**HISD, Prairie View A&M partnership to allow students to earn nursing degree faster**

*April 15, 2015* – The Houston Independent School District and Prairie View A&M University partnered Wednesday to announce a new registered nursing pathway for the students of Jones Futures Academy.

The partnership will allow students in the existing Allied Health program at Jones to take college level anatomy and physiology and medical terminology courses that directly align with Prairie View A&M’s nursing degree plan.

The Jones Futures Academy is one of eight HISD Futures Academies that allow students to receive college credit, career training, and industry credentials to provide them with options for a promising future after completing high school.

By taking these classes now, students at Jones will be able to earn free college credit and more quickly complete their bachelor’s degree in nursing after graduation — in just two to three years as opposed to the standard four-and-a-half.

“Houston expects to see tremendous job growth in nursing over the next 10 years. We want to ensure our students are skilled and prepared to work in such a high-demand and well-paying job field,” said HISD Futures Academy Assistant Superintendent Michael Love.

“The opportunities students will receive from this partnership will strengthen their academic knowledge of health sciences, expose them to nursing field experiences, and prepare them for a career in nursing, as well as other jobs in the health sector.”

Currently, students in Jones’ Allied Health program have the opportunity to graduate high school with an associate’s degree and certification as a licensed vocational nurse. Starting this fall, all 90 students in the program will spend half of their day taking courses that are directly aligned with Prairie View’s registered nursing program. The courses will be offered through an existing partnership with Houston Community College and taught at HCC Coleman College for Health Sciences in the Texas Medical Center.

Students will also participate in clinical rotations and receive mentoring, college advising, and work-based learning opportunities from Prairie View’s College of Nursing.

Jones’ Allied Health program, in its first year, expects to graduate its first class of certified licensed vocational nurses in 2018. The partnership will allow students who complete the program to successfully continue the work toward a bachelor’s in nursing.

“We truly believe that this partnership is a shining example of the power and significance of what the entire educational community can do when it invests in our children’s future and opportunities,” said Prairie View A&M President George C. Wright.

