



# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

May 5, 2011

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**TISD APPROVES DEVELOPMENT OF VIRTUAL ACADEMY**

**Texarkana, TX** – During the Friday, May 6, 2011, called meeting of the Texarkana Independent School District Board of Trustees, approval was given for the District to move forward in the development of an Electronic Course Program approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and in partnership with Calvert Education Services (CES).

The Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy is an innovative educational program within the State of Texas that will allow TISD to provide online learning options to Grades 3-6. Since the inception of TEA's virtual program in 2006, only two charter schools and one independent school district have been approved for participation. TISD was recently approved for program implementation for the 2011-12 school year.

"This unique virtual academy is designed to serve any public school student who is motivated to learn academic content in a customized educational setting with the daily support of a responsible adult," commented James Henry Russell, Superintendent of Schools. "Students will be challenged, inspired and encouraged to achieve the highest academic level of learning while at the same time fostering their ability to integrate ideas and concepts across subject areas."

The collaboration with Calvert Education Services will allow Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy to offer a customized version of the world-renowned Calvert School curriculum that is also aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). All students enrolled in the academy will have the same accountability measures required by the State and will be required to take all annual assessments.

"We are delighted to be working with TISD," said Richard Rasmus, CEO of Calvert Education Services. "Our partnership will provide an outstanding opportunity for Texas students who would thrive in an engaging educational experience."

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“Calvert Education Services has been the trusted leader in distance learning for over a century. It serves schools and student in all 50 states and over 60 countries with its world-renowned curriculum and exceptional academic support services. We dedicate ourselves to inspiring students to realize their full potential in a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment using a proven curriculum, personal instructional support and outstanding online learning resources all designed to encourage academic excellence,” continued Rasmus.

Students enrolled in the Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy will have course studies that offer a flexible pacing and customized instruction in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health and Fine Arts.

“The virtual classroom will have a supervising teacher to monitor the student’s progress, help problem-solve, lead discussion, demonstrate via webcam, offer intervention, remediation and enrichment for the student and the managing parent/guardian,” stated Marsha Burris, Principal of the Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy.

“Our goal as virtual educators will be to enrich the experience even more for the student by having a systematic evaluation process that will include personal, phone and virtual conferencing.” Virtual Academy teachers will be housed at our Academic Learning Center and will undergo the necessary professional development to lead curriculum with online tools and resources. We will work closely with Calvert to learn the necessary techniques for online instruction and interaction.”

TISD will begin their efforts immediately in marketing, student recruitment and staff selection in order to reach their goal of 75 enrollees by the start of the 2011-12 school year.

To learn more, contact Marsha Burris, 903.793.5632 or [burrism@txkisd.net](mailto:burrism@txkisd.net).

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