



METRO Introduces Electric Buses into its Fleet

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press release



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Catch a Smoother, Quieter Ride as METRO Introduces Electric Buses into its Fleet



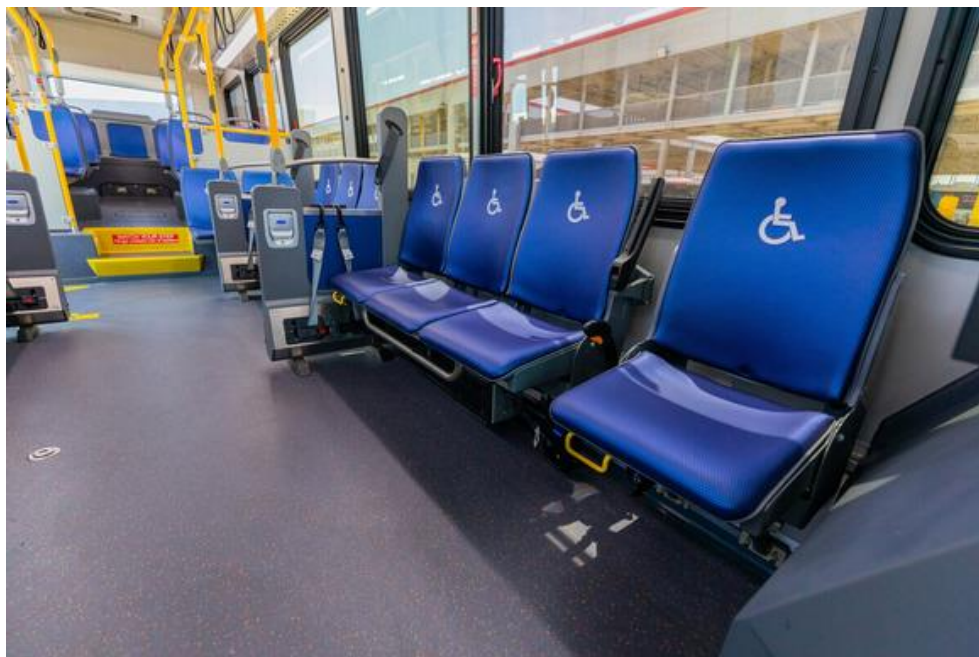
Passengers on two local bus routes will experience a quieter, smoother ride as METRO rolls out its first zero-emission electric buses for regular service. This pilot project represents a significant step toward enhancing the customer experience and improving service reliability.

As part of the September [service change](#), the [402 Bellaire Quickline](#) has transitioned to an all-electric fleet, replacing aging buses. The [28 OST - Wayside](#) now has five electric buses in its fleet.

"These improvements are an investment in our customers. The new electric buses meet our broader goals of ensuring the system is accessible, equitable, and helps us close environmental justice gaps," said METRO Board Chair Elizabeth Gonzalez Brock. "Both routes service some communities that include minority, low-income, and transit-dependent populations. It is so

important we provide these customers with an easy and safe choice that they will be excited to ride.”

The 402 Bellaire Quickline runs from Chinatown to the Medical Center, serving Southwest Houston, Gulfton, and the City of Bellaire. The 28 OST-Wayside route serves neighborhoods like Fifth Ward, which has historically grappled with air pollution.



Other features include USB charging ports, three wheelchair securement areas, and more space for ADA patrons.

Moving away from diesel is a key component of the Authority's [initiative](#) to build a more sustainable, environmentally-friendly transit system. While METRO already operates more than 400 clean-running diesel-electric hybrid buses, a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant will ensure the agency has 20 electric buses and 14 hydrogen fuel cell electric buses in total in the coming years.

Learn more about other recent service modifications, [here](#).

Media can download b-roll video of the new electric buses by clicking the image below.



April 2024

Rail Shutdowns Allow METRO to Improve Safety



Ever wonder what happens during METRO's rail shutdowns? A few times a year, customers are notified about a service interruption along one of the [METRORail](#) lines. During these closures, METRO employees and contractors work around the clock to make critical rail improvements while minimizing impacts to customers.

