

## Student Voices – Dallas – Stop the Presses!

**ISAAC VILLAFINA, Reporter:**

It's 4:15 at Dallas' Skyline High School and senior Bonita Murillo is on deadline.

**BONITA MURILLO, Student:**

It's in the newspaper right now.

**ISAAC VILLAFINA:**

This week's article is about student leadership. But Bonita isn't just writing for her school newspaper, she's writing an article for a section called The Zone that will appear in the central zone of the Dallas Morning News readership area, which will be read by over 230,000 readers.

**WADE CROWDER, Instructor:**

The Zone is a student-produced feature that appears every Thursday in the Dallas Morning News Sports Day High School section. It allows students to write feature-type articles on different events and topics, or subjects that affect them on pretty much a day-to-day basis.

**BONITA MURILLO:**

The approach I take for news stories is, "What is everyone talking about?"

Just, I listen to what everyone is thinking and what's, like, the hot topics. I want to write about things that matter and that could get people thinking in a different way.

**ISAAC VILLAFINA:**

Students were selected to be writers after submitting draft articles for review. The first editorial board meeting was held in the offices of the Dallas Morning News. After the meeting, students got their picture taken so that it could appear in the paper, as well as a tour of the building.

I think it gives the parents and other people in the community an opportunity to look inside. When they open the...

**WADE CROWDER:**

... paper up and they look at The Zone, they see stories that are -- they're written about the students, about the teachers, about the people who are in the high schools.

And a lot of times unless a parent or someone in the community knows someone directly or actually goes to visit, usually they're not in the schools. It gives them an opportunity to step inside the school, to hear the voice of both the students who are writing the articles and the students that they interview and quote from.

**BONITA MURILLO:**

Writing for The Zone is really a great opportunity because it allows our work to get seen -- the entire Dallas area could actually read what we do.

When my work was first published in The Dallas Morning News, my friends and family were excited for me because they knew how great of an opportunity it is for me and my future and it's like -- it's just real fun to do. I really enjoy it.

**CHRISTY RIVERA, Student:**

I've been working with a lot of new people and have been getting new pointers on how to write stories. This really has helped me a lot -- this whole experience. And it's really training me for the future and my career.

**ISAAC VILLAFINA:**

In addition to having articles appear in the paper, the special section is delivered to all Dallas high schools once a week.

**WADE CROWDER:**

I've been very impressed -- the reporting they've been able to do, the research, and their actual writing. It's been very impressive. It's a wonderful opportunity to look inside, DISD (Dallas Independent School District), and see the good things that are happening.

**BONITA MURILLO:**

This experience has been fun. It's a learning experience, I got to meet new people and do new things. It's a great...

**BONITA MURILLO:**

...networking tool and it's a great opportunity to get my work shown, seen, by everybody.

**ISAAC VILLAFINA:**

This is the first year for The Zone in Dallas. Not only are students throughout the city getting a chance to read articles by their peers, the Zone staff is gaining real-world experience of life on a deadline for a big city paper.

This is Isaac for the.News.