



PRESS RELEASE

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**TISD CURRICULUM EXPANDED TO OFFER
ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN GENERAL STUDIES;
BOARD APPROVES EXPANSION OF VIRTUAL ACADEMY
AND HEARS FINANCIAL AUDIT**

Texarkana, TX – During their Tuesday, November 27, 2012 regular session, the Texarkana Independent School District Board of Trustees approved high school program of studies expansion to include 26 new courses and an Associate Degree in General Studies beginning the 2013-14 school year.

The new courses to be added to the Texas High School curriculum for next year include: Oral Interpretation (3 levels); Public Speaking (3 levels); Calculus BC AP; Social Studies Advanced Studies: Texas State and Local Government DC; UIL Academic Preparation; Orchestra I; Art Design I DC; Sports Medicine (3 levels plus DC); and Emergency Medical Responder DC. Other courses added fall within the Career & Technology Program areas of Architecture & Construction, Arts, A/V Technology & Communications, Business and Finance.

“These additional courses now give Texas High School students a wide array of 425 course offerings that present a broad range of choices to meet their interests and abilities,” commented Lori Ables, Director of Curriculum & Instruction. “Our new courses, combined with course increases in the Dual Credit (DC) and Advanced Placement (AP) programs, are providing a foundation for students that will sharpen their academic preparedness for college.”

The AP Program allows high school students the opportunity to earn a minimum of 69 college semester hours of credit while in high school. Students must successfully complete the AP exam in order to receive college credit for the course.

The DC program allows students the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses and to earn high school as well as college credit for completed coursework. Although typically offered to juniors and seniors, Texas High School’s DC program will now provide several courses for 9th grade students beginning the 2013-14 school year and will offer approximately 381 college semester hours of credit.

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Through the Texas High School Dual Credit Program, and in collaboration with Texarkana College, THS students can now earn their Associate Degree in General Studies before leaving high school by completing 62 total college hours. Subject areas and required hours are: English/Speech (9); Visual and Performing Arts (3); History (6); Government (6); Behavioral Sciences (3); Mathematics (3); Natural Sciences (8); Computer Technology (3); Humanities (3); Electives (18).

“We are excited to offer the Associate Degree opportunity for our students,” shared Paul Norton, Superintendent of Schools. “What an accomplished feeling it will be for the student, parents and the district, when the student walks across the stage to not only accept their high school diploma but their Associates Degree in General Studies. From there, students can head directly into the workforce or continue on the path of earning their Bachelor’s Degree in less time and with less cost incurred.”

In other business, approval was given for the submission of a request to the Texas Education Agency to expand the Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy program to eighth grade effective the 2013-14 school year.

Currently, Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy has 107 students enrolled in grades 3-6 from throughout the state of Texas. The grade level expansion will offer room for 40 additional students in eighth grade.

One of three public school virtual programs approved by Texas Education Agency, the Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy is an innovative educational program which provides online learning options. This unique virtual academy offers the opportunity to educate a child outside the traditional classroom setting bringing the freedom to balance flexibility and structure. “Our collaborative effort with TEA and Calvert Education Services features individualized learning plans designed to meet the child’s specific educational needs and goals with oversight by highly qualified TISD teachers,” stated Nanette Power, Executive Director of Quality Assurance. “All students enrolled in the academy have the same accountability measures required by the State and are required to take all annual assessments.”

In additional business, board members heard the results of the District’s fiscal year 2011-12 annual financial audit, presented by Mason Andres, CPA of Thomas & Thomas, LLP.

For the fiscal year, the District ended with a fund balance of \$13.1 million, an increase of \$100,000 over the previous year. The fund balance at the end of 2011-12 was 28% of expenditures.

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Auditors gave a clean opinion with no findings on the District's accounting procedures and determined that the District continues to maintain sound financial practices.

"Despite lower funding available from the state and the unknown of what is to come, TISD has worked hard during this last year to maintain a healthy fund balance that can assist us during lean times," remarked Deidra Reeves, Chief Financial Officer. "I am very proud of the level that we have achieved and TISD will continue to work hard to ensure that we maintain a strong financial record."

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