**Three HISD schools receive 2016 National Merit awards from Magnet Schools of America**

*National magnet organization to honor Garden Oaks Montessori, Lovett Elementary, Energy Institute High School*

*March 7, 2016* – Garden Oaks Montessori, Lovett Elementary School, and the Energy Institute High School were honored Friday with 2016 National Merit awards from Magnet Schools of America, the national association for magnet and themed-based schools.

The three schools are among 258 public magnet schools and programs from across the nation to receive the award. They were selected for their commitment to high academic standards, school diversity, specialized curricula and instruction, family engagement, and community partnerships.

Nearly 400 magnet schools and programs from across the country applied for the award.

“These schools have incredible educators who challenge students every day to excel,” HISD Board President Manuel Rodriguez said. “In addition to strong neighborhood schools, HISD is committed to providing parents and students school choices that offer unique and innovative learning opportunities and allow our students to be leaders and critical thinkers as we prepare them for college and the workforce as global graduates.”

Lovett and Energy both received a Magnet Schools of Excellence Award, the top merit award given to a select group of magnet schools. Garden Oaks earned a Magnet Schools of Distinction Award, which is the second-highest distinction awarded to schools.

As Magnet Schools of Excellence, Lovett and Energy Institute are now eligible to receive a monetary award from the association, in addition to the chance of being named the top elementary, secondary, or new and emerging magnet school in the nation.

“We are extremely proud of these schools for their excellence in student achievement, instruction, and community engagement,” said HISD Interim Superintendent Ken Huewitt. “It’s a tremendous honor for our schools to be recognized among the best in the country.”

Garden Oaks is one of the district’s three Montessori magnet programs emphasizing highly personalized and collaborative learning to help students develop social skills, cognition, and physical coordination, as well as their own interests.

Lovett is a fine arts magnet program with specialized instruction in music, visual arts, and physical education, which includes health initiatives such as the school’s Recipe for Success program. As part of Recipe for success, students run a school garden and grow fruits and vegetables.

The Energy Institute, which opened three years ago, is the nation’s first high school devoted to preparing students for careers in the energy field, including geosciences, offshore technology and alternative energy.

The schools will receive the awards at the Magnet Schools of America Conference on May 6 in Miami.

