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The Congressional Award, Fort Worth ISD to Provide ‘Pathway to Career’ for Texas Teens

Washington, DC (April 24, 2019) —Fort Worth Independent School District and The Congressional Award Foundation strengthened their commitment to student leaders by launching a new effort to grow tomorrow’s leaders, today.

The two organizations announced today a regional collaboration, which will address the need to prepare tomorrow’s workforce with tangible skills and attributes necessary to excel in a classroom setting and beyond.

“Our purpose in education is not only to teach our students to excel in school but to build their character through service to others. We are honored to partner with The Congressional Award to help our students thrive,” said **Dr. Kent Paredes Scribner**, Fort Worth ISD Superintendent.

The partnership will initially take shape with the first official *Congressional Award designated school*, which has been determined to be the **World Languages Institute (WLI)** located in Fort Worth.

In working with national, state, and local supporters, this partnership will have a sharp focus on leveraging enrichment opportunities for students like internships, intergenerational interactions, job training, and exploration of the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

The new partners are optimistic that exposure to different industries and populations will ignite students’ passions and interests.

“Our program aims to foster leadership, public service, arts and culture, and healthy communities through youth empowerment,” said **Erica Heyse**, National Director for The Congressional Award Foundation. “Working with an educational leader like Fort Worth ISD will allow students to utilize The Congressional Award as a pathway to a career. It’s important for us to keep students motivated and connected to their community and to provide that extra incentive to graduate from high school and find job placement.”

Lending bi-partisan congressional support to the North Texas initiative are United States Representatives Kay Granger (TX-12) and Marc Veasey (TX-33).

“It is an honor to have the first Congressional Award school in Fort Worth. I am proud to be part of this bipartisan effort to help our children with the preparation and skills they need to be successful in life. As a former teacher, I know first-hand how important efforts like this can be in a student’s development,” said **Congresswoman Kay Granger**.

“Over four decades, The Congressional Award program has displayed an unparalleled ability to empower young adults to prepare for life outside the classroom,” said Fort Worth native **Congressman Marc Veasey**. “Regardless of ability, circumstance, or socioeconomic status, The Congressional Award recognizes the effort, initiative, and achievement students make. I’m excited and honored that the Fort Worth ISD will host the first Congressional Award School providing our students with access to fellowships, job training, and on-site future employment opportunities with Dallas-Fort Worth companies. This is key to exposing our students to resources they may never have had access to and to show them they have the tools and skills to achieve their dream job.”

Partnership Launch

The Congressional Award and Fort Worth ISD will host a kick-off event on **Saturday, May 4, 2019** at the **Dallas Museum of Art**, which will include a reception with remarks from state and local officials and an award presentation for Congressional Award recipients in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

The kick-off will also recognize partners who remain an integral part of the program’s success locally, including the presentation of The Congressional Award’s 2019 Education Champion Award to **Dr. Hector Rivera**, associate professor in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University.

"This award symbolizes the commitment of the Texas A&M University to diversity and community development through the support of its faculty," said Dr. Rivera. "It also embodies the collaboration with multiple partners (districts, non-profits, and private sector) who have played a key role at improving the educational experience for all children in Texas and beyond. It is an honor to receive this award with an understanding that it takes many partners and collaborators, with a common vision, to achieve what we have achieved together."

About The Congressional Award

The Congressional Award is the United States Congress’ only charity and the highest honor bestowed upon a youth civilian through the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Established by Congress as a public-private partnership in 1979 under Public Law 96-114, the program recognizes initiative, service, and achievement in youth ages 13 ½ - 23.

About Fort Worth Independent School District

With more than 86,000 students in 83 elementary schools, 29 middle schools and 6th grade centers, 18 high schools, and 16 other campuses, Fort Worth ISD enjoys a diverse student population and strong community partnerships. Under the leadership of the superintendent and the Board of Education, the District is undergoing a series of initiatives that will redesign, transform, and revitalize Fort Worth ISD Schools. Fort Worth ISD’s mission is “preparing ALL students for success in college, career, and community leadership.”

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