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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MEDIA RELEASE

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ESPORTS ROARING INTO TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL FOR FALL 2021

Texarkana, TX – Esports, or electronic sports, is set to make its way to Texas High School beginning this fall semester.

Not to be confused with video gaming, Esports takes video gaming to another level with organized competitive gameplay between two teams, governed by its own strict set of rules and guidelines. The difference is comparable to a pick-up basketball game at a park versus a varsity high school basketball game.

“Esports requires teamwork, communication, critical and strategic thinking, creativity, sportsmanship and leadership – much like traditional sports,” said Gerry Stanford, Athletic Director for TISD.

To get the game going, Texas High will open up participation to students in grades 9-12 as an after-school club. Junior Varsity and Varsity teams will compete in several titles including: League of Legends, Valorant, and Rocket League. More titles are expected to be introduced as the Esports program grows.

According to Rick Allen, Esports Coach for Texas High School, “Like any other high school sport or extracurricular activity, students will attend team meetings, practices and official matches. However, since Esports is played online, there is no travel required throughout the regular season,” “Players will compete from our dedicated Esports classroom located on the Second Floor of the Multi-Purpose Facility.”

Each school year is divided into two regular seasons, Fall and Spring, each with their own playoff season. Texas High School will provide all electronic equipment students will need to compete.

“Esports allow students to come together over a common passion,” shared Patti O’Bannon, THS Principal. “It has been shown that there is a strong correlation between student engagement and student achievement where students who participate in

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extracurricular activities perform higher on math and reading assessments.” “It also enables students to practice and further develop their STEM skills, spending hours analyzing data, game statistics and strategies which provide real-world experience and application.”

Esports is a gateway to colleges and universities. The National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), the main governing body for varsity collegiate Esports, has awarded millions of dollars in sports scholarships and aid over the last five years. Currently, more than 200 colleges and universities offer nearly \$15 million dollars in scholarships.

The Texas' University Interscholastic League (UIL) expects to vote in August as to Esports becoming an official team sport.

For students interested in being part of the Esports program at Texas High, please contact Coach Rick Allen at Richard.Allen@txkisd.net or 903.793.7731 ext. 57085.

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