

Vargas: Why I'm running for the Texas State Board of Education, District 2

Education is the civil rights issue of our time. Not since the days of *Brown v. Board of Education* has our educational system been so politicized both in our state and across our nation.

We need to ensure that the politicization of our educational system does not hinder students in our region and that our students receive every educational opportunity we can provide.

The Texas State Board of Education, District Two, needs a representative with real experience and extensive knowledge to enter the arena and advocate for the nearly 1.8 million students enrolled in our District Two educational institutions.

My name is Michael Vargas, and I was born and raised in one of the poorest pockets of San Benito, Cameron County, Texas. However, I was fortunate enough to have amazing teachers and mentors to help and guide me through my early education. The guidance of these teachers and mentors along with my innate drive for success and capacity for hard work enabled me to earn a full scholarship tuition to Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. I became the first member of my family to attend college and graduate. During my time at Brown, I quickly learned the importance of providing equal educational opportunities to all students. It is appalling that for far too long, a student's zip code and place of birth determine what opportunities they have and, ultimately, their future. This needs to change. We need to ensure that all students have access to the support they need to achieve their dreams. We also need to ensure that our teachers and schools have the resources necessary to help our students and our region.

When I graduated as Salutatorian from San Benito High School, I left the area for almost ten years – four years at Brown – and six years teaching and as a Corps Member with the Teach For America (TFA) program in St. Louis, Missouri. No one in Texas may be familiar with the Wellston School District or the **Hazelwood School District**, but teaching and working in these institutions is what informed me on the state of education in this country. In my six years in Missouri, I served as a teacher, an instructional coach, and a grants administrator. My experiences during this time ignited my passion for social justice, and my personal mission of advancing educational equality became a life endeavor. The knowledge and understanding I gained in these educational systems outside of Texas make me uniquely able to tackle educational issues here at home in the Lone Star State. I can bring classroom experience, innovative ideas, and a working knowledge of alternatives to the educational institutions in District Two.

Huge comeback in fourth quarter powers Collinsville past Hazelwood Central



BELLEVILLE — Tray Swygeart had a football flashback Wednesday.

The Collinsville High senior hauled in a long inbound pass from senior Deante Franklin and turned it into a key three-point play as the Kahoks rallied for a 55-50 boys basketball victory over **Hazelwood Central** in the first round of the Belleville East Classic.

“Everybody doesn’t know I play football. I play receiver in high school,” Swygeart said. “Deante put it out there and I went and got it. (The pass) was right there. I knew we needed a quick bucket, but I didn’t expect them to foul. I was just thinking about making the bucket.”

The basket and ensuing free throw gave the Kahoks a 51-46 lead with 38.6 seconds to play in the game. They sealed the outcome by making four free throws in the final 18.5 seconds.

It was the sixth consecutive win for Collinsville (14-5), which trailed 43-29 early in the fourth quarter before closing with a 26-7 run in the last seven minutes.



Recap: Collinsville defeats Hazelwood Central

Collinsville defeated visiting Hazelwood Central 55-50 Wednesday.

The Kahoks made 21 of 27 free throws (78 percent), while the Hawks sank 6-10 (60 percent). Devin Davis led Collinsville with 19 points and Tray Swygert added 16. Dylan Owens led the way for Hazelwood Central with 12 points. The leading rebounder for Collinsville was Nick Horras (10).

Collinsville (14-5) will host Althoff on Friday at 7:30 p.m. Hazelwood Central (4-7) hosts Belleville West on Thursday at 7:30 p.m.