"Every component we have on the rail system has to go through a maintenance interval to keep it functioning," said Assistant Superintendent of Special Events & Construction Eddie Espinosa. "It's all about maintaining a healthy rail system."



Crews work to replace a switch near Palm Center Transit Center.

Monitoring the rail's condition and replacing components according to their expiration date prevents unplanned closures and ensures the safety of passengers and employees.

"People don't see all that goes on behind the scenes. It's a huge effort," said Espinosa.

Espinosa oversees the entire process, planning what work can be achieved during the allotted time and communicating within the agency and beyond. Planned shutdowns are carefully scheduled around Houston's big events.

"We reach out to different agencies and venues, like NRG Stadium or the George R. Brown Convention Center, so that when we schedule a shutdown, we don't do it while they have a major event that people might be relying on rail to get to," said Espinosa.

In April, the Purple Line was closed for a weekend to make switch and insulator replacements, change cameras, and clean platform canopies. Switches allow trains to move between tracks, while insulators are crucial for the overhead lines that power the trains.

"These trains move a great deal of our public, so you want to make sure the train stays on track how it's supposed to, and everything is safe," said Signals & Communications Supervisor Kareem King.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the crews, the rail was back up and running in time for the Monday morning commute.

METRO provides free bus shuttle service to riders during every shutdown. To sign up to receive alerts about closures and everyday METRO service, click [here](#).



METRO employees work alongside contractors to replace an insulator.



METRO Rededicates Art Installation by Renowned Artist Floyd Newsum

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METRO Rededicates Art Installation by Renowned Artist Floyd Newsum



On Wednesday, METRO leadership, U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, former State Rep. Garnet Coleman, State Rep. Jolanda Jones and Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis along with community members celebrated the rededication of an art installation by renowned artist Floyd Newsum.

"The Tower" was originally installed in 2014 at Martin Luther King Boulevard and Griggs Road along the METRORail Purple Line.

After receiving feedback from Coleman and the Third Ward community, the sculpture was relocated to a more prominent area near that intersection and additional lighting was added to ensure the public can enjoy the piece at any time of day.

"METRO's commissioning of 'The Tower' is an example of how public art can enhance the overall experience of public transportation, contribute to the identity of the transit system and the community that it serves," said METRO Board Chair Sanjay Ramabhadran.

The installation is part of The Authority's commitment to [urban design](#) which focuses on the look, feel and function of public spaces to shape quality of life in the region.

METRO's [Arts in Transit Program](#) aims to bring character into transit spaces with imagery that reflects community identity and the region's unique diversity.

"Art deals with the human condition and public art makes sure that people know that their community is something they can embrace," said Coleman. "This enhances our city and it enhances our quality of life."



A plaque was added to the platform of the piece, which reads:

"This sculpture was created and installed as part of METRO's Arts in Transit program for the METRORail Purple Line. It embodies the spirit of rebirth and heritage. Pyramids are used to reflect a sense of revival and growth in the community."

Along with commissioned sculptures near METRORail lines, METRO also built art into the structure of rail platforms and continually collaborates with the community to create a vision for new and existing transit surroundings.



Watch the full rededication event [here](#).



METRO Unveils Lone Star College Connector

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press release



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METRO Unveils Lone Star College Connector



METRO leadership, Lone Star College and community partners celebrated the launch of a new service to the Lone Star College-Houston North Fallbrook campus on Tuesday, Jan. 24.

The [Lone Star Connector](#) runs six and a half miles near the campus, improving students' and faculty's commute and providing important connections to three local bus routes—85 Antoine / Washington, 86 FM 1960 / Imperial Valley and 96 Veterans Memorial.

"Convenient, high-quality transit is essential for communities because it gives people a safe, sustainable, and affordable way to get to schools, job opportunities, health care, grocery stores, parks, recreational facilities, and other essential destinations," said METRO's Board Chair Sanjay Ramabhadran.



The connector runs Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. with destinations to the LSC campus, Walmart and Fallbrook Church.

