



A letter from the superintendent



The 2026-2027 school year is about to begin! I hope you and your family have enjoyed a wonderful summer filled with rest, fun, and time together. As we start another year, our teachers,

administrators, and staff are excited to welcome students back to enjoy another year of learning, growth, and opportunity.

At Rains ISD, students come first. Every decision we make is guided by what is best for our students, and we remain committed to providing a safe, supportive, and engaging environment where every child has the opportunity to succeed. We believe all students can learn and grow, and we will continue working each day to help them reach their full potential.

Throughout the summer, many of our administrators, teachers, and support staff have been hard at work preparing classrooms, planning instruction, improving our facilities, and getting everything ready for a successful start. Their dedication behind the scenes reflects the pride they take in serving our students and community.

Parents, your partnership is vital to the success of our district. Thank you for the encouragement, support, and trust you place in us. We encourage you to stay connected throughout the year by downloading the Rains ISD app, following the district on social media, and ensuring your contact information is current in Skyward. Also, watch for communication from your child's campus and teachers on additional opportunities to connect so you can stay informed and involved in your student's education.

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of educating your children. We look forward to partnering with you to make this another outstanding year for our students, families, and community.

Joe Nicks
Superintendent

Rains Elementary class assignment list delayed this year due to enrollment system outage

From Staff Reports

For the first time in recent memory, the Rains County Leader will not publish its annual listing of Pre-K through second grade class assignments for Rains Elementary before the first day of school.

The delay traces back to a technical outage with Rains ISD's Skyward enrollment system, combined with an early start to the 2026-27 school year that left no publication window between the system coming back online and the first bell.

Rains ISD announced on Facebook that student registration, originally set to open as scheduled, would be pushed back because the Skyward system was down on the vendor's side — a problem outside the district's control. The district said it would notify families through the Rains ISD app and its social media accounts as soon as the system was restored, and encouraged parents who had not already done so to download the

app for updates.

The following day, the district confirmed registration was back open for the 2026-27 school year. Returning students register through Skyward Family Access, where parents and guardians log into their existing accounts to complete enrollment forms. Families new to the district must first visit the Rains ISD website, navigate to the Enrollment tab, and submit a New Student Enrollment account request. Once that account is approved, new families can then complete enrollment through Skyward Family Access as well. The district asked anyone needing help with the process to call their student's campus and speak with a registrar.

Even with registration back up and running, the timing didn't leave enough room to compile and publish a complete class list before students head back to class. School starts Tuesday, Aug. 4, and the Leader's next publication date isn't until Thursday, Aug. 6 — two

days after the first day of school. District officials informed the Leader that class assignments would not be completed before the paper's press deadline, leaving no reliable window to gather accurate, campus-verified class rosters in time for print before the start of school.

The Leader publishes the Pre-K through second grade class assignment list each year as a service to Rains Elementary families, helping parents and students know which classroom and teacher to expect before the first day. This year's disruption means that tradition will be on hold, at least for the run-up to the new school year.

Parents with questions about their child's classroom placement are encouraged to contact Rains Elementary directly or check updates through the Rains ISD app and the district's Facebook page, where enrollment announcements have been posted throughout the registration period.

Rains ISD Contact Information

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P.O. Box 247
Emory, TX 75440
PH 903-473-2222
FX 903-473-3053
Superintendent Joe Nicks
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General Info: Pam Gilliard, ext. 4112
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Rains Elementary
PH 903-473-2222 ext. 3108
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Asst. Principal, Mandy Lutz
Email: lutzm@rainsisd.org

Rains Intermediate
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Principal, JC Vance
Email: vancej@rainsisd.org
Asst. Principal, Dusty Asbill
Email: asbilldu@rainsisd.org

Rains Jr. High
PH 903-473-2222 ext. 2106
Principal, Jennifer Moore
Email: moorej@rainsisd.org
Asst. Principal, Heath Blalock
Email: blalockh@rainsisd.org

Rains High School
PH 903-473-2222 ext. 1401
Principal, Jeff Akin
Email: akinj@rainsisd.org
Asst. Principal, Kortney Clayton
Email: claytonk@rainsisd.org

Athletic Director
Bryan Oakes, ext. 1145
Email: oakesb@rainsisd.org
General Info: Karen Brimer, ext. 4117
Email: brimerk@rainsisd.org

Special Services Director
Molly Davidson, ext. 4119
Email: davidsonm@rainsisd.org

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A letter from the Elementary Principal



Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year! I hope you and your family have enjoyed a wonderful summer filled with rest, fun, and special memories. Our staff has been hard at work preparing for an incredible year of learning, growth, and connection, and we cannot wait to welcome our Wildcats back to school!

