

September 2026 Board FYI's

Van Alstyne High School

The 2026-2027 school year is off to a strong start at Van Alstyne High School, with a current enrollment of 862 students. We continue to welcome new students and families, and our staff has worked hard to ensure smooth transitions for everyone. The energy on campus has been positive, and our students have quickly settled into their routines.

On Wednesday, September 9, VAHS will host its annual College Fair with more than 75 colleges and universities represented. This event gives students direct access to recruiters and admissions representatives and provides an excellent opportunity for both underclassmen and seniors to begin exploring their options after high school.

Our extracurricular programs are also thriving! Volleyball, football, cross country, and FFA are all off to great starts. It is exciting to see our students representing VAHS with pride in so many different areas.

Homecoming Week will be celebrated September 9-12 with the theme *"Lights, Camera, Action – Hollywood Homecoming."* A highlight of the week will be the return of the Homecoming Parade on Wednesday, September 9, at 6:00 p.m. We have enjoyed a great partnership with the City as we planned and prepared throughout the summer to bring this tradition back to our community. The parade will culminate at the Central Social District with a short community pep rally.

We will continue the celebration with a pep rally at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, September 11, in Panther Arena and finish the festivities with our Homecoming Dance on Saturday, September 12. We are looking forward to a fun week filled with Panther Pride!

VAHS Open House is scheduled for Monday, September 28, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. Parents will have the opportunity to follow their student's daily schedule, meet each teacher, and gain a better understanding of classroom expectations. Every year, I look forward to welcoming our parents to campus and giving them the opportunity to meet the amazing teachers who serve our students each day!

As we move into the fall, we are grateful for your continued support of Van Alstyne High School students and staff. We hope you will join us at one of our games, performances, or events and see firsthand the pride and excitement that fill our campus.

Panther Pride – Family – Together We Thrive

Van Alstyne Junior High School

VAJH is off to a great start, and our students are settling into the routines of junior high. We are currently at 501 students, and as enrollment has grown, we have made some class adjustments to help balance our core classes and provide the best learning environment possible. Students are becoming more confident finding their way around campus, building relationships, and getting

into the rhythm of the school year. We will continue supporting them as they grow academically and socially throughout the year.

Street Smarts is in full swing! Students have really embraced this initiative; in fact, they are beginning to ask for it when we have a day or passing period without it. So far, we have focused primarily on math and RLA skills, and next week we will begin incorporating science and history as well. It has been exciting to see students engaging with academic skills outside the classroom and having fun while doing it.

We completed MAP testing for ELAR last week, and thanks to the support of our curriculum team and the hard work and flexibility of our teachers, testing went smoothly. We look forward to completing math and science MAP testing over the next couple of weeks and using the information to better understand and support our students' academic needs.

Student involvement is also growing across campus. Clubs are beginning to organize, including D&D Club, sponsored by our counselor. Our new Campus Ambassador Club has already received more than 30 permission slips from students interested in participating! Mr. Ritchie also received recording equipment from the high school to support the program, and we are incredibly grateful for their generosity and partnership. We are excited to see our students begin telling the story of VAJH from their perspective.

We also had a successful Back to School Dance, giving our students an opportunity to have fun with friends and build connections with their classmates. Athletics are underway as well. Our volleyball teams have been dominating the competition so far, and we are excited to see our football teams take the field soon. We especially appreciate Coach Foster's work to find additional opportunities for our football players to compete after their first game was canceled.

There is a lot happening at VAJH, but what has been most encouraging is seeing our students become increasingly comfortable, involved, and connected to their school. We are excited about the momentum we are building and will continue working toward our goal of supporting **Every Kid, Every Day!**

Van Alstyne Middle School

Aside from some bumpy beginning of school carline congestion issues, Van Alstyne Middle School is off to the best start! Teachers and students have worked together to establish clear, consistent expectations for learning and behavior. An important part of this process has been giving students a voice in developing collaborative classroom norms. Research consistently demonstrates that students are more successful when expectations are clear, concise, consistent, and understood by all, and we have nailed that at VAMS this year!

We have also launched our PAWS lessons, which are eight-minute homeroom lessons designed to intentionally develop responsible citizens and positive contributors to our school and

community. Our first character focus has been Responsibility, with students engaging in conversations and activities around what responsibility looks like at school, at home, and in our community. We are not solely focused on grades, but also growing great humans!

Instruction is now in full swing, and our classroom walkthroughs have been especially encouraging. We are seeing engaging, interactive learning environments, strong student participation, and lots of smiling faces. Our teachers are doing an excellent job creating classrooms where students are actively involved in their learning! It is the best!

On September 1, we will begin MAP testing, which will provide robust academic data about where each student is currently performing in achievement and growth. This information will help us identify opportunities to accelerate learning, provide targeted support, and address gaps so that instruction can be responsive to individual student needs. Having had previous experience with MAP, Principal Fair is excited to dig into the data to see where we can customize support for each of our learners.

