

Southwest ISD Receives \$1.7 Million Grant from Toyota USA Foundation

May 22, 2017

San Antonio, Texas – May 22, 2017 – Toyota USA Foundation awarded Southwest Independent School District (SWISD) a \$1.7 million grant to help prepare students for high-demand, high-growth occupations in the region by expanding education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

SWISD will use the grant to equip classrooms with robotics, conveyors and other technologies, enhancing the district's programs through "smart" classrooms, labs and specialized program spaces at the new Southwest Legacy High School. The state-of-the-art facility, opening in August, will offer students pre-requisite coursework in STEM fields.

"This grant helps build the workforce of the future, supporting teacher development needed to offer a rigorous curriculum in an environment that is relevant and engaging for students," said Mike Goss, president, Toyota USA Foundation. "By providing hands-on experiences to develop the necessary set of skills, programs such as those offered by SWISD can help bridge the STEM skills gap and empower our youth."

The new high school will be the second Center for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) campus. CAST schools are a network of industry-led, career-themed high schools offering college coursework embedded in classroom curriculum, internships for credit, job shadowing, mentoring, summer job opportunities, guaranteed interviews for graduates and project-based learning. Students who graduate through the CAST program will possess college credit and, potentially, industry certifications.

"The strong support modeled by Toyota to create enhanced partnership and pathways of success for students serves as a model for assisting the next generation of prepared and educated high school graduates," said Dr. Lloyd Verstuyft. "While school systems are striving to become better for our students and communities, the reality is we have limited resources."

He added, "When business steps forward we can create brighter and more engaging learning environments with student outcomes that benefit our youth, communities, state and the nation."

In August 2018, SWISD will open the program to surrounding districts and higher education partners, welcoming 150 students. The curriculum will focus on advanced manufacturing, engineering, global enterprise, logistics and energy. Total enrollment at CAST is expected to reach 600 students by 2022.

"Toyota's steadfast commitment to education in San Antonio is exceptional," said Ivy R. Taylor, mayor of San Antonio. "Its financial pledge will not only help improve our school system by offering more opportunities for students, but it will also support an emerging industry, develop future workers, and educate our next generation of leaders."

CAST schools work together with industry leaders to create career-focused education. The Southwest Legacy campus, which will focus on manufacturing careers, is located on the Southside of San Antonio where many manufacturers are located, including Toyota and its suppliers.

"This is an impressive, bold and long overdue step forward to preparing our young people for careers of the future," said Nelson Wolff, Bexar County Judge. "This is exactly why Bexar County worked so hard to recruit a global leader like Toyota. They provide real opportunity to the Southside and to all of San Antonio."