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Gregory-Portland Independent School District

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Long-Time East Cliff Elementary Principal Alma Munoz Retires after 39 Years in Education

When asked to share her formula for academic success, Principal Alma Munoz was quick to explain “it’s not always how much work you put in as campus staff, but how much you invite and allow parents to (contribute) with you” that makes all the difference. This community-minded approach to progress, she says, is one reason why three Gregory-Portland ISD schools earned academic honors during her 28-year tenure as an administrator. Munoz retired on August 31st with a total of 39 years in education, including 17 consecutive years as Principal at East Cliff Elementary School.

“I have learned that educating kids is about working with families,” said Munoz. “You must have an open door policy, and understand that (progress) is achieved when both students and parents are engaged. After all, we’re all in this together.”

G-PISD Superintendent Dr. Paul Clore agrees. “Mrs. Munoz and her staff have done excellent work to develop an active school community at East Cliff. I frequently see parents volunteering on campus at all hours of the day, and I’ve heard from many that they are well informed and supportive of our teachers. In turn, we appreciate all the work our parents and community put in to provide the best learning experiences possible for students.”

Munoz credits her staff and parents for maintaining good communication with parents, and says that setting high expectations at school and at home is vital to academic success. “For a student to reach beyond what they think they can do, we (as a community) have to set goals higher than students set for themselves. I love to see the look on a child’s face when they accomplish something. We work as hard as we do just to hear them say, *‘I did it!’*”

Then, once a goal is met, Munoz says every success requires acknowledgment and celebration. “Students are eager to learn. They want you to be proud of them. When we hear comments like, ‘I’m a failure,’ we say, ‘No, you’re not,’ and we make them believe what we (already see). They can achieve, and they will. We never give up on them.”

East Cliff earned five distinction designations and a “Met Standard” Rating for academic performance in 2017 from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Two distinctions were awarded for being among the top 25 percent of campuses in the state with high results in Student Progress and Closing Performance Gaps.

“Mrs. Munoz has always been self-motivated and focused on student achievement,” said Dr. Clore. “She has worked very hard for this school district during her career, and we appreciate all she has done for the good of our students, parents, community, and staff, in 37 years with G-PISD.”

Munoz began her career as a 1st Grade Teacher at Bonham Elementary School in Harlingen ISD. She then spent one year as a Migrant Intervention Specialist in Falfurrias, Texas, before joining G-PISD in 1980. She was a 2nd Grade Teacher at East Cliff, and then Stephen F. Austin Elementary School, prior to serving as a Curriculum Supervisor for the school district. Munoz was an Assistant Principal at Gregory-Portland Junior High School for three years before serving as Principal of the same campus another four years.



East Cliff Principal Alma Munoz Retires

In 1993, she became Principal of the newly constructed Gregory-Portland Intermediate School. Munoz transitioned to Principal at East Cliff in 2000. She opened the new campus at East Cliff in 2016. All except the first two of her 39 years in education have been completed in service to G-PISD students and staff.

“I have been fortunate to work with some awesome, caring, and devoted professionals,” she said. “It has been a true blessing to serve every G-PISD campus where I have been assigned – the people have been great, and so have the kids.”

When asked what she would like to leave behind, Munoz said she hopes others will maintain high expectations for all students. “I know they will, because we have great leadership, excellent staff, and wonderful parents. Our work is not done until every child passes the STAAR test, until every child achieves their very best.”

Munoz will enjoy time with her family in the months ahead, citing a desire to return the favor for their many years of volunteering at her campuses. “My husband and children have always helped out at the schools, and I am so grateful to them – it will be nice to slow down just a little.”

Slowing down will give Munoz a break, but it won’t keep her away from school too long. “Oh, I will definitely volunteer at some point wherever I am needed. I have a passion for helping the kids. If you don’t have a passion for what you do, you will never make great things happen ... and great things are happening in G-P. I am glad to be a part of it.”

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