

HCC Katy campus celebrates first anniversary



HCC-Katy President Dr. Zachary Hodges receives a special proclamation from Katy Mayor Dusty Thiele at HCC-Katy's first anniversary celebration.

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Houston Community College celebrated the first birthday of their new Katy campus facility on August 29th with festivities held at 22910 Colonial Parkway, Katy. The event was emceed by State Representative Mike Schofield, who read a resolution in honor of the event. Mayor of Katy Dusty Thiele also read a special proclamation in honor of the day, which he presented to Dr. Zachary Hodges, president of HCC-Katy.

According to the college's website, the new year-old Katy campus offers transferable core classes days, evenings, and Saturdays. The state-of-the-art classrooms and labs provide a project-based focus in an innovative learning ecosystem including courses in Art + Design, Engineering, Music, and Studio Art. Katy is home to the Warren Bernard Itz Horticulture, Agriculture, and Environmental Studies program. It also offers workforce training in Cyber Security, Digital Information Systems, and Logistics & Supply Chain Management.

Through HCC's partnership with University of Houston-Victoria (UHV), students can "Start in Katy. Finish in Katy" by earning an associate degree



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARGARET LANEY

Rep. Mike Schofield, who serves the Katy area in House District 132, emceed HCC-Katy's birthday party.

at HCC and transferring to UHV to earn a bachelor's degree in business, computer science, education, and other high demand fields. The Katy instructional site shared by University of Houston (UH) and UHV is located across the street from the HCC campus. Through the UH/HCC Engineering Academy at Katy, students are co-enrolled at both institutions and are official UH Engineering Cougars from the very first day.

For more information, go to <https://www.hccs.edu/locations/northwest-college/katy-campus/>

University of Houston pilot program aims to address teacher shortage

\$3.5 million grant from Houston Endowment supports training, increased mentoring for new teachers

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

HOUSTON -- Districts across the Gulf Coast had to scramble to fill thousands of teaching vacancies this fall, evidence of a critical problem facing Texas schools — fewer certified teachers are entering the profession, even as retirements and resignations have increased the need.

The College of Education at the University of Houston is launching an innovative solution, using a \$3.5 million grant from Houston Endowment to create a high-quality alternative certification program that combines key components of the college's nationally recognized traditional degree program with a shortened timeframe to get aspiring teachers into classrooms more quickly.

A pilot program began this summer, and the effort is ultimately expected to double the number of certified teachers produced by the College of Education.

"This is a way to fast-track the preparation of people who already hold a college degree, to help them become well-prepared to be in the classroom," said Dean Cathy Horn. "The practical reality is that we have, for the last several years, started the academic year with thousands of classrooms

being taught by long-term substitutes, by uncertified teachers or just empty, with students sent elsewhere. That means kids are starting school without the stability of a qualified teacher to set them up for success."

The teacher shortage is a statewide crisis, but the fast-growing Houston region warrants particular attention as it represents about a quarter of the state's school-age population, according to the Texas Demographic Center. Strengthening public schools is a priority for Houston Endowment.

"Our growing region employs more teachers than some entire states, such as Tennessee, making it critical that we open additional pathways to the profession, and teachers who are better prepared in a high-quality program are more likely to stay in the classroom," said Ann B. Stern, president and CEO of Houston Endowment. "We are proud to support this innovative program from UH, which will strengthen the pipeline of well-prepared and supported teachers and help us more quickly meet the demands of the teacher workforce."

UH's alternative certification program, or ACP, will distinguish itself with a commitment to high-quality, research-based preparation that involves strong partnerships with school districts. Participants, who must have a bachelor's degree, will benefit from intensive upfront training taught by college faculty, on-site coaching and support from an experienced mentor, and professional development

sessions throughout their first year in the classroom.

Jeremy Sapp, assistant director