We are incredibly proud of our middle school Panthers and the way they have embraced the start of the school year. There is a strong sense of energy, respect, and purpose throughout VAMS, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead as we continue to build a school where every student can learn, grow, and thrive! Go VAMS!

Sanford Elementary School

Sanford kicked off the new school year by welcoming students back to vibrant, engaging classrooms across all grade levels. As we settle into our daily routines, our administrative and instructional teams are finalizing the schedule adjustments for our special populations. We are taking care to fine-tune service delivery, pull-out times, and push-in supports so that every student receives the individualized assistance they need without missing critical core instruction.

This year, our faculty gathered to discuss our primary goals for the year and collectively decided on our professional development focus. Moving forward, our staff will be concentrating on deep data analysis. By strengthening our ability to evaluate and interpret assessment data, teachers will be better equipped to tailor their daily instruction, target specific student needs, fill learning gaps, provide enrichment activities, and measure overall academic growth more effectively.

Looking ahead, we are eager to connect with our school community at our upcoming Elementary Curriculum Night and Annual Title I Meeting on September 15. This evening will give parents a sneak peek into what their children will be learning this year, outline key grade-level expectations, and provide essential resources to support learning at home.

Partin Elementary School

The school year is off to a great start! We had an excellent turnout for Meet the Teacher, and Meghan and I enjoyed meeting so many families during our “New to VA” presentation that evening. During the presentation, we shared important information about our routines, procedures, and VA culture. It was wonderful to connect with so many sweet families, and we are already beginning to solidify routines and procedures across the school, including dismissal.

During in-service week, our staff was introduced to Ron Clark’s *1% Better*. The book emphasizes how small, intentional, and meaningful changes can lead to a significant impact over time. We have already seen teachers embracing this challenge in meaningful ways. For example, one of our dyslexia teachers is sending home a newsletter to keep parents informed about what students are learning in their groups. A new teacher is making a daily, intentional effort to build relationships with some of her most challenging students. A math teacher is intentionally creating more opportunities for students to communicate their learning throughout the Bluebonnet lessons.

These are just a few examples of the meaningful changes already taking place. I am excited to see how these small, intentional efforts continue to make a positive impact throughout the school year.

Williams Elementary School

It has been a wonderful start at Williams Elementary!

It was an incredibly touching and special ceremony honoring Charles Williams and his late wife, Beth, at the Williams Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. With the ribbon cutting, we officially celebrated the opening of Williams Elementary! We then opened our doors for Meet the Teacher, our very first official community event.

This first week and a half with students in the building has been absolutely everything we hoped for as we worked throughout the summer to prepare. Our WES staff have jumped in enthusiastically, teaching and reinforcing our Panther PRIDE expectations in classrooms and throughout the building. Our students have quickly embraced the “Williams Wave,” greeting one another and staff as we pass in the hallways. It is the cutest thing!

This week, we practiced all of our safety protocols and communication procedures. Our staff and students did a wonderful job demonstrating that they are learning the routines and expectations necessary to keep our campus safe.

We also held our first practice Panther PRIDE assembly, giving students a sneak peek at all of the ways we will celebrate their learning, growth, and hard work each month. It was exciting to

see their enthusiasm as we begin establishing traditions and building the culture of Williams Elementary.

Upcoming Events

AUGUST

8/19–9/11 – No visitors or volunteers, please. We are using this time to learn and practice our school-day routines!

SEPTEMBER

7 – No School/Holiday

8 – No School/Staff PD

9 – 100 Book Reading Challenge Begins!

11 – Homecoming

14 – Visitors and Volunteers Welcome (please see safety procedures and check-in process)

14 – Blue Reading Bags Come Home

14–18 – Celebrate Freedom Week

15 – Elementary Curriculum Night, 5:30–6:30 p.m. @ WES (more information to come)

18 – Begin Recording At-Home Reading Steps

Curriculum Director

Accountability ratings for 2026 have been released. Much of my time is spent analyzing the most recent data to support campus principals as they work on their own campuses and to support our curriculum team as they work directly with teachers.

There are many new faces around VA, and I've spent many hours ensuring that everyone is aware of our processes, knows where their materials are, and knows where to go for support if they need it. The focus documents for math, RLA, science and social studies are complete K-12, and we are continually adding to the resources linked there for our teachers. Course syllabi have been updated on our website and Williams elementary has been added.

My team has spent countless hours already working with our new teachers ensuring they are settling in to how we do things and have all of their questions answered. We had a few very late hires that missed summer trainings so we are actively working to schedule their training sessions asap.

Two years ago, we added a Teacher Leadership Academy, an Assistant Principal Academy, and a Principal Leadership Academy. The principal and ap's will experience a version of both ARC and Bluebonnet academies to help support them as they are also learning what to look for when visiting classrooms and how each program works. We are combining that with TTESS calibrations and leadership walks where we visit classrooms as a group and discuss what they saw and how that would be on an evaluation of the teacher. We began this process last year and will continue it moving forward as it is also a required piece of our TIA implementation.

Ensuring that each campus has instructional expectations that meet district level expectations is paramount to creating an equitable TIA process.

Athletic Director:

Things are off to a great and hectic start for our Panther athletes! All of our fall sports are rolling along, and it has been exciting to see so many of our junior high and high school athletes competing and representing VAISD.

For the past several years, the UIL has provided schools with recommendations related to heat conditions and outdoor practices. I believe VAISD has always done an outstanding job of being smart and safe when it comes to having our student athletes outside in extreme heat, and we have been fortunate to avoid any serious heat-related issues.

This year, many of those recommendations became required regulations.

We are fortunate to have the Perry Weather system, which monitors the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) at VAHS and Panther Stadium. WBGT takes into account temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and solar radiation to provide a more accurate measurement of heat stress on athletes.

Our coaches have access to Perry Weather and can see the current WBGT readings at our facilities. Our athletic trainers also do an outstanding job communicating with our outdoor sport coaches to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding conditions and the appropriate level of activity.

There are four levels of WBGT regulations, ranging from green, where normal activities are allowed, to black, where no outdoor activities are permitted. We have reached the black level a few times, but most often we have been in the orange level, which requires us to limit equipment and shorten practices.

One of the somewhat inconvenient adjustments we have made involves our 8th-grade football players. We have asked them to come in before school on a few days so they can get some necessary work in full equipment. Afternoon conditions frequently limit the amount of equipment we can wear, and on some days we have had to move inside to the gym because we could not practice outdoors.

This has created a different schedule for our 8th-grade parents and has required us to split our coaching staff on those days. Both our parents and coaches have been extremely understanding and flexible, and we appreciate their willingness to make it work.

It is also important to note that the WBGT regulations apply to practices only. They do not apply to scrimmages or games.

The other outdoor sport most affected has been cross country. Fortunately, our cross country athletes complete the majority of their training before school at VAHS and VAJHS, when conditions are typically more favorable.

Our varsity volleyball team has performed very well throughout their tournaments and pre-district schedule. We are excited to watch them continue to grow and compete for a district championship.

As of this writing, our high school cross country teams have competed in one meet and performed very well in their first competition of the season.

We are proud of the work our athletes and coaches are putting in across all of our fall sports.

I would also like to take this opportunity to explain an issue that may cause some frustration for parents throughout the year in several of our sports.

Our participation numbers are very strong on both the girls' and boys' sides at both campuses, which is a great problem to have. However, those numbers require us to be creative when scheduling games for our sub-varsity teams.

In some sports, we have more teams than many of our opponents. As a result, an opponent may not have enough teams to match all of ours. Our coaches work hard to find additional opponents so that as many of our athletes as possible have an opportunity to compete. This sometimes means one of our teams may play a different school or at a different location than the rest of our teams.

Our coaches do a good job communicating these changes, but we understand that it can sometimes be confusing or frustrating when schedules do not line up exactly.

Our priority is to find meaningful opportunities for our kids to compete. With the participation numbers we have, that occasionally requires some creativity and flexibility from everyone involved.

Speaking of participation numbers, we are busting at the seams at VAJH! Once again, that is a great problem to have.

Our coaches are having to be creative with locker space and locker-room usage, which can certainly be challenging. Our coaching staff will also be stretched at times and required to remain flexible as we work to provide quality coaching while safely supervising all of these awesome Panther athletes.

We are extremely thankful that so many students want to be involved in our athletic programs. Growth creates challenges, but these are challenges we are excited to have.

Thank you for everything you do to serve our school district and support our students.

If you ever have any questions regarding our athletic program, please feel free to reach out.

Chief Financial Officer

Financial Snapshot -

*We are in the process of closing out the 2025-2026 school year budget. This process includes year-end transactions, accruals and audit preparation.

*Budget rollover is underway. Departments are moving into the new fiscal year.

*Fund Balance - The auditors will give us our fund balance in November for the 25-26 school year.

Numbers to Know -

*We are currently watching enrollment/ADA compared with budget assumptions. Last year's ending enrollment number was 2858. Our enrollment number is currently at 3022, so we have grown 164 students. Our projected enrollment based off of the most recent Demographic Study is 3120, a difference of 98 students. We will let campuses get settled in and then we will do a detailed analysis of both our enrollment numbers and our ADA.

Legislative Update -

HB2 continues to be the primary school finance topic! TEA has continued to release guidance affecting funding, staffing, **special education (a huge topic)**, early childhood, Pre-K along with other areas.

The 90th Texas Legislature will return in January of 2027. We are already being encouraged by the Equity Center along with many other organizations, to begin identifying local legislative priorities, including school funding, special education and teacher recruitment and retention. It should be interesting! It always is.....