At Rains Elementary, we are committed to creating a safe, positive, and engaging environment where every child is known, valued, challenged, and supported. We are excited to partner with you as we help our students grow as leaders, learners, and friends while living The Wildcat Way.

Communication between home and school is one of the keys to student success. Here are a few ways to stay connected throughout the year:

- **ClassDojo** – More information will be provided by your child's teacher.
- **Facebook:** Rains Elementary Wildcats

Enrollment

- All new and returning students must be fully enrolled in Skyward.
- For enrollment questions, please contact Kristen Childers at childersk@rainsisd.org.

July 30 – Meet the Teacher

- 3:00 p.m.: Class lists will be posted on the front doors of the elementary campus.
- 4:30 p.m.: Title I Meeting in the Elementary Cafeteria
- 5:00–6:00 p.m.: Meet the Teacher for fully enrolled students

First Day of School and School Hours

- Tuesday, August 4, 2026 is the first day of the 2026–2027 school year.
- Families are welcome to walk their child to class on the first day of school only.
- Building Opens: 7:15 a.m.
- School Day: 7:45 a.m. – 4:05 p.m.

Lunch Visitors

To help our students establish routines and become comfortable with school procedures, the campus will be closed to lunch visitors until September 1. We appreciate your understanding and support as we help our Wildcats transition successfully into the new school year.

We are truly honored to partner with you in your child's education. Thank you for entrusting us with your greatest treasure. Together, we will make this an outstanding year filled with learning, growth, and unforgettable memories.

We look forward to seeing you on July 30 for Meet the Teacher and on August 4 for the first day of school!

It's a GREAT day to be a Wildcat!

Jennifer Dracos
Rains Elementary Principal

Welcome back from Rains Intermediate Principal



believe that true growth comes not from avoiding challenges, but from facing them head-on with determination and courage. At Rains Intermediate, we are committed to fostering a culture where perseverance is celebrated, resilience is built, and every student discovers their own strength. Our core values—PERSEVERE through challenges, STAY STRONG in difficult moments, KEEP GROWING in all areas, and REACH YOUR GOALS with determination—will serve as our compass throughout the year.

We know that school is more than just academics. It's about building character, developing friendships, discovering talents, and learning that hard things are often the most worthwhile. Our students will be challenged to push beyond their comfort zones, support one another, and celebrate every milestone, no matter how big or small. We are committed to creating an environment where every child feels valued, heard, and empowered to succeed.

We are grateful for the partnership of our families and our community, whose support makes our mission possible. Together, we will make this an unforgettable year for the Rains Intermediate School Wildcats!

J.C. Vance
Rains Intermediate Principal

As summer comes to a close, we are delighted to welcome everyone back to Rains Intermediate School for the 2026-27 school year! This is an exciting time of new beginnings, fresh possibilities, and renewed energy. Whether you're returning as a proud Wildcat or joining our community for the first time, we invite you to be part of something truly special. Our doors are open, our hearts are ready, and our commitment to your child's success has never been stronger.

This year, we are embracing a powerful message that will guide everything we do: Never give up! We

"A new school year means new beginnings, new adventures, new friendships and new challenges. The slate is clean and anything can happen"

– Denise Witmer

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Good luck to all teachers & students as they embark on a new school year!
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A letter from the Junior High Principal



As summer comes to an end, we are excited to welcome another school year filled with fresh starts and new opportunities. Our teachers and staff have spent the summer preparing to welcome students back on August 4.

This year's campus theme, "Small Actions Create a Big Impact" reminds us that every member of our Wildcat family has the opportunity to make a difference. It starts with us. As we begin the year, our focus is simple—creating an environment where every student is known, challenged, and supported. That means strengthening the

transition into junior high through our new LAUNCH class, using technology with purpose to enhance learning, and continuing to recognize and celebrate the growth and accomplishments of our students. Meaningful progress doesn't come from doing more; it comes from doing the right things well.

Along with high expectations for learning, we remain committed to providing a safe, welcoming environment where every student feels valued, safe, and prepared to succeed. We also know that a successful school year begins with strong partnerships between our school, our families, and our community. We cannot wait to begin this journey together, and it all starts before the first day of school. Therefore, we want to invite JH families to join us on Thursday, July 30 for 6th Grade Orientation (5:30 p.m.) followed by JH Meet the Teacher/JH Back-to-School Fair (6:00-7:00 p.m.). We are grateful for our community partners whose generosity helps make this event possible. Their support reflects what makes the Rains community special – a community that works together to invest in our students.

We look forward to partnering with our families and community as we make this year a great year for every Wildcat. Together, it starts with us.

