



PRESS RELEASE

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**TISD RECEIVES \$560,000 GRANT TO FURTHER
STEM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM;
HOLDS SECOND READING FOR 2011-12 BUDGET**

Texarkana, TX – During the Tuesday, April 19, 2011, regular session of the Texarkana Independent School District Board of Trustees, it was announced that the district has recently been awarded a \$560,000 continuation grant from the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (T-STEM) Academies, Cycle 4 Grant Program.

This program is administered through the Texas High School Project (THSP), a unique organization that brings together, partners with, and aligns the work of influential public and private groups committed to improving education in our state. Current partners include: Texas Education Agency, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, National Instruments, Greater Texas Foundation, Meadows Foundation, Office of the Governor, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Legislature. THSP develops practical insights and proven solutions that can be scaled in schools and districts throughout Texas based on evidence and data analysis across the transition from middle school through high school and into postsecondary programs.

“I am so pleased with the unbelievable STEM partnership that has been developed with Texas High School Project,” stated James Henry Russell, Superintendent of Schools. “They have walked hand-in-hand with us on each step of our STEM programming and have allowed us to grow and share our program with so many across the country. It is through this partnership that we have been able to achieve regional and national recognition for our development of a strong foundation for innovative STEM education and our PreK-16 collaborative with Texas A&M University – Texarkana and Texarkana College.”

Since 2009, TISD has been a recipient of two T-STEM grants totaling \$891,000. The first grant in 2009 allowed for the development of the STEM Academies on the Texas Middle School and Texas High School campuses. These small learning communities are made up of 110 students per grade level

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and operate as a school-within-a-school. The Academies offer students a rigorous, well-rounded education with outstanding instruction that integrates science, technology, engineering and mathematics into the curriculum. The purpose of the Academies is to increase student achievement, while creating a new workforce of problem solvers, innovators and inventors who are self-reliant and able to think logically.

In 2010, THSP granted TISD \$51,000 to enhance and share the professional development component of the Texarkana STEM model with other school districts.

“This latest grant will allow us to continue the T-STEM blueprint to extend and augment the STEM model at TISD,” commented Ronda Jameson, Lead Coordinator of 9-12 Math, Science & STEM Education. “It will finalize the expansion of the T-STEM Academies into grade 11 for the 2011-12 school year and grade 12 for the 2012-13 school year. Additionally, it will provide STEM-specific professional development for all STEM educators at TISD and assist us in the purchasing of needed curriculum and supplies to support STEM learning.”

In other business, the Board of Trustees approved the Second Reading of the 2011-2012 budget.

“Last month, I shared with you that we had hoped to know our total amount of budget reductions in June following final decisions of our legislative leaders,” said Deidra Reeves, Chief Financial Officer. “I’m still crossing my fingers on that but all signs are indicating that the legislature could call for two special sessions which could possibly put us into July or August.”

For the second reading, TISD presented seven possible budgets each reflecting varying reduction scenarios.

The first budget projection reviewed includes teacher step increases and features a \$199,244 deficit on a \$56.3 million budget and assumes that all current finance law remains as is before final decision of legislature.

The next three budget projections examined reflect Senate Bill 22 which forecasts up to a \$4 billion shortfall in education over the next biennium and the final three budgets reflect Committee Substitute House Bill 2485 proposal which projects \$6.5 billion in reductions.

“As you can see, our budget reductions for TISD could range from \$2.9 to \$3.9 million on a \$53 million budget,” continued Reeves. “We continue to move forward in our budget preparations knowing that there will be shortfalls and are preparing accordingly. Each level of reductions that we have presented this evening include resignations, retirements and a range of other cost effective and efficient measures that can be enacted in order to meet the needed budget loss.”

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