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## Famed kid's authors perform at Smith Elementary, present students with autographed books

*Reading Rock Stars literacy program presentations, Oct. 16*

### WHAT

AUSTIN—The Texas Book Festival's Reading Rock Stars literacy program brings books to life for children in low-income schools, and will host authors from across the country at six local Central Texas schools. The authors will present their literary works in an entertaining fashion, and the Texas Book Festival gives each student an autographed copy of their book and provides the school library with a new set of books. *Media are invited to cover the presentations at Smith Elementary School.*

### WHO

- More than 750 students, grades pre-K through 5th, at Smith Elementary—this year's featured Reading Rock Stars school
- Children's book authors **Eric Litwin** (*The Nuts*), **Monica Brown** (*Maya's Blanket*), **Joe Cepeda** (*Swing Sisters*), and **Stephan Pastis** (*Timmy Failure*)
- **Lois Kim**, executive director of the Texas Book Festival
- Smith's librarian **Laura Cartier** and principal **Frances Maldonado**

### WHERE

Smith Elementary, 4209 Smith School Road, Austin, TX

### WHEN

**Friday, Oct. 16, 8:15 a.m. until noon**

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|---------------|---|
| 8:15- 9 a.m.  | Monica Brown, 1 <sup>st</sup> grade (music room)  |
|               | Stephan Pastis, 4 <sup>th</sup> grade (cafeteria) |
| 9:15-10 a.m.  | Joe Cepeda, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade (commons)       |
|               | Stephan Pastis, 5 <sup>th</sup> grade (cafeteria) |
| 10:15-11 a.m. | Joe Cepeda, 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade (commons)       |
| 11:15- noon   | Eric Litwin, K and pre-K (library)                |

*\*Note: book distribution and signing takes place directly after authors' presentations.*

## **VISUALS**

Kids of all ages; famous children's authors; large banners and welcome signs for authors plastered all over the school; a library cart full of brand-new, signed books; stage with book-themed decorations including posters of book covers, cut-outs of authors, and props for interactive parts of the presentations.

## **INFO**

<http://www.texasbookfestival.org/welcome-reading-rock-stars/>.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Texas Book Festival brings books to life for young readers through Reading Rock Stars, a dynamic program in which selected authors from across the country are invited to present their works to students in economically disadvantaged public schools. At the end of the presentations, each child receives an autographed copy of the book, and a set of books is also given to the school library.

Since 2001, the Texas Book Festival has given more than 65,000 books to kids at Title I schools in Texas through its Reading Rock Stars program. For many children, it is the first book they have ever owned.

Originally created to serve children in the Austin area, the Reading Rock Stars program is expanding each year. With support from H-E-B's Tournament of Champions and Read 3 programs, the Texas College Savings Plan, The Wright Family Foundation, the ECG Foundation, the Tecumseh Foundation, and other generous donors, Reading Rock Stars is now serving Austin, the Rio Grande Valley, and Houston. The Texas Book Festival makes a three-year commitment to each school it accepts, bringing in different authors and new books each year.

"The festival does not send authors to speak to the children of privilege, rather to the children of hope—all from Title 1 schools. And the event is about more than just one day—it is about the lead-up to the event. Committed teachers and librarians build excitement in the students through creative activities, art and writing projects, guiding them to find their own voices and put their dreams into words," says Monica Brown, Reading Rock Stars author.

"To own an \$18 picture book is a luxury the vast majority of children in the world can't afford, but the Texas Book Festival makes sure thousands of children do, in Austin and the Rio Grande Valley," says Brown.

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## **About the Texas Book Festival**

The Texas Book Festival celebrates authors and their contributions to the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. Founded in 1995 by first lady Laura Bush, Mary Margaret Farabee, and a group of volunteers, the nonprofit Texas Book Festival promotes the joys of reading and writing through its annual Festival Weekend, the one-day Texas Teen Book Festival, the Reading Rock Stars program, grants to Texas libraries, youth fiction writing contest, and year-round literary programming. The Festival is held on the grounds of the Texas Capitol each fall and features more than 280 renowned authors, panels, book signings, live music, cooking demonstrations,

and children's activities. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and 1,000 volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public. [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org)