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PROGRAMMING

Monday Morning Weather Update

Pleasant Conditions Much Of The Week. 1/30/12

Mostly Sunny to Partly Cloudy conditions are expected through much of the week. High temperatures will be well above normal for this time of year through Thursday.

NEWS

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There are Options for West Texas Students 1/24/12

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Odessa, TX - Texas is celebrating "National School Choice Week" this week.

Events are planned across the state to highlight the need for enhanced education options for students.

The movement hopes to inspire parents to look at all options outside of their neighborhood schools.

School choice supporters say "Texas leaders should do more to improve student achievement and attainment by expanding access to improved public schools, public charter schools, private schools, virtual education and home schooling."

There are options here in West Texas. Over the years several charter schools have popped up in our area.

Harmony Science Academy has locations across the state and 2 years ago a campus opened up here in Odessa. Parents immediately jumped on board and they say, for them, it was by far the right move.

Nathaniel Everett hopes to be an aerospace engineer one day so he made the move to Harmony Science Academy, a school that centers around advanced science and math.

"It's focusing more on advanced math not just math to pass the test. In other schools I've been at they haven't been teaching you for the future they've been teaching you to pass the TAKS Test," Everett claims.

"My children...while I love them, they would not thrive in a sports minded community. My children are very mathematically and scientifically minded," explains parent Sunny Busby.

Busby has 5 children attending Harmony. For her, it was an easy choice.

"They need something that is academically focused because that's where their strengths are."

Statewide the Harmony School System claims to have a 100% graduation rate, a 0% dropout rate and they say 100% of the students go to college.

"We make sure that every one of them goes to college," enforces Principal Emin Cavusoglu.

Administrators believe small class sizes and high expectations are the reasons behind their success.

"Our focus is on 1 student at a time. Making sure they are graduating and going to college," Cavusoglu says.

"It's more like a family I guess you could say," claims Everett.

Harmony Academy is free and open to anyone, they accept students in a lottery system. They do have a waiting list for all grades at this time, but to learn more about applying, visit www.hsadessa.org.

As part of school choice week, many are advocating for school vouchers.

The vouchers would allow parents to control some or all of the tax they pay for public education.

In some cases, supporters say the vouchers would give low-income scholars the opportunity to attend a private school.

Tonight CBS 7 sat in on a conference call for School Choice Week, featuring Bill Cosby.

Cosby says while students should be able to receive the best education, parents should stand up for the schools in their own neighborhood and work to make them better for all students.

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The Junior League of Midland, Inc.
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