

**Three HISD schools nominated for national Blue Ribbon Schools award**

*Challenge Early College HS, DeBakey HS for Health Professions, and East Early College HS nominated among exemplary and high-performing schools*

*Jan. 18, 2018* – Three Houston Independent School District schools have been nominated for the U.S. Department of Education’s prestigious national 2018 Blue Ribbon Schools designation.

The National Blue Ribbon award is given annually to high-performing schools to showcase the hard work of students and educators. Challenge Early College High School, DeBakey High School for Health Professions, and East Early College High School are among 26 public schools in Texas to be nominated by the Texas Education Agency. Each of these three schools is a previous National Blue Ribbon Award recipient.

Challenge Early College High School’s mission is to graduate confident, lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and be productive citizens in our world. CECHS students function in a college environment and are guided by adult advocates to develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning through work and life tools acquired in Advisory, Student Leadership, and Guidance classes. Challenge boasts a curriculum designed with a level of rigor that better prepares students for a successful college career. Students have the option after graduation to stay an additional year enrolled in college credit bearing courses, with individualized support provided by the school.

“This nomination represents the commitment of our teachers, staff, parents, amazing students, and the tremendous support that we receive from our district leaders,” said Challenge Principal Tonya Miller. “Our team has high expectations for every child, and we are very grateful and honored to receive this recognition.”

DeBakey High School for Health Professions offers students interested in science and health careers an alternative to the traditional high school experience. It was the first High School for Health Professions in the nation and continues to develop and provide a rigorous and comprehensive pre-college program. Located in the Texas Medical Center, DeBakey offers a rigorous curriculum taught by a diverse faculty that is dedicated to offering students a solid college preparatory program which requires courses in upper-level science and mathematics combined with introductory study of medicine and medical careers.

“The DeBakey staff, students, and parents are elated to hear of our nomination as a National Blue Ribbon School,” said DeBakey Principal Agnes Perry. “Our hard work and dedication to excellence in education has been evident in our academic results. We appreciate the recognition.”

East Early College High School is dedicated to creating a college-bound culture with a goal of graduating all incoming freshmen in four years with not only the advanced high school diploma, but also with up to 60 hours of college credit. East Early’s targeted group is comprised of previously underserved student populations from HISD’s East region. The school’s goal is to follow the early college philosophy of rigor, relevance, and relationships.

“Being nominated for this prestigious award is an honor,” said East Early principal Stephanie Square. “This nomination is a reflection of the hard work and dedication from students, faculty, and staff. We strive to support all students to reach their full potential on their path to college and career readiness.”

To earn a nomination, schools must be deemed exemplary and high performing as measured by state assessments. This year, all of the nominated schools in Texas have an economically disadvantaged population of at least 39-percent.

The nominated schools will now work with the U. S. Department of Education to complete the application process. National award winners will be announced in September. The winners will then be recognized in Washington D.C. at the National Blue Ribbon Schools awards ceremony.

For more on Challenge Early College High School go to: <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/79449>

For more on DeBakey High School for Health Professions, go to: <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/36>

For more on East Early College High School go to: <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/42563>