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Former Austin Mayor Announces Tutoring Incentive Plan for Eastside Memorial High School at the Johnston Campus

Plan Would Include Financial Incentives For Students to Attend Tutorials

AUSTIN—Former Austin Mayor Bruce Todd announced today an innovative plan designed to improve the academic performance of students at Eastside Memorial High School at the Johnston Campus. The privately funded Tutoring Incentive Program (TIP) includes \$375,000 to cover student achievement incentives for attending tutoring sessions and funding for tutors within the Austin Independent School District, the Austin Community College District, Kaplan Tutorial Services and area colleges.

“My son graduated from Johnston High School, so I have a personal connection to the school,” former Mayor Todd said. “I also believe it is critical that we give all students the same opportunity to get a solid education.”

TIP will help students with college and/or job-readiness, and will include tutoring programs in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Tutoring will be offered on the Eastside Memorial High School campus after school, in the evenings and on Saturdays.

“Not only is this the start of a new school year, it’s also a new beginning for the students at the newly repurposed Eastside Memorial High School,” said Dr. Pat Forgione, superintendent of the Austin school district. “We have already made some substantial changes on this campus—including adding new academic programs and hiring new teachers with strong experience. We believe the Tutoring Incentive Program will provide a solid foundation for the high school, and will ensure every single student is given the opportunity to succeed academically.”

TIP is a partnership among the Austin Community College District, Austin ISD, Eastside Memorial High School staff and students, local colleges, and Kaplan Tutorial Services. Local college students who demonstrate high academic achievement and personal integrity will be recruited from Austin Community College, University of Texas at Austin, St. Edward's University, Huston-Tillotson University and Concordia University Texas. Personal interviews and criminal background checks will be administered before hiring tutors. Kaplan Tutorial Services also will be used as needed. The number of students served will be based on available funding.

"The Austin Community College District has many long-standing partnerships with the school district," said Stephen Kinslow, ACC President and CEO. "We hope this type of partnership will be the first of many. We are happy to participate in this effort."

The effectiveness of TIP will be determined by reviewing data such as students' TAKS scores, six-week grades, high school exam and course grades, and results of diagnostic pre- and post-testing.

On June 4, 2008, Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott ordered the former Johnston High School to close, after several years of being rated Academically Unacceptable under the state accountability system. The district is now faced with forming a new vision, or repurposing, the high school. On June 9, Austin School Trustees voted unanimously to submit a resolution and plan to repurpose the former Johnston High School for the 2008-2009 school year to Scott, as allowed by the Texas Education Agency.

Former Mayor Todd is working to raise the \$300,000 needed to pay the tutors and program coordination through private donors, as well as the \$75,000 for student achievement incentives. Contributions can be made to the *ACC Center for Public Policy and Political Studies, TIP Fund* and sent to: Austin Community College, Center for Public Policy and Political Studies, 5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, TX 78752.

If you have any questions, please contact Peck Young (Director, ACC CPPPS), 512.223.7069, Fax: 512.223.7210, cppps@austincc.edu

CPPPS is a non-profit organization at ACC committed to education, civic engagement, informed decision-making and understanding across cultures. Overseeing the non-profit is a board of directors, chaired by former Mayor Todd.