



Texas Education, Higher Education and Workforce Agencies Award Innovative Education-to-Workforce Programs Grants

Dallas, Houston, McAllen and Odessa to launch new career and technical education early college high school programs

June 2, 2014 – Austin, Texas – As Texas high school graduates celebrate their accomplishments, Commissioner of Education Michael Williams, Higher Education Commissioner Raymund Paredes and Texas Workforce Commission Chairman Andres Alcantar today announced funding for the development of four new career and technical education early college high school (CTE ECHS) opportunities for students in Dallas, Houston, McAllen and Odessa.

In an unprecedented partnership, the Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Texas Workforce Commission each committed funding to support innovative education partnerships between local school districts and public community or technical colleges. The funding is designed to help local education leaders plan and launch new opportunities for students to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential that prepares them to enter high-skill, high-demand workforce fields.

After receiving 21 proposals from across the state, the three agencies have awarded the first round of funding to support initiatives at Dallas County Community College District - Eastfield College; Houston Community College Coleman; Odessa College; and South Texas College (McAllen).

“Knowing that more than half of the jobs available to new and recent graduates today require some sort of postsecondary education, our state needs new and different pathways for Texas students that emphasize the close ties between college and career readiness,” Commissioner Williams said. “These pilot programs, and others like them, can provide a roadmap for additional innovative partnerships and opportunities for Texas students.”

The goal of the CTE ECHS programs is to enable students to be immediately employable by providing them with job skills and an opportunity to earn stackable credentials that include Level II certificates, at least 60 credit hours toward an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree or an AAS degree. Each proposal required close collaboration among local school districts, colleges and regional employers to ensure the highest degree of academic and technical rigor and establish strong alignment between proposed programs and local workforce needs.

“These particular early college high schools with a focus on career and technical education will provide new opportunities for students to be prepared to enter the skilled workforce upon high school graduation,” Commissioner Paredes said. “Earning college credit while in high school also helps students save money and offers them early exposure to the types of environments they’ll encounter in the workplace.”

The CTE ECHS grant program is a reflection of what the three agency leaders have learned as they have conducted regional workforce and education forums across the state.

“Encouraging leaders from across Texas to foster and enhance innovative partnerships among school districts, higher education institutions and employers will better prepare students for high demand occupations,” Chairman Alcantar said. “We are committed to working together and with local partners to implement innovative education and workforce strategies that strengthen the education and workforce outcomes for our students.”

Texas’ economy is booming. In the last 12 months the state added 348,000 jobs across its 11 major industries. Innovative efforts such as the CTE ECHS programs are needed to provide a skilled, educated workforce -- Texas’ greatest asset as the state competes in a global economy.

Recipients of the June 2014 CTE ECHS grants include:

Dallas County Community College District – Eastfield College

Dallas County Community College District – Eastfield College, in partnership with Dallas Independent School District, will develop the Eastfield College Career and Technical Early College High School (ECCTECHS). The ECCTECHS will enroll 60 ninth grade students in fall 2015, and will scale up one grade each year.

Proposed programs of study will include: Machinist; CNC Machine Operator; HVAC and Refrigeration Technology; Digital Media Technology in Graphic Design/Graphic Artist; Computer Aided Drafting and Design; and Advanced Manufacturing/ Mechatronics Technology.

“This new Early College High School will bring training in marketable skills to Dallas-area high school students who will be able to take technical and general education courses at our college as they complete both their high school diploma and associate degree requirements through a dual credit arrangement,” said Eastfield College President Dr. Jean Conway.

Houston Community College System – Coleman

Houston Community College – Coleman, in partnership with Houston and Alief Independent School Districts, will develop two Career and Technical Education (CTE) Early College High Schools (ECHS).

Proposed programs of Study will include: Industrial Electricity; Plumbing, Construction trades and practices; Heating Air Conditioning and Refrigeration; Health Information Technology; and Respiratory Therapy, Physical Therapy Assistant

"HCC Coleman continues to support programs that reach out to high school students preparing them for health science careers, as we are currently doing with HISD Jane Long Academy, which has been extremely successful, and we look forward to developing complementary programs with other Houston public schools under this grant," said HCC Coleman College for Health Sciences President Betty Young, Ph.D., JD, LLM.

Odessa College

Odessa College, in partnership with Ector County Independent School District, will develop the Odessa Career and Technical Early College High School (OCTECHS).

Proposed programs of Study will include: Instrumentation and Electrical Technology; Machining Technology; and Welding. With the documented support of twelve business and industry partners, OCTECHS will start off with immense community investment in its students.

“Odessa College has proven success and experience providing CTE dual credit opportunities for students in Ector County ISD and throughout our 33,000 square mile service area,” said Odessa College President Gregory Williams. “In the past four years, CTE dual credit at OC has increased by 445 percent. The Odessa College Technical Early College High School is the natural next step to ensure that even the traditionally under-served students have an opportunity to earn an associate of applied science degree in a high skill, high wage career field.”

South Texas College

South Texas College, in partnership with Mission Consolidated Independent School District and Weslaco Independent School District, will develop two Career and Technical Education (CTE) Early College High Schools (ECHS).

Proposed programs of study will include: Welding; Diesel Mechanics; and Precision Manufacturing – Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operator

“Our 24 early college high schools focused on academics are incredibly successful with large numbers of high school graduates also earning an associate degree. It is time to extend this successful model for career and technical students. The CTE Early College High Schools will align dual enrollment with the career pathway requirements of HB 5 and provide a pathway to high-wage, meaningful careers,” said Dr. Shirley A. Reed, President of South Texas College.

Earlier this year, the three agency leaders announced this joint effort to create the career and technical education (CTE) Early College High Schools (ECHS) initiative. Each agency committed \$1 million to support partnerships between local school districts and institutions of higher education to create career and technical education opportunities that help students simultaneously earn a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential aligned with a critical community workforce need.

In addition, the three commissioners have been traveling the state to hear from public education, higher education, business and economic development leaders in various communities to determine how such partnerships can benefit a region and state.

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