



P R E S E N T S T H E TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Richard Lines

Teaching requires constant learning, teacher finds

Being a good teacher means a constant commitment to continued learning, says Garland ISD Teacher of the Month Richard Lines. This high-school physics teacher teaches students enrolled in Garland High School's International Baccalaureate program.

"I'm a huge fan of the IB program," Mr. Lines says. "They've got it right" with this course of study, which supplies students an excellent liberal arts education, he says.

The IB program prepares high school students for higher learning at Ivy League and other major U.S. universities, Mr. Lines says. This rigorous path begins with a student selection process as early as eighth grade, and students begin taking pre-IB courses in ninth and tenth grades. As juniors and seniors, those students immerse themselves in the IB program, and conclude their curriculum with in-depth testing, a major research paper, and community service.

"These students graduate with a well-rounded education. They don't concentrate solely in any one area, but have to be well-versed in all aspects of the program," he says.

While IB students are "academically gifted for the most part," Mr. Lines says, the IB program actually requires highly motivated students willing to take on the rigorous study required of the demanding curriculum.

"IB students really learn time management, and many report back to us that college is a breeze because of the good skills they've acquired in high school," he says.

These students may also find college a breeze because so many begin their college careers as sophomores or juniors based on all the in-depth work they've done in high school that allows them to place out of basic college courses.

"Our IB students keep a lab book for their science classes, which by the end turns out to be two or three inches thick. When they present college science professors with this lab book, they are immediately placed in advanced courses because of all they accomplished in high school," Mr. Lines says.

Mr. Lines's own path to the IB program began when he joined the Garland High School staff in

1992, teaching Biology I and Physical Science, core courses in the general curriculum. "The IB chair hadn't had much success finding an IB physics or chemistry teacher, and asked me if I knew anyone who was certified to teach physics in the IB program. I told him I just might," referring, of course, to himself. His associate degree in engineering, his bachelor's degree in education, and his certification to teach any secondary science course in Texas with an emphasis on physics, all provided him a solid foundation for the IB physics course.

Mr. Lines says he discovered his love of teaching in a rather unorthodox way: as a gymnastics coach. "I coached gymnastics during high school and college," and found he really loved the process of teaching. That affinity for teaching and his love of science proved to be a logical combination that resulted in a career that's lasted more than 15 years.

"I began my own education intending to be an engineer, but I realized there were a lot of good engineers, but not that many good science teachers," Mr. Lines says.

For him, being a good science teacher requires his own continuing course of study, Mr. Lines says. "I make sure to keep up with physics. Dramatic changes take place every year because of advancements in science and technology. I study at SMU every summer to keep up with changes in the field," Mr. Lines says.

In addition, he says he spends most of the summer working on revising his courses for the following year, incorporating those new advancements as well as new teaching methods.

Mr. Lines was recently recognized through the "Inspiring Teacher Program," part of the Presidential Scholar program. "A former student, who was awarded the Presidential Scholar award, nominated me for this honor," Mr. Lines says.

Inspiring teacher, indeed. Mr. Lines is one important facet in Garland High School's IB program, inspiring students every year to reach higher and achieve more. Garland High School is proud to honor Mr. Lines as Garland ISD Teacher of the Month.



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