

COORDINATING BOARD

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COLLEGE FOR ALL TEXANS FOUNDATION AND HISD LAUNCH NEW PROGRAM TO HELP STUDENTS EXPLORE POST-HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

HOUSTON, TX, October 30, 2007 – Today, the College for All Texans Foundation (CFATF), the official non-profit partner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Houston Independent School District (HISD) announced the launch of a new program to help make post-secondary education opportunities accessible to students throughout Houston. The program will create strategic partnerships between institutions of higher education and the HISD to augment existing college access centers, also known as GO Centers. The initiative will begin in 2008 at eight HISD high schools to help students explore and plan for college opportunities. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has invested \$1.1 million in the Houston program.

“The Gates Foundation grant offers a tremendous opportunity to pilot enhanced GO Centers, which provide a critical linkage between K-12 and higher education, and moves us closer towards achieving the goals of *“Closing the Gaps,”*” said Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes. “This will help create a persistent college-bound culture in Houston high schools and provide a robust model we can recreate throughout Texas.”

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board supports several statewide initiatives that create partnerships between higher education and K-12 schools in an effort to encourage students to attend and succeed in college. One such initiative is GO Centers, which are a grassroots network of community-managed, prospective college student centers located in schools, libraries, and community centers across the state of Texas. These centers offer access to resources and personnel that can assist students as they research and plan for college. Currently, there are more than 220 GO Centers operating statewide.

“Applying for and getting into college can be a difficult process to navigate,” said Steve Seleznow, program director for education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “As schools and school districts throughout America struggle with the challenge of providing a smooth transition to higher education, GO Centers in Houston and throughout Texas offer an innovative approach to help more young people make college a reality.”

The CFATF will work with HISD and higher education partners to implement an enhanced GO Center model. The grant will provide the following components to existing college access centers at select HISD high schools:

- A full-time academic advisor from a local institution of higher education;
- A full-time volunteer from the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program; and
- Fifteen part-time college students to serve as mentors for students.

“We wholeheartedly embrace this grant and the opportunities it brings for the selected high schools and their respective feeder middle schools,” explained HISD’s Assistant Superintendent of School Services Lupita Garcia. “This grant will help us keep students continuously engaged in the college dream and post-secondary aspirations.”