

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Nearly a decade later, Garcia walks at high school graduation

Not every one of Comal ISD's more than 1,100 graduation stories this spring is a traditional tale.

Perhaps the most unique of these comes from Samantha Garcia.

In 2001, Garcia had enough credits to graduate from the Comal Leadership Institute, Comal ISD's self-paced high school that later had its name changed to Memorial High.

She didn't pass the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test, however, so Garcia couldn't walk the stage at graduation and didn't receive a diploma.

She tried once again in 2002, but started to forget about school soon after that when she failed to receive the required grade on the TAAS math test yet again.

Then, last year, Garcia's friends and family talked her into giving it one more try.

In January, Garcia, now a 27-year-old mother of a six-year-old named Sara, started studying for what is now the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test.

"I wanted to set a good example for my daughter," Garcia said. "Going back to try and get my diploma was always on the back of my mind, but I didn't think I'd ever really do anything about it."



There were times during long evenings of studying after coming home from her job as an administrative clerk in San Antonio Garcia thought about giving up.

“It was very hard to comprehend some of the math I was trying to learn after being away from school so long,” Garcia said. “The thought of my daughter seeing me walk across the stage kept me going.”

She took the exam on March 4, and Garcia said she vividly remembers the day she received the news that she passed the math portion of the TAKS test.

“I had to have three different people read it to me,” Garcia said. “They kept saying I passed, so I finally believed them. I cried, and then I called all my friends and we celebrated.”

Garcia wasn’t sure what to do when she had completed her requirements, so she called Memorial High School.

“She was extremely thrilled,” said Dr. Dolly Adams, MHS principal. “It really shows persistence pays off. I suggested Samantha walk the stage with us on graduation night.”

Garcia gladly accepted the invitation, and her daughter, friends and family were in attendance when she walked across the stage to receive her diploma on May 25 at the New Braunfels Civic Center.

“I hope this sets an example to never give up,” Garcia said. “I’m just somebody who didn’t want to quit.”

Comal ISD school board president Carol Kendall Keller was proud of Garcia’s impressive accomplishment.

“She has shown a great deal of fortitude,” Keller said. “It’s an absolutely wonderful story.”

Garcia’s educational journey may not end here.

“Now I want to educate myself further,” Garcia said. “I’m looking into a few colleges. I figure if I can finally accomplish something that’s taken nearly a decade, I can achieve anything.”