Cort Chauvin is a fourth grader at Nottingham Country Elementary. Cort’s goal is to be a scientist when he grows up “to invent webs for Spiderman and analyze the DNA of reptiles and extinct dinosaurs”. If being a scientist doesn’t work out, he wants to “create computer animations and special effects so that toys can move on their own”. It is no wonder that Cort excels in art and science at school. Cort also loves earning stars so that he can get extra computer as a reward.

The most exciting thing that happened at school lately, however, was the “Boosterthon! Because Coach Lee got covered in slime!”

What is most notable about Cort is the way his teachers describe him and the way he describes his relationships with those around him. Cort’s teachers use the words “nurturing”, “friendly”, and “charming” to describe Cort’s personality. He loves talking to all of the adults in the building and is described as a mentor to the younger students in the school. Cort helps the younger students understand what to do if they get upset, and never forgets to tell them when they are doing a great job. Cort says he loves his teachers because they are nice to him….and give him rewards!

At home, Cort likes to watch movies and go on vacations with his Mom, Dad, and 3 sisters! His last vacation was to Six Flags where he loved the water slides, but avoided the roller coasters. When asked about his family, Cort said “They’re great! I love my parents.” He makes superhero videos with his Dad, and amidst giggles, told about a time he “pranked” his Dad by dressing up his pillows as Spiderman!

Cort is adored on his campus and is a bright and kind kid. It will be exciting to see his progress in Katy ISD in the future!
What’s New In Theatre Arts at West Memorial Junior High

It is an exciting time to be in Theater Arts at WMJH. The theater arts teacher Ms. Elizabeth Mace and the choir teacher Mr. Matt Wallace along with the LIFE Skills teacher Ms. Betsy Seltzer have created a collaborative teaching environment for the fine arts program at WMJH. Students from Ms. Seltzer’s LIFE Skills class create and perform a variety of theatre activities alongside their peers. The minute the students walk in the classroom a buddy welcomes and assists them with joining the group. In addition, the students are engaged in the planning process and also perform pantomimes, short in-prov skits and the “mirror me” activity with their peers. While some of the planning is on the spot with trial and error, Ms. Mace and Mr. Wallace have carefully considered the Theatre Arts curriculum and made adaptations to address the needs for the students in Mrs. Seltzer’s class. For example, the curriculum requirement could be a writing warm up for the day’s skit, so the adaptation of a drawing warm up is provided for some students. We often see campuses providing collaborative teaching classrooms for academic contents, but it great to see WMJH bringing inclusive practices to the fine arts classroom. Students are seen redirecting hand self-stimulatory behaviors by providing paper slips for drawing and also modeling for students. Students in the class are responding positively to the social interactions that are such a natural part of a theatre arts program and as a result communication is increasing student engagement. Thanks to Ms. Mace, Mr. Wallace and Ms. Seltzer the 8th period theatre arts class at WMJH is providing a learning environment where compassion, acceptance and a sense of pride is clearly evident among the staff and students.
**Renae Murphy**

Years ago, when Renae Murphy’s principal told her she was “meant to be a LIFE Skills teacher”, she didn’t really understand the comment. Now that she is the LIFE Skills teacher at Katy Elementary school, she knows that principal was right. “I love LIFE Skills.” She said. “You can meet a child where they are. We can work on what a child needs.”

Murphy graduated with a degree in Occupational Therapy, but due to cuts in federal spending for OT positions, was unable to secure a job. Her first job in teaching was in a private school in Dallas where she taught Kindergarten. From there, she moved to Minneapolis, teaching at a preschool for children with disabilities. All of the staff were Occupational Therapists or occupational therapy students with a focus on meeting the sensory needs of their students. This was Murphy’s first experience working with children with autism.

A job move for Murphy’s husband landed the couple in Houston where Murphy took a position in an Alief intermediate LIFE Skills classroom. But once the couple became a family, Murphy wanted to be closer to home to spend more time with her new baby. She took a position at Exley Elementary as a Resource and In-Class-Support teacher. Murphy worked at Exley for four years before deciding that she would work part time. She took a part time teaching position at Child’s Play, a preschool at Epiphany Church. “This was my version of being a stay-at-home Mom,” she said.

