

Space Center Rotary Education Excellence

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Dr. Greg Smith

Superintended Clear Creek Independent School District

The Clear Creek Independent School District (CCISD) is fortunate to have the Space Center Rotary as a partner in education. I am grateful for the support this organization provides to our district as we achieve our mission to prepare students for the 21st century. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and our staff, I hope as businessmen and women you feel you are getting a strong return on your investment as we graduate more than 2,200 students every year prepared for college and the workforce. While the results of TAKS, soon to be called STAAR, reflect continuous improvement, we are keenly aware pencil-to-paper tests are not the sole indicator of college or workforce readiness. This is why the district, with your support, has embarked on an ambitious five-year strategic plan to develop students who can effectively demonstrate the Courage, Collaboration, Innovation, and Self-Direction to succeed in the 21st century. We are well on our way in this effort as demonstrated by the students here today.

Across the district, our students score 30 to 45 points above the statewide and national average on the SAT test. Two of our high schools have received the 2011 College Readiness Award from the Texas ACT Council and five schools have been recognized as top performing schools by the National Center for Educational Achievement. CCISD is home to an impressive number of 35 National Merit Semifinalists. More than 1,200 of our students are currently earning dual credit through University of Houston- Clear Lake, San Jacinto Community College, and College of the Mainland. We also have a very successful early college high school located at the San Jacinto South where students simultaneously earn their high school diploma and their college associate's degree, tuition free! Clear Horizons Early College High School is a life changer for many of these high school students and their families as we intentionally seek children who would be first-time college goers in the family or where financially, higher education seems out of reach.

In the area of career readiness, CCISD has expanded its career and technical education programs where students earn certifications often reserved solely for trade schools or community colleges. Many people may not realize that Clear Creek ISD has a certified nursing assistant program in the district. And I am proud to share with you 100-percent of the students involved in the program passed the state certification. They are workforce ready, in a high demand industry today! The nursing program is just one of many career and technical programs that light that passion for students to pursue college majors in biotechnology, health sciences, and more! I would like to take you inside one of those very programs that are truly on the leading edge of education - our biotechnology program, only in its second year of operation!

[CLEAR FALLS BIOTECHNOLOGY VIDEO]

I have spoken before this group many times about the shift in public education and the need for us to look at education through the eyes of a child today and the leader we want them to become tomorrow. This requires so much more from us than having a teacher in front of the 3 room lecturing and students consuming that knowledge. Our kids want to be creators, innovators, and collaborators. We have worked hard to create that environment for them.

For example, tonight at the Board of Trustees meeting we will hear from a group of high school students who have been tapped by MIT to design a portable medical support system. It is this type of real-world

work that keep our kids engaged and the opportunities for learning are far greater than simply sitting in a row of desks and taking notes. Thank you for your continuing support and scholarships for our students. You are paving the way for a better future for our community and nation.