Go Wildcats!

Jennifer Moore
Rains Junior High School Principal

A letter from the High School Principal



Welcome back to another exciting school year at Rains High School! I hope this letter finds you well rested and ready to embark on a journey of growth, learning, and achievement.

As we begin the 2026-27 academic year, RHS is filled with optimism and enthusiasm about the opportunities that lie ahead for our students, staff, and families. Our dedicated teachers and staff have been working diligently over the summer to prepare for your return, and we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and enriching environment where every student can thrive.

I would like to extend a special welcome to our new students and their families. Transitioning to a new school

can be both exciting and challenging, and we are here to support you every step of the way. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need assistance.

Communication and collaboration between the school and our families are essential to the success of our students. I encourage you to stay informed and engaged by attending school events, joining our parent-teacher association, and keeping up with school news through our website and newsletters.

Make sure you download the Rains ISD app.

Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/RHSCats.

Check Skyward for our weekly newsletter.

As we move forward together, let us remember that every member of our community plays a vital role in the success of our school. Your support, involvement, and dedication make a significant difference in the lives of our students.

We would love to see you at: Back-to-School Fair on July 30 from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., followed by Meet the Teacher from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Meet the Wildcat on August 14 from 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at Wildcat Stadium.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children's education. I am confident this will be a fantastic year filled with learning, growth, and memorable experiences.

Jeff Akin
Rains High School Principal

RAINS							2026-2027						
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT							DISTRICT ACADEMIC CALENDAR						
JULY 2026							1st SEMESTER - 74 DAYS						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	24	JULY					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	27	New Employee Orientation					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	28	First Day of In-Service					
19	20	21	22	23	24	25		All Staff Convocation					
26	27	28	29	30	31		4	AUGUST					
							28	First Day of School					
								Staff Development					
							7	SEPTEMBER					
							30	Labor Day					
							28	UIL 1st 6 Weeks Eligibility					
							25	Rains Co. Fair Day					
								PD Exchange Day					
							36	OCTOBER					
							15	Staff Development					
							25-25	NOVEMBER					
							26-27	Staff Development					
								PD Exchange Days					
							11	DECEMBER					
							21-31	Staff Development					
								Christmas Break					
							1-3	2nd SEMESTER - 74 DAYS					
							4	JANUARY					
							18	Christmas Break					
								Work Day					
							12	Beginning of 2nd Semester					
							8-12	MLK Day 1- Day					
							26	FEBRUARY					
								Staff Development					
							36	MARCH					
							23	Spring Break					
								Good Friday					
							14	APRIL					
							28	Staff Development					
							31	Bad Weather Make-up					
								MAY					
							16	Bad Weather Make-up					
							28	Graduation					
							31	Memorial Day					
								Grading Periods					
								1st 9 weeks: Aug 4- Oct 1					
								2nd 9 weeks: Oct 5-Dec 17					
								3rd 9 weeks: Jan 5- Mar 4					
								4th 9 weeks: Mar 15-May 27					
								KEY					
								STAFF/DOC					
								Instructional Days					
								PD Days					
								PD Exchange Days					
								Total Contracted Days					
								MINUTES					
								Secondary					
								Elementary					
								School Times					
								Elementary School: 7:45AM-4:00PM					
								Intermediate School: 7:45AM-4:00PM					
								Junior High School: 7:45AM-4:00PM					
								High School: 7:45AM-4:00PM					

Rains ISD Seeks Applicants for Full-Time, Part-Time and Substitute Positions

By Trey Hill
Rains County Leader staff

As the new school year approaches, Rains Independent School District (RISD) is inviting community members to join its staff, with openings ranging from full-time teaching positions to part-time and temporary substitute work.

The district is currently hiring for several full-time and part-time roles, including a theater/AV/journalism teacher, an athletic trainer, paraprofessionals, food service cooks and a custodian, according to a hiring announcement released by RISD. The district is also recruiting substitutes to help fill classrooms throughout the year.

Substitute pay is based on education level. Certified teachers earn \$125 a day, those with a college degree earn \$115, applicants with 60 or more college hours earn \$100, and non-degreed substitutes

earn \$90 a day. Substitute aide positions pay \$90 a day regardless of the substitute's credentials, based on the assignment.

Anyone interested in substituting must complete training before being added to the district's sub list. To register for training, applicants should email brimerk@rainsisd.org. Once training is complete, applicants should contact the district's human resources department to schedule an appointment by emailing huzara@rainsisd.org.

For more information on any position, call the district at 903-473-2222, ext. 4117, or visit www.rainsisd.org, where all openings are posted and applications can be submitted online.