Katy Elementary is a good fit for Murphy. “I love this school,” she said. One of her daughters attends Katy Elementary with her and the other attends Katy Junior High. “It’s a real neighborhood school,” she added. Murphy and her daughters enjoy swimming, going to the beach, to movies and roller-skating. They are all big fans of reading. “We love the library in Old Katy,” she said. Murphy is looking forward to a road trip with her daughters to see the bats in Austin.

**Mary Ann Miron**

Mary Ann Miron is a new Work Based Learning (WBL) teacher at Mayde Creek High School. Mary Ann came from Brenham ISD but has a long history in Katy. Having spent 27 years in education, Mary Ann taught resource Reading, English, and Math at the elementary and junior high levels, vocational skills at the high school level, and has been Department Chair.

Mary Ann presented at several state conferences on developing vocational skills, and her former school was a site for educators to observe their vocational program. Due to her program’s and student’s accomplishments, she was recognized as Teacher of the Year. Mary Ann is especially glad to be back on Dr. Steele’s team. She has worked with Dr. Steele in the past and looks forward to a great year. Mary Ann has two outstanding Job Coaches, Carla Laskey and Kim Starkey. They share a desire to help students maximize their personal potential for employment and personal independence. Mary Ann said, “Challenge ALL students and get them to “think outside the box”. Once a student realizes what they can do instead of what they can’t, they open the door to develop their skills for independence.”
Russell Chadwick

Russell Chadwick began his career with Katy ISD 15 yrs. ago in Special Education. He has experienced a variety of positions in those 15 yrs., including Life Skills at CRHS and MMJH, beginning the PASS program at MCJH then moving on to PASS teacher, Coaching and Department Chair at CJH. Russell earned campus and district finalist teacher of the year while at MCJH in 2007, as well as having the Model PASS classroom for the district.

Russell continued his work impacting staff and students becoming the Assistant Principal at MCE in 2014. He along with Karen Raymond, Principal, implemented CHAMPS successfully with staff, teaching students expectations in all areas of the campus. This effort significantly reduced their student referrals by 70%.

Now as the Assistant principal at the Behavior Transition Program (BTP) he has provided students and staff with leadership, compassion, and guidance. Russell stated “he was excited about the opportunity to work with Becky Tucker, Principal at OAC/Raines/ BTP and our most challenging students in the district”. Russell was instrumental in continuing the successful restructure of BTP.

Dedicated to the Education profession, both he and his wife are educators and just welcomed their second son, Carter, and older brother Connor loves his new baby brother! Russell indicated he is not getting much sleep lately, but loves his family time!

Russell stated “that he has always had a passion for working with challenging students”. He truly believes all students can learn and he finds joy in guiding students in finding their path to be successful, no matter what their challenges may be.

Aimee Cantrell

“Aimee understands the constant changing world of Special Education and has a positive and supportive attitude as she rises to the occasion to adapt to student and staff needs.

She received the honor of Teacher of the year in 2013-2014 school year. This school year marks her 4th year teaching in Special Education Math at MCJH. She has spent some years teaching Resource Math, but is currently a part of a collaborative teaching Math classroom with her General Education Teaching peers.

Aimee feels her role as a Special Education Teacher has somewhat changed as she embraces the Collaborative Teaching classroom. She has always felt the desire to help all students, but she really sees this happening now that she and her General Education counterparts work with all students through the station teaching approach. In order for this approach to be effective, she plans with her 8th grade Math team weekly, and attends all PLCs. In the classroom, Aimee balances her role to take data, monitor behavior, and teach the curriculum so that she can meet the needs of her students. She believes that being with their peers is important.

Aimee’s life outside of school consists of getting her five kids to and from all of their activities (band, sports, etc.) and spending time with her family and friends.

Aimee’s five children are ages 17, 16, 14, 13, and 8.
Katy Independent School District, the leader in educational excellence, together with family and community, provides unparalleled learning experiences designed to prepare and inspire each student to live an honorable, fulfilling life...to create the future.

Katy Independent School District Department of Special Education

Mission Statement
The Special Education Department exists to provide leadership and service to equip campuses with knowledge and skills in order for students to create their own future success.

Department Values
- Excellence
- Service to Campuses
- Students as Individuals
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Importance of Servanthood and Leadership