

**HISD awarded more than $13 million in grants**

**to expand college access programming**

More students in the Houston Independent School District will have access to college readiness programming thanks to two grants totaling $13 million from Houston Endowment.

The three-year grants will allow the district to expand EMERGE, a program that helps students from underserved backgrounds attend and graduate from the nation’s top colleges and universities. Most students in the program receive more than $200,000 in scholarships and grants over four years. And more than 96 percent of all EMERGE students have graduated from college within four years, or are on track to do so.

“No other urban school district in the country is as committed to ensuring that their students are ready for postsecondary success,” College and Career Readiness Officer and EMERGE program founder Rick Cruz said. “From making the PSAT, SAT, AP and Dual Credit coursework available to all students at no cost, to ensuring that students have access to high-quality college advising and innovative programs such as EMERGE, HISD is living up to its commitment that all of its students are college- and career-ready.”

This is the second time Houston Endowment has awarded HISD grants for college readiness and access. With the last grant three years ago, the district was able to hire 32 highly trained college advisors. As a result, the district significantly increased the number of students applying and being admitted to college, completing the FAFSA, and receiving scholarships.

With the newest grants, the district will be able to hire more college advisors to work with students, offer college transition programming and support, and expand postsecondary access programming into middle schools.

“We are extremely grateful to Houston Endowment for its ongoing support,” Superintendent Richard Carranza said. “With these grants representing one of the largest financial contributions to the district, we will be able to help thousands of additional HISD students access life-changing postsecondary opportunities.”

EMERGE HISD partners with EMERGE Fellowship, a nonprofit organization focused on supporting work within the district as well as expanding the EMERGE program to new students in school districts across the city