parent Alerts

KPRC-Channel 2 Houston

KHOU-Channel 11 Houston

KTRK-Channel 13 Houston

KRIV-Channel 26 Houston

### NO CELL PHONES

In accordance with House Bill 1481, Brazos ISD prohibits student usage of personal communication devices on school property during the school day. Brazos ISD’s new policy requires personal communication devices to be turned off and out of sight. Brazos ISD defines the school day as the time the student enters the school building until the time they leave the school building at the end of the instructional day.

### E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING

House Bill 6 from this most recent legislative session removed mandatory discipline alternative educa-

tion program (DAEP) placement for first-time offenders of possession or use of a nicotine delivery product, or e-cigarette. School districts now have the option to instead suspend first-time offenders. Brazos ISD’s leaves discipline up to the discretion of a school administrator.

### FOOTBALL

The entire football season schedule can be found on the district’s website. First games for each team:

Brazos varsity will open their season against Hempstead away Friday, Aug. 29 at 7:30 p.m.

The first pep rally is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 29. The theme is “Cage the Cats,” students should wear camo. The entire pep rally schedule is posted on Brazos High School’s Facebook page.

### OTHER UPDATES

Middle school students will be allowed to bring backpacks this school year.

The Brazos ISD school board appointed Greg Graham as the new principal of Brazos Middle School. Graham holds over 15 years of experience in education, spending most of his time in leadership roles at Leander ISD. Graham succeeds Clay Hudgins who was named principal for Brazos High School.

**22nd Annual  
Prairie Chapter CCA  
Kid’s Fishing Tournament**

**August 16, 2025  
4:00 pm to 7:00 pm**

**Open to the Public, everything is FREE.**

**Prizes will be given for  
different age categories.**

**Hot Dogs and drinks will be served.**

**Bring your fishing pole and Lawn Chair.**

**Worms and Bait will be provided.**

**Location in Cat Spring:  
Don & Patricia Walters Resident  
12857 Newberg Road**

**R.S.V.P. or Text  
for information  
Patricia at  
979-877-5598**

## RECIPES

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Salon at 120 Main Street in Sealy any day except Sundays and Mondays. Forms may be completed by hand and returned to the Sealy Area Historical Society’s Recipe Collection Box at The Salon.

If unable to submit rec-

ipes on the forms provided, copy or photograph the recipes and send by email to [info@sealyhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sealyhistoricalsociety.org) or by text to 832-492-4244. Please follow the instructions listed below:

- List ingredients in order of use in ingredients list and in directions.
- Include container sizes (e.g., 2-8 oz. cans), temperatures and cooking times.
- Use standard abbreviations:

viations: pt, qt, pkg, env, c, tsp, T, oz, lb, gal, doz, sm, med, lg.

- Keep ingredients and instructions separate; instructions should be in paragraph form, not in columns or charts.
- List names of ingredients in directions (e.g., “combine flour, sugar and spices” vs. “combine first 3 ingredients”).
- Any additional notes

or substitution suggestions should be listed separately at the end of the recipe.

Recipes should fit into one of the following categories: Appetizers & Beverages Breads & Rolls Soups and Salads Desserts Vegetables & Side Dishes Cookies & Candy Main Dishes This & That (pickles, jams, relishes, salsas, sausages, etc.)