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Media, please note: If you wish to cover the Perez Elementary School presentations, please RSVP with your name, title, and affiliation to be allowed entry into the school.

Bilingual children's authors to speak, present books to students at six Rio Grande Valley schools, March 20-21

State Representative R.D. "Bobby" Guerra; the Texas Book Festival's leadership; authors Cynthia Weill, Duncan Tonatiuh, Diana Lopez to participate

WHAT

The Texas Book Festival's Reading Rock Stars, a dynamic program that brings books to life for children in economically disadvantaged Texas public schools, will host bilingual children's authors from across the country at six schools in the Rio Grande Valley. Authors will present their literary works in entertaining fashion, give each student an autographed copy of their book, and provide the school library with a new set of books. There will also be a brief speech given by an elected official and the Texas Book Festival's leadership will also make brief speeches.

Elementary schools participating in this year's Reading Rock Stars program include D.U. Buckner in Pharr, Emiliano Zapata in Mission, Woodrow Wilson in McAllen, E.B. Guerra in Edinburg, Perez in McAllen, and Robert E. Lee in Edinburg. **Media are invited to attend and cover the presentations at Perez Elementary School on Friday, March 21 (see schedule below).**

For the first time ever this year, the Texas Book



Festival will also have an opportunity for the entire Rio Grande Valley community to meet the Reading Rock Stars authors. **There will be a book signing and meet-and-greet with Cynthia Weill, Duncan Tonatiuh, Diana Lopez, Carmen Tafolla, Diane Gonzales Bertrand, and Lupe Ruiz Flores at Barnes and Noble in Palms Crossing, McAllen, on Thursday, March 20 at 4 p.m.**

WHO

- State Representative R.D. "Bobby" Guerra, District 41
- Bilingual children's book authors Cynthia Weill (*Opuestos*), Duncan Tonatiuh (*Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*), and Diana Lopez (*Confetti Girl*)
- Lois Kim, executive director of the Texas Book Festival
- Kendall Miller, logistics and outreach coordinator of the Texas Book Festival
- Cynthia Cooksey, librarian at Perez Elementary School, this year's featured Reading Rock Stars media school
- Hundreds of students in grades pre-K through fourth.



WHERE

Perez Elementary School, 7801 North Main Street, McAllen TX 78504

WHEN

Friday, March 21, 8:15- 11:30 a.m.

- 8:15- 8:45 a.m.— pre-k, Cynthia Weill, in the library
- 9- 9:30 a.m.— kindergarten, Cynthia Weill, in the library
- 8:15- 9 a.m.— 1st and 2nd grade, Duncan Tonatiuh, in the cafeteria
- *9:05- 9:15 a.m.— Lois Kim, executive director of the Texas Book Festival, introduces State Representative R.D. "Bobby" Guerra, District 41, who will give a brief speech to before author presentation, in the cafeteria
- 9:15- 10 a.m.— 2nd and 3rd grade, Duncan Tonatiuh, in the cafeteria
- 9:45-10:30 a.m.— 5th grade, Diana Lopez, in the library
- 10:45-11:30 a.m.— 4th grade, Diana Lopez, in the library

**Note: book distribution and signing will take place directly after authors' presentations.*

VISUALS

Children of all ages; famous bilingual authors; large hand-made posters, banners, and welcome signs for authors plastered all over the school; large stage with book-themed setting/scenery; and shelves full of books that will be signed by authors and individually given to students in a single file line after each author presentation.

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 52,000 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, The Wright Family Foundation, Target and other generous donors, Reading Rock Stars is now serving Austin, the Rio Grande Valley, and new this year, Houston. The Texas Book Festival makes a three-year commitment to each school it accepts, bringing in different authors and new books each year.

Reading Rock Stars in the Rio Grande Valley is sponsored by Target and presented in cooperation with the University of Texas Pan-Am and the university's FESTIBA: Festival of International Books and Arts.

“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, past 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.”

For more information on Reading Rock Stars, contact the Texas Book Festival office at (512) 477-4055 or email Kendall Miller at kendall@texasbookfestival.org.



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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 250 renowned authors, panels, book signings, live music, cooking demonstrations, and children's activities. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and nearly 1,000 volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public.

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