“The two main issues we have with students, one is money and the other is just transportation issues,” said Lone Star College Chancellor Dr. Stephen C. Head, “If we can get them here, we can at least give them the opportunity to be successful.”

Riders can also connect to METRO's broader network including Park & Rides and transit centers, as well as destinations including Willowbrook Mall, the Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital complex, and downtown Houston.

The pilot project launched as part of the January [service change](#) on Sunday, Jan. 22. The Authority currently offers service to four LSC campuses. Students interested in riding METRO can obtain a [discounted fare](#) card.

Watch the full event [livestream](#).



**Click here for event
media kit.**

- Fact sheet
- Video
- Photos



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February 9, 2021

NASA Partnership Allows CCISD Students to Send Items to Space



League City, Texas – Not many can say their creation is in outer space. For students in the HUNCH program at Clear Creek ISD (CCISD), this is their reality.

The HUNCH (High school students United with NASA to Create Hardware) program is a pioneering project-based learning initiative that partners with NASA and over 275 schools nationwide. This collaboration offers students the unique opportunity to design, manufacture, and send their creations to the International Space Station (ISS).

Clear Creek High School's Metal Manufacturing Program was fortunate enough to be one of the first to partner with NASA more than 15 years ago to create crew training hardware and products that are now onboard the International Space Station (ISS).

CCHS students start with a design and oversee the whole process, from the manufacturing of each component to assembly and quality assurance.

“They have to meet all the same requirements. They don’t cut us any slack on the end result being subpar because students did the work,” said Tommy Gillis, metal manufacturing teacher. “We meet all the same safety checks.”

The program allows NASA to cut back on costs for personal items and tools, while giving students real-world experience with industry-standard machines.

“The HUNCH Program provides some of the machines that the school would never be able to afford,” added Gillis.

Several other CCISD schools have a hand in the HUNCH program, creating items like tape dispensers, hand railing, and stowage lockers.

“These real-world projects give them examples of where they are going to use the things that they are learning in high school,” Program Manager George Kessler explained.

Students benefit from close supervision by NASA engineers and even have the opportunity to work alongside them as interns.

“Being able to work and have these parts go up to the ISS and know that you worked on something like that, is really challenging and fun,” said Ethan Glass, a CCHS student and intern.

CCHS is the hub of the HUNCH program and the last stop for final processing of the products made at various schools across the country.

This story is part of Clear Creek ISD’s MaSTARminds segment. Watch [here](#).

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May 21, 2021

Overcoming Adversity: CBHS Student Shines in Debate, Academics



Friendswood, Texas — If you ask Isaiah Hall about his first few years in debate, he will tell you a tale of struggle, but also, perseverance. After suffering a knee injury in middle school, Isaiah left sports behind to pursue debate at Clear Brook High School.

He admits his freshman year started off rocky.

“Sophomore year I was a little bit better, but also still, not that good,” Isaiah explained. “It was those first two years where I’d really thought about quitting debate. I wasn’t doing very well at tournaments, and I wasn’t advancing.”

Despite some negative thoughts about his performance, Isaiah managed to place in one competition his sophomore year.

“I kind of had to dig deep down and look to myself and see why I’m not doing well in these tournaments,” said Isaiah.

“I realized that I wasn't really applying myself within debate.”

Drawing inspiration from his past experiences in football, basketball, and track, Isaiah adopted a new mindset.

“I was very passionate about those sports, and I was always practicing. I was always playing, always working on doing everything I needed to do to progress and get better,” he said.

Isaiah's newfound determination led him to mentor his peers, using his competitive spirit to elevate both his own performance and that of others.

“Being able to use those work ethics of always wanting to be the best and wanting to get better, while also helping the people who maybe aren't as good as me, helped them get to my level,” added Isaiah.

His humble nature won't let him take all the credit. Isaiah attributes his persistence to his mother.

“She sacrificed a lot just to make sure I was fed and getting a good education,” Isaiah clarified. “Without her guidance and her support, I wouldn't be where I am now.”

