

Making Memories for a Lifetime

Third Grade Students of Alton Elementary attend a Special Session of City Council

What would be better as a third grader than the opportunity to design the city of your dreams and present it to your own city's council members? And not just present, but have your ideas considered in future planning of your hometown? To the 29 students of Brenham ISD Gateway program at Alton Elementary, nothing could have been better. At least for one day.



A special session of council was held February 21, 2019 where students learned about community development, then broke into groups to create their own city. The sounds of laughter mixed with serious planning discussions filled the room. Council members and City staff interacted with each group to answer questions and encourage the planning ideas. Daven Johnson brought chuckles to the room when he asked City leadership how the water system was handled - knowing it may require a lengthy description - says, "It's ok if it takes all day to answer, I'm here to listen."

"Today we had the wonderful opportunity to engage our youth population and learn from them in the city planning and community development context. It was refreshing to hear their perspective on what makes a great park, a great neighborhood, and a great community. I am thankful to have been involved in such a unique opportunity," said Stephanie Doland, Assistant Director of Development Services.

Einstein said, "Logic will take you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere." Students modeled this today as they stretched their imaginations and put on their creative hats to build a city that offered such amenities as a shopping mall, ice skating rink, paintball park, homeless shelter, lakes for fishing, an arcade, a dog park, and even a shooting range. Their plans for dining included restaurants like Olive Garden, Chick-Fil-A, Freebirds, Fuddruckers, Popeyes, Cheddars, Cracker Barrel, and Dave and Busters.

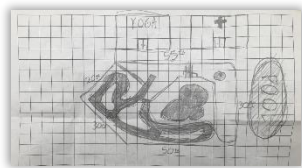


Kaylee Roznovsky, third grade Gateway teacher at Alton said proudly, “For our students, the future leaders of Brenham, this visit and special working session with the council members and leadership team was an invaluable learning experience. Not only do they better understand city planning, they also were afforded the opportunity to flex their creative muscles and share innovative ideas with Brenham's current leaders. The students have bought into being active in their community and are passionate about the ideas and planning shared at this special work session. Thank you, council members and Brenham leaders, for taking the time to work with our students, considering their input valuable, and creating a love of community in our students.”



The class took the project seriously and one student, Brody Zorn, brought his own sketch of a skate park to share with Dane Rau, Director of Public Works. Brody asked, “How much money will it be

to build this skate park, per square foot?” Dane took time to share the building costs of other parks in Brenham and ensured Brody his sketch and suggestions would be taken into consideration, even going as far as giving his business card to Brody for future discussions. Another classmate, June



Crampton, researched and brought her ideas of how additional housing, specifically apartments, for Blinn College students could benefit Brenham. There were questions to council members of all sorts. On a serious note they asked, “Are our lakes man made or natural?” and Gage Graham took questioning in a different direction when he asked, “Are any of you good at playing Mario?” Based on their answers, it seems the next special session may require turning the tables, and having the students provide Mario and gaming lessons to council members.



“This was absolutely a special moment for the City of Brenham! The students from Alton Elementary were well prepared, enthusiastic, and their energy contagious. The future of Brenham is in great shape with these young students paving the way and it could not be done without the amazing teachers we have serving in Brenham ISD,” said James

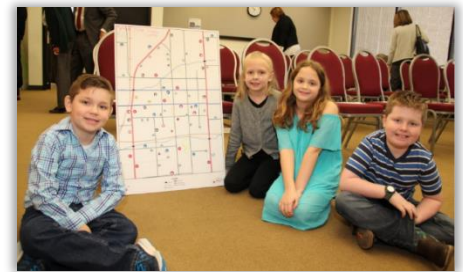
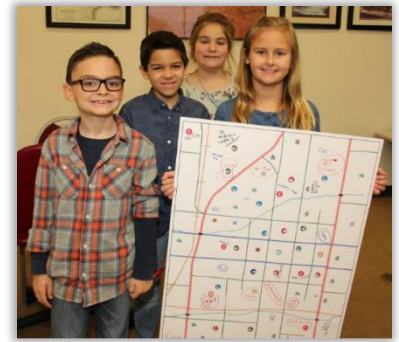
Fisher, Brenham City Manager. Sarah Shelnut, third grade Gateway teacher at Alton went on to say, “Our third graders are the leaders of tomorrow. For the city leaders of today to take time to teach our students about our local city government, was an invaluable lesson and opportunity for our students. They saw first-hand the importance of participation in the democratic process and the impact local government has on their daily life. I am honored to teach in a town that values education and is willing to invest in even the youngest members of our community.”



The special session ended with a pizza party where students sat with council members to continue the conversations, both serious and silly. Who enjoyed the day more? From the looks and smiles on faces, it’s clear the day was cherished by all...a day of building confidence in future leaders and a day of making memories that will last a lifetime, for everyone.



“Children are the world’s most valuable resource and its best HOPE for the future” – John F. Kennedy



What makes a child may not always be good grades in school, but a different way of looking at the world and learning.