



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Irma Chapa, Director of Communications / C: 956-995-2815 / E: [ichapa@mcallen.net](mailto:ichapa@mcallen.net)

## **Learning to Lead: Houstonville's Young Officials Take Center Stage at McAllen City Hall**

***Mayor Javier Villalobos swears in Sam Houston Elementary students, celebrating 29 years of hands-on civic education***

The next generation of community leaders took an official step into public service today as Mayor Javier Villalobos swore in Houstonville's 29th mayor and student officials during a special ceremony at McAllen City Hall. Students from Sam Houston Elementary School had the opportunity to experience local government firsthand while learning about leadership, civic responsibility and public service.

"Today is an important day because you get to help make changes in your school and in your community," said Mayor Villalobos. "What you learn now will help you with your future careers." Now in its 29th year, Houstonville is an innovative, hands-on learning program that gives students a miniature city to operate and manage. Complete with a bank, grocery store, post office, recycling center and other community services, the program helps students understand how cities function and how individual roles contribute to the greater good. Through roles such as mayor, treasurer and city manager, students practice decision-making, teamwork and leadership while learning the importance of civic participation.

Following the swearing-in ceremony, students sat at the City Commission dais then visited the McAllen Cable Network (MCN) studio and toured the Mayor's office. During their studio visit, City Communications Director Irma Chapa offered insight into how the City uses public communication to keep residents informed and connected to their local government.

The experience demonstrated that effective government involves more than making decisions; it also requires communicating with the public, sharing information and helping residents understand the services and decisions that affect their community.

By bringing students into the spaces where local government operates, the City of McAllen supports educational opportunities that connect classroom lessons to real-world experiences and encourage young people to see themselves as active participants in their communities. To learn more about Houstonville, visit [Sam Houston Elementary's Houstonville webpage](#).

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### **About the City of McAllen**

Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.-Mexico border. Known as the "City of Palms," McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. McAllen city leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement. For more information, visit [www.mcallen.net](http://www.mcallen.net) and follow us on social media @cityofmcallen