Isaiah's journey has not been without hardship. He and his mother faced homelessness during his elementary school years. Despite these challenges, she remained a steadfast source of motivation, spending many late nights motivating him to study.

Isaiah's breakthrough began his junior year as he started to win awards in debate. By his senior year, he qualified and placed in the top 50 in the state tournament.

On December 20, 2020, Isaiah's relentless dedication was rewarded with a full-ride scholarship to the University of Notre Dame through QuestBridge, a nonprofit that partners with prestigious universities to offer scholarships to students with lower-income backgrounds. To qualify, students must be in the top 5-10% of their class and have primarily A's in the most challenging courses offered.

Isaiah plans to major in marketing at Notre Dame with aspirations of starting his own business and a nonprofit.

“I've always wanted to give back to homeless shelters and be there as much as I can for other people who have been in my situation,” said Isaiah. “There's a lot of people in this world and in this country specifically, that are often overlooked. That's what I want to do with my life, to be there for others and always be there for others.”

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March 23, 2021

CCISD Student Invents Wearable Metronome for Beginner Musicians



Friendswood, Texas – For a novice musician, learning to follow a conductor or “feel the beat” can be a daunting challenge.

Ella Schreiter, a Brookside Intermediate student, encountered this struggle in her first year playing percussion in the school’s band.

“In order for us to follow our conductor, we had to have older students come tap our shoulders to the beat of the conductor,” Schreiter described. “I thought, ‘There has to be a better way to do this.’”

A metronome can help with the issue, but Schreiter imagined a more immersive experience to allow students to feel the beat, like a tap on the shoulder.

Her curiosity inspired the idea for a wearable metronome with two components—a wand-like instrument for the conductor and a small device with a strap, worn on the arm of the musician. The device vibrates as the conductor moves his or her hand to direct the musician.

With guidance from a NASA engineer, Schreiter built a prototype for last year's Science and Engineering Fair, which required her to learn to code, 3-D print and assemble all the components.

"I tested it out with four band directors, and they all agreed that this would be a very beneficial learning tool for their students," she remarked. "We are still working on developing it further, so we can use it in a school setting."

Science and research teacher Tammie LaBiche noticed Schreiter's engineering talent early on.

"Probably what is most impressive about her is she remains teachable, and I know that she will be a great scientist in the future," said LaBiche.

At the 2021 Science and Engineering Fair, Schreiter not only improved her design but also built ten additional devices. Her project won first place in the junior electrical and mechanical engineering category and garnered two additional awards. Notably, Schreiter made history as the first intermediate student in CCISD to receive a Grand Award, a distinction for the most outstanding project across all categories and divisions.

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April 16, 2020

Wedgewood Student Opens “Little Free Pantry”



Friendswood, Texas – Wedgewood third grader Alexandra Castillo strives to make an impact wherever she goes. She has her own Facebook page called “Alexandra’s Secret Smiles,” where she regularly challenges others to spread kindness in the community.

Her ideas inspired the school to create a program to share goodie bags with kids who have been hurt, bullied or are new on campus.

“It warms my heart how she is always thinking of others and never gives up,” said her mother, Julie Castillo.

Even during the current COVID-19 pandemic, Alexandra is still thinking about how she can lend a hand while socially distancing.

“My neighbor across the street has a ‘little free library’ and I love getting books there and watching others get some too,” said Alexandra. “I told my mom I wish there was a way to do that with food.”

Julie found some pictures of “little free pantries” on Pinterest and the two got to work on their big project.

First, the duo put out a message on community pages, asking if anyone had supplies to donate or to purchase to put the pantry together.

About a week later, Brady Burnett with Burnett Realty built a cabinet and donated it to the family.

After the family put up the cabinet outside their home, the community dropped off food to keep the pantry fully stocked.

“I just want to help others. I want them to be able to find the things they may need for their house without having to go to the store,” added Alexandra.

She hopes her act of kindness can inspire others her age.



“I want them to know that even though we were just children we can make a difference,” she said. “That's why my motto is, ‘Never underestimate the power of a smile.’”

In addition to her pantry project, Alexandra recently made over 300 face masks for community members.

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