



PRESS RELEASE

HISD Media Relations Department

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Recent HISD Graduate Will Win a Free Car at the Inaugural HISD Foundation ‘Cool to Be Smart’ Event Celebration

July 25, 2011 – A free car, laptop computers and college scholarships will be awarded to members of the HISD Class of 2011 who excelled in college-level Advanced Placement courses at the inaugural HISD Foundation Cool to Be Smart Celebration. The event happens Sunday, Aug. 14 from 2-4p.m. at Delmar Fieldhouse (2020 Mangum).

Houston Chronicle Executive Vice President and Editor Jeff Cohen, an HISD alumnus, will be the guest speaker.

The purpose of this new annual event is to encourage and recognize recent graduates who enrolled in five or more Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses or a combination of both and took the corresponding exams. Students who score high enough on these exams are eligible to earn college credits.

“One of our strategies to help us become the best school district in America is to increase the rigor in our schools,” said HISD Superintendent Dr. Terry Grier. “Cool to Be Smart recognizes students who have stepped up to the plate and taken these advanced courses to better prepare themselves for college.”

More than 950 students who graduated in 2011 and qualified for this drawing will receive an official invitation by mail. Students must be present to enter the drawing and win prizes. A picture ID and student ID number will be required at the event.

Texas Direct Auto is donating a car for the grand prize.

“We are excited for the opportunity to assist in motivating these young adults in excelling to their highest potential. Not only is it "cool to be smart" but these classes are an investment in their academic careers,” said Jessica DeMarr, Director of Business Development at Texas Direct Auto.

Many of the other prizes were donated by the HISD Foundation.

“The HISD Foundation is honored to have this opportunity to recognize those students who went above and beyond what was expected of them. To show our commitment to the district and to college-readiness, the HISD Foundation will also award its first ever student scholarships -- ten \$1,000 scholarships -- at this event,” said Tina Medlin, president of the HISD Foundation.

Aside from the scholarships, the HISD Foundation will be giving away seven laptops and the Microsoft Store at the Galleria will contribute three more laptops fully equipped with Microsoft Office Student Edition.

All winners will be randomly selected.

The number of HISD students taking AP exams increased 43 percent from 2009 to 2010, and the number scoring high enough to earn college credit increased 27 percent. In 2011-2012, all HISD high schools will offer at least 15 AP courses.

To be eligible for future 'Cool to be Smart' event drawings, HISD students will need to take at least five AP or IB exams and their corresponding exams before graduating. Students may call the HISD High Schools Office at 713-556-6000 to see if they qualify.

About the HISD Foundation:

The HISD Foundation provides philanthropic support and donor accountability for the seventh largest school district in the nation. Funds raised by the HISD Foundation provide resources to advance the core initiatives of the district's Strategic Direction. Fundraising efforts focus on institutional priorities set by the superintendent of schools and board of education. A separate 501 (C) (3) nonprofit, the Foundation is governed by a volunteer board of business, community and philanthropic leaders. Programming is aligned with the district's five core initiatives: Effective Teacher in Every Classroom; Effective Principal in Every Classroom; Rigorous Instructional Standards & Supports; Data-Driven Accountability; Culture of Trust through Action. For more information about the HISD Foundation please visit www.houstonisd.foundation.org.

The **Houston Independent School District** is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States with 298 schools and more than 200,000 students. The 301-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with nearly 30,000 employees.

For more information, visit the HISD Web site at www.houstonisd.org.
