

TEACHER
FEATURE

A weekly
service of the Journal



TRAVIS BUTLER

School: Tivy High School.
Subject taught: Ninth-grade World Geography.
Years teaching: 24 years.
Years at school/district: Two years at Hal Peterson Middle School, and nine years at Tivy High School.
College: I have a Bachelor of Arts in History from Texas A&M University.
Reason you chose a career in education: I always felt like I should help kids in some way, by being a positive influence and teaching them something and maybe have some fun along the way.
Most enjoyable part of teaching: Laughing with the students and my co-workers. We have a lot of fun at Tivy.
Hardest part of teaching: The Texas Legislature is constantly changing the game and has made it incredibly difficult for districts to keep up with proper funding. Our community values us, it does not feel that way with the state. I try not to focus on what is out of my control though, and mostly just celebrate what is good, like the History Department at Tivy or our custodians. (Shout out to Roy!)
If I could change one thing in education it would be: How schools are funded, particularly how they've structured teacher pay scales while dealing with a large budget surplus in the Texas Legislature. I also strongly believe we are over-testing our students in pretty much every subject.
Other duties at school: I'm starting a bicycling club to promote that sport.
Hobbies/interests: I'm an avid bicyclist, and I love to go camping with my family. I spend huge amounts of time outside. As a teacher I am frequently mentally tired and need time to just decompress. It just so happens that my decompression involves physical exhaustion.
Personal history: I was born in Lawton, Okla., but we moved to Conroe when I was five years old. At Conroe High School I played soccer and ran cross-country. I graduated in 1998 and started at Texas A&M University. Over a Christmas break my senior year I met Katie Hensley at a dinner, and impressed her with my Trivial Pursuit knowledge. For a first date I drove her to Houston in a very loud diesel truck to see the 1991 animated "Beauty and the Beast." I graduated in 2002. During the year between our graduations, I worked for Young Life in Katy, Texas, and the weekend after her graduation from A&M in 2023 we were married. After that I taught 11th grade U.S. History for one year at Fonville Middle School in Houston and another year at Conroe High School. We moved to Cary, N.C. and I taught 11th grade history there. We returned to Texas and I taught in Lake Travis Middle School for 10 years. We visited friends in Kerrville on a weekend, and I took a bike ride and fell in love with the Hill Country. I applied to KISD and spent my first two years at HPMS, then moved to Tivy High School. Katie worked for both HPMS and Tivy before becoming the Lead Librarian for KISD, back at HPMS. Our son, Brody, plays tennis for Tivy High School, where he is a senior. After graduation he intends to pursue a career in nursing. We also have a Blue Heeler, Lupe, who is a professional ball-fetcher. She requires miles of running every day or she'll become as restless as a toddler full of skittles.

Learning the significance, loss of Sept. 11, 2001



Photo by Emily McClure

GENA CARPENTER, Tally Elementary School principal, explains the significance of remembering the lives lost 25 years ago during the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. The students began with raising the flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

KPSF celebrates record-breaking fundraising efforts



Courtesy Photo

KERRVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL FOUNDATION board members and KISD staff gathered at Antler Stadium to recognize the significant fundraising efforts for the last year, money that directly benefits KISD teachers, classrooms and students.

The Kerrville Public School Foundation raised a record-breaking \$735,250 during the past year to support Kerrville ISD schools, educational programs, teachers and students, the foundation announced Sept. 10.

KPSF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to mobilize the community and its resources to further academic excellence for all students of Kerrville ISD. Kerrville ISD is proud to partner with the foundation and is grateful for the donors, volunteers and community partners who make its work possible.

"KPSF is an extraordinary example of what is possible when a community believes deeply in its public schools," Kerrville ISD Superintendent Dr. Brent Ringo said.

"Their investment goes far beyond dollars. It creates opportunities for students, further empowers our teachers to innovate, and recognizes the people who make Kerrville ISD such a special place. We are incredibly grateful for KPSF, its donors, volunteers, and community partners whose generosity continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of our students and staff."

As the Kerrville community continues to heal and support one another, the generosity shown to KPSF reflects the community's strength and commitment to local students and educators.

"We believe that public school provides the stability, structure, and support that our entire community needs," KPSF Director Sarah Baetz said. "It is an honor for

KPSF to support the Kerrville ISD faculty, staff and students as we further academic excellence in KISD."

During the 2025-2026 school year, KPSF support included:

- \$309,190 through a donor-directed grant funding a third-grade level leader position at each Kerrville ISD elementary school. KPSF extends special appreciation to Mrs. Charlene Spaulding for her generous commitment to this program;
- \$231,726 in Instant Impact and Innovative Teaching Grants;
- \$50,000 in scholarships for graduating seniors;
- \$94,039 for additional programs supporting Kerrville ISD teachers and students.

KPSF also celebrates excellence

throughout the district through programs recognizing campus and district Teachers of the Year and KPSF Shining Stars.

Shining Stars are Kerrville ISD employees who exemplify excellence through their dedication and contributions to students and the district. Students, KISD colleagues, parents and community members submit nominations to recognize the everyday heroes who make a difference and positively impact lives.

This year, the Kerrville Public School Foundation honored a record 30 Shining Stars.

Kerrville ISD congratulates each honoree and thanks KPSF and its supporters for their extraordinary investment in the future of Kerrville ISD students.

Night Sky friends install first Sky Quality Meter



Courtesy Photos

SAMUEL LARTIGUE AND BRUCE BARTON proudly stand with the first-ever Sky Quality Meter installed on Sept. 7 by the local Friends of the Night Sky organization.

Kerr County Friends of the Night Sky installed its first permanent Sky Quality Meter on Sept. 7, marking a milestone in the non-profit's efforts to measure and reduce light pollution across Kerr County, the organization announced Friday.

Volunteers mounted the meter, designated KC001, near an observatory north of Ingram. It is the second meter providing data on Kerr County sky quality. KCFNS member Todd Nunnally has operated his own meter for several months.

KCFNS plans to use data gathered from these meters, and future meters, to better understand the effects of artificial light on the night sky and to guide local efforts toward responsible outdoor lighting.

"This is the first Sky Quality Meter owned and operated by our organization," said Bruce Barton of the KCFNS Board of Directors, who supervised the installation. "It's a milestone in our efforts to mitigate light pollution around Kerr County, and we hope it's the first of many."

Barton also serves as president of the Hill Country Astronomers and has extensive experience with sky quality meters and light monitoring.

Data from the meters will give the community a baseline understanding of local light pollution levels and their impact on the region's dark skies. The data will also support the city of Kerrville's application for certification as a Dark Sky Community by Dark Sky International.

KCFNS purchased the unit from Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky. A representative from that organization, Samuel Lartigue, traveled to Kerr County to help install the meter and train KCFNS volunteers on its setup and operation.

KCFNS plans to share more about the initiative, including opportunities for community involvement, at its Dinner and Dark Skies event on October 15 from 5 to 7 p.m. at East End Pizza in Kerrville. The no-cost event is open to the public.

KCFNS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the small-town character of the community by protecting the local dark sky through education, advocacy and science addressing light pollution. The Hill Country Alliance sponsors KCFNS, which is affiliated with Dark Sky Texas.

RWKC award scholarships to Houdeshell, Craddock

While local students are several weeks into school, college students

are just beginning. Two local students are starting the year with financial scholarships under their belts. The Republican Women of Kerr County Scholarship Committee announced Elyse Houdeshell and Catarina Craddock as recipients of this year's Theda Schlieter Scholarship.

Elyse Houdeshell, a 2025 Tivy graduate, completed her freshman

year as a Horned Frog at Texas Christian University. While at TCU,

Houdeshell participated in a sorority project supporting the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and her chapter raised more than \$180,000. Her sorority, Chi Omega, selected her as a Home town Representative, and she communicated with prospective students, helping answer questions about academics and campus life. Building upon her Tivy career, Houdeshell

has continued to serve her community, balancing academics with leadership and service. Houdeshell is the daughter of Republican Women member Melanie Houdeshell.

Catarina Craddock, a 2026 graduate of Harper High School, will attend Texas A&M University. Craddock has received numerous district, state and national awards in 4-H and FFA, participating in various judging teams and showing livestock. Additionally, Craddock has excelled in band, earning Regional, Area Champion and State Silver Medalist marching band placements and contributing to winning concert performances. While at Harper, she held All A Honor Roll and officer positions in the National Honor So-

ciety and National Junior Honor Society. Craddock is the daughter of Kristan Weaver, an RWKC supporter and current RWKC member.

With the scholarship named after the first president of the Republican Women of Kerr County, Theda Schlieter, both Houdeshell and Craddock will receive \$1,000 each toward their educational careers. The Republican Women of Kerr County congratulates Houdeshell and Craddock and thanks all the applicants who applied.

The Republican Women of Kerr County is a volunteer organization separate from the elected Kerr County Republican Party.

For more information, visit rwkctx.org.

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