With classes resuming Tuesday, August 4, district officials say filling these positions — from the classroom to the cafeteria — is a priority heading into the new school year.



"I can do all things through him who gives me strength."

- Philippians 4:13

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Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

- Proverbs 22:6

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Good luck & best wishes for a great school year!

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- A.A. Milne

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- Dr. Seuss

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"Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen."

-Michael Jordan

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Rains ISD New Teachers and Staff



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

New Rains ISD staff for the 2026-2027 school year. In no particular order, Samantha Miller, Cyndi Calk, Heather Simms, Hannah Stringer, Amanda Mikulak, Faith Cowley, Maci Hughes, Tylar Parker, Ashley Faulkner, Paula Cookson, Stephanie West, Emily Wharton, Nickole Brown, Raygen Raney, Spencer Raney, Davida Tarplay Johnson, Willie James, III, Meredith Hettich, Meagan Hurst, Candice Duncan, Cassie Fuller, Tayler Green, Ashley Roan, Amanda Scarbrough, Lauren Smith, Cameron Adkins, Micah Kilgore, Damion Rogers, Jennifer Dracos, Adam Craven, Michelle Richards, Ashley Edwards, Ladawnya Wallace, Kimberly Williams, James Hjelmstad, Savannah Hollaway, Hailey Forester, Elizabeth Riley, Stephanie Snider and Mary Ausmus. NOT PICTURED: Jeff Smith, Chelsey Sacrey, Heather Bunch, Angela Dearing and Tammy Stevens.



WILDCAT & LADY CAT SPORTS



2026 Wildcat Varsity Football

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
8/20	Edgewood (Scrimmage)	Home	6:00
8/28	Dallas Life Oak Cliff	Home	7:30
9/4	Rice	Home	7:30
9/11	Grand Saline	Away	7:30
9/18	Howe	Away	7:30
9/25	Eustace* (HC)	Home	7:30
10/2	Malakoff*	Away	7:30
10/9	Mt. Vernon*	Home	7:30
10/16	Mineola*	Away	7:30
10/23	OPEN		
10/30	Commerce* (SN)	Home	7:30
11/6	Winnsboro*	Away	7:30

* District Games

2026 Wildcat JV & JH Football

DATE	OPPONENT	JH	JV
8/27	Dallas Life		Away @ 6:00
9/3	Rice	Home @ 4:30	Away @ 6:00
9/10	Grand Saline	Away @ 4:30	Home @ 6:00
9/17	Howe	Away @ 4:30	Home @ 6:00
9/24	Eustace	Home @ 4:30	Away @ 6:00
10/1	Malakoff	Away @ 4:30	Home @ 6:00
10/8	Mt. Vernon	Home @ 4:30	Away @ 6:00
10/15	Mineola	Away @ 4:30	Home @ 6:00
10/22	OPEN		
10/29	Commerce	Home @ 4:30	Away @ 6:00
11/5	Winnsboro	Away @ 4:30	Home @ 6:00

2026 Lady Cat Volleyball

DATE	OPPONENT	PLACE	TIME	TEAMS
8/8	Scrimmage	Mineola		JV/V
8/11	Scurry-Rosser	Rains	5:00	JV/V
8/13-15	Tournament	Sulphur Springs		V
8/18	Brownsboro	Rains	5:00	JV/V
8/21-23	Tournament	Van		V
8/25	Blue Ridge	Blue Ridge	5:00	JV/V
8/27-29	Tournament	Hawkins		V
8/28	Canton	Rains	4:30	V/JV
9/1	Mabank	Mabank	5:00	JV/V
9/4	Fruitvale	Rains	4:30	V/JV
9/8	Sulphur Bluff	Sulphur Bluff	5:00	JV/V
9/10	Paris Chisum*	Paris	5:00	JV/V
9/12	JV Tournament	Mineola		JV
9/15	Mt. Vernon*	Mt. Vernon	5:00	JV/V
9/18	Lone Oak*	Lone Oak	4:30	V/JV
9/22	Quitman*	Rains	5:00	JV/V
9/25	Prairiland*	Rains	4:30	JV/V
9/29	Commerce*	Rains	5:00	JV/V
10/2	Alumni Game	Rains	4:30	V
10/6	Paris Chisum*	Rains	5:00	JV/V
10/9	Mt. Vernon*	Rains	4:30	V/JV
10/13	Lone Oak*	Rains (SN)	5:00	JV/V
10/16	Quitman*	Quitman	4:30	V/JV
10/20	Prairiland*	Prairiland	5:00	JV/V
10/23	Commerce*	Commerce	4:30	V/JV

* District Matches



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Good luck, Wildcats!

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