



**HOOVER ELEMENTARY  
CY-FAIR ISD**

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**TRANSFORMING  
EDUCATION ONE  
HERO AT A TIME**

**6425 GREENHOUSE RD.  
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Nominated by Michelle Rice, Principal  
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## **Overview**

Janet Brenner Hoover Elementary opened its doors in August 2017 and currently houses 867 diverse learners. 75% of the student population is identified at-risk, and all kids receive free breakfast and lunch each day. Hoover also receives a large amount of Title funding to meet the needs of our students. It is the fifty-sixth elementary school within Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, but the first of its kind housing only PK-2nd grades. Building a strong educational foundation in the primary grades prompted the design of a campus of this type. From the start, the guidelines set before us was to teach our district curriculum and meet expectations of state learning standards. Outside of that, the sky is the limit.

## **The Work**

At Hoover, we are striving for organizational transformation. It is our goal to create a fun, loving, and engaging learning culture centered around what is best for kids. This focus is the driving force in our why at Hoover. Listed below are ways we are making this vision a reality.

***Growth Mindset Focused*** - The growth of students, staff, and parents are part of the transformation. We believe that everyone can learn and grow their brains with hard work and effort—all staff work to be the model for learning with our students. In addition to this, we have a campus monthly growth mindset focus to help staff and students understand the concept, apply the information, and work to build better learners throughout the building. We share these resources with parents to build the home-school connection. The feedback we receive from parents is that they desire to help their students but are unsure how. Mathflix, our technology-based site recently launched that houses videos of our teachers modeling math lessons to aid parents in helping their children on specific skills. Work is also currently underway to add another parent component to our growth focus with the addition of our Parent University. Various school personnel will offer learning opportunities in an inviting environment to teach parents how to help their students with curriculum, but also how to build social-emotional skills in their students and gain English language acquisition.

***Engaging Learning Experiences*** - The leadership team works to empower our teachers to create impactful learning opportunities that actively engage students and ignite their desire for growth. During collaborative planning times, teachers work with instructional specialists to discuss the how of instruction and brainstorm creative ways to hook and actively engage students in their learning. Throughout the building, teachers utilize varying ideas to bring learning to life. Some examples of those opportunities have included:

- Transforming classrooms and collaborative areas into campsites including reading by the fire and going fishing for sight words
- Creating a cave to build student vocabulary and explore the animals that live there
- Hosting non-fiction cafe's allowing students to move to various classrooms and explore the different topics that exist in this genre
- Utilizing collaborative areas so students can experience a measurement lab to learn length, capacity, and more
- Making lemonade or pizza with students as they learn to write how-tos

- Creating a construction zone for TELPAS writing to help students look at writing differently and make something challenging, more engaging, and fun.

When asked what keeps them moving forward in transforming our organization for active engagement and learning for our students, one teacher replied, *“Seeing the excitement in my students when we start a new unit, or they walk in, and something in the room is different keeps me going. I am always thinking about how I can ‘hook’ them right away!”*

**Action Based Learning** - At Hoover, we believe in action-based learning and the importance of movement in the classroom to minimize gaps and actively engage the brain. Our PK classes visit the action lab regularly to prepare the brain for learning and focus on the 12 foundations of learning readiness. They are working on balance and spatial awareness which aids in students placing words and letters on the page. Research also shows that when a student walks or crawls a specific way, the brain works better. This information has led to creating intervention groups for Kindergarten students to remediate movement issues to minimize learning gaps that could result later on. In 1st and 2nd grades, teachers utilize scooters, shapes created on the floor, and activities crossing the bodies midpoint to activate both sides of the brain in students’ learning experiences.

**Makerspace** - Makerspaces allow students to communicate, collaborate, create, and utilize critical thinking skills. All of these make up the components of a 21st-century learner. Hoover houses its makerspace in the library kiva, and students and teachers enjoy going to this fun environment. It supports our growth mindset focus because it allows students to explore something new, make mistakes in the learning process, while not getting discouraged in their learning. Teachers have also commented on how they love that it builds vocabulary in our learners because it provides time to talk as they create, explore new topics, and learn new words. When asking a Hoover student what they think of makerspace, their response is, *“It is fun, I get to create and make new things.”*

**House Teams** - A strong culture is critical to our success. House Teams helps us create a fun, loving, and engaging culture and keep it alive. Each classroom and staff are assigned to one of six colored teams each year. Students from all grade levels compile each team creating vertical alignment. The goal is for everyone to get to know each other and staff members to say these are “our kids.” Each month, teams meet together to cheer, celebrate birthdays, and learn. Monthly focuses in the meetings center around No Place for Hate activities, reading and math challenges, diversity knowledge building and celebrations, and more. Teachers also collaborate and have peer tutoring opportunities as PK classes pair up with 1st grade as reading buddies. 1st and 2nd-grade buddies are known to learn together, utilizing technology and Quizizz.

## **Results**

In the three years since Hoover began, transforming our organization has been our mission. People visiting Hoover always comment on the positive, engaging environment that they experience when they are here. While on the journey, we never believe we have arrived, but we are definitely on our way to our destination. Our goal is to continue the work to transform learning for our students, one Hero at a time.



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This is to acknowledge my awareness and support of the Hoover Elementary School team's application for a 2020 School Transforming Learning Award with the Texas Principal Visioning Institute.

*Dr. Carla Brosnahan*

Signature

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Title

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