

March Heart at Work Employees of the Month

Keller ISD's Heart at Work Employee of the Month for March 2026 is Jeanine Benard, a Nurse at Keller Middle School. Jeanine was nominated by KISD Lead Nurse Candace Harriman, who shared the following:

Jeanine consistently demonstrates an exceptional commitment to supporting others. She is a true "get it done" professional who rarely asks for assistance, always focused on ensuring the work is completed efficiently and thoroughly. When nurses were asked to collaborate with their principals to develop a plan for offering Stop the Bleed training to students, Jeanine stepped up without hesitation. She created the necessary forms and organized the information needed to implement the training effectively. As word spread among the nursing team, several campuses reached out to her and utilized the materials she had developed, which streamlined the process districtwide. Jeanine exemplifies dedication, teamwork, and servant leadership. Her willingness to go above and beyond makes a meaningful difference for students, colleagues, and the broader school community.

Battle of the Books Achievements in Elementary, Intermediate

Battle of the Books is one of Keller ISD's most exciting literacy traditions, bringing together enthusiastic readers from elementary and intermediate campuses for a spirited competition celebrating books and teamwork. Each year, KISD librarians curate a diverse reading list, challenging students to dive into great stories and expand their knowledge of characters, plots, and themes. Throughout the year, students read from the selected titles and work together to prepare for the spring competition, where teams from across the district face off in fast-paced quiz rounds that test their knowledge of the books. The event not only showcases strong reading comprehension, but also collaboration, dedication, and a shared love of literature.

Congratulations to this year's elementary and intermediate Battle of the Books champions:

Elementary

First Place – The Blazing Bookworms from Bette Perot Elementary

Reed Gilbert	Deaun Lawrence	Raymond Nguyen
William Johnson	Leo McIntyre	Zachary Torode

Second Place – Because of the Six from Lone Star Elementary

Palmer Beaudoin	Claire Helf	Cameron Russell
Iker Cruz	Neeharika Nekkhalapu	Liam Schwendemann

Intermediate

First Place – The Lost Dreamers from Bear Creek Intermediate

Iman Badamosi	Sreehitha Kalluri	Eric Lu
Ayana Hegde	Lena Kim	Kaylee Middleton

Second Place – Candy Readers from Timberview Middle School

Elijah Jenkins	Michael Kryscio	Rachel Nguyen
Sydney Johnson	Peter Kryscio	Josiah Rodriguez

Destination Imagination Achievements

Keller ISD Destination Imagination teams competed at the Mid-Cities Destination Imagination Regional Tournament on February 21, with two advancing to the finals. The Mythical DI Legends placed second in the elementary-level Engineering Above and Beyond category, while the Scary Dairy team earned second in the middle-level Fine Arts category. Both teams will advance to the Lone Star Finals April 10-11 at the University of Texas at Arlington. These students' creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills were on full display as they tackled complex challenges and showcased innovative thinking.

Mythical DI Legends – Willis Lane ES

Neel Deepak
William Allen
Francis Fry
Oliver Rybak
Alejandro Duarte
Tobias Henicke
Olivia Seugling

Scary Dairy

Emma Nelson, *KMS*
Shiloh Nelson, *BCIS*
Aarna Vemulapalli, *BCIS*
Audrey Reusser, *HMS*
Milo Hawes, *HMS*
TJ Deepak, *ISMS*
Dhruv Arun, *ISMS*

National Merit Scholarship Program Finalists

Keller ISD is proud to recognize four high school seniors who have advanced to Finalist standing in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program, one of the nation's most prestigious academic competitions. These students were initially named among more than 16,000 Semifinalists nationwide, selected from over 1.3 million high school juniors who took the PSAT/NMSQT®. Representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, National Merit Semifinalists are recognized for exceptional academic achievement and outstanding accomplishments in and beyond the classroom.

Advancing to Finalist status requires students to demonstrate a consistently outstanding academic record, leadership and involvement in school and community activities, and the submission of a comprehensive scholarship application endorsed by their school. As Finalists, these students will now compete for approximately 6,900 National Merit Scholarships awarded nationwide, worth nearly \$26 million. Their achievement reflects an extraordinary commitment to scholarship, leadership, and academic excellence.

Congratulations to this year's Keller ISD National Merit Finalists:

Caleb Cotten (TCHS)
Jack Diers (KHS)
Daniel Milmo (CHS)
Aisha Shaik (TCHS)

UIL State Achievements in Wrestling, Swimming & Diving

Wrestling

Eighteen Keller ISD wrestlers competed at the UIL State Tournament on February 13-14 at the Berry Center in Cypress, Texas, following outstanding performances at the Regional Tournament. Three student athletes earned top six finishes, proudly representing the district on the medal stand. Echo Cranor, a senior at Central High School, placed fourth in the girls 135-pound division. On the boys side, Drew Brinkmeier, a sophomore at Keller High School, finished sixth in the 120-pound class, while Dominic Salazar, a junior at Central High School, earned fifth place in the 126-pound division.

Central High School

Ryan Salazar

Echo Cranor

Calais Ford

Aurora Berberena

Dominic Salazar

Coaches Marvin Lethridge, Connor Buscher, Aaron Faith

Fossil Ridge High School

Kadence Juarez

Kayley White

Carmen Torres

Kinsley Ashburn

Aaron Esquivel

Jayden Brown

Xavier Morris

Coaches Doug Grounds, Melissa Watts, Isaiah Vega

Keller High School

Audrey Moore

Kianalei Hiller

Drew Brinkmeier

A.J. Parchman

Coaches Jim Schee, Chris McDaniel, Dustin Scarbrough

Timber Creek High School

Evra Behn

Enrique Guerrero

Coaches Desmond Torrez, Jacob Burton

Swimming & Diving

After outstanding performances at the Region Championships, both the boys and girls Keller High School swim and dive teams competed at the UIL 6A State Championships on February 20-21 at the University of Texas at Austin. The Keller girls team finished second overall, earning a state silver medal, and captured state titles in both the 200-yard medley relay and the 200-yard freestyle relay. Standout performances included Natalie Schneider, who won the 50-yard freestyle and placed third in the 100-yard freestyle, and Ella McWhorter, who claimed first place in the 100-yard breaststroke. The boys team capped a strong season with Maxwell Stanislaus earning second place in the 200-yard freestyle.

Maxwell Stanislaus

Adam Huynh

Ella McWhorter

Natalie Schneider

Sophia Corbin

Paloma Rabe

Lila Dowell

Amber Gallimore

Claire Hollaar

Ashlyn Anderson

William Fisher

Quentin Purnama-Yang

Coaches Jason Lovell David Poole, and Justin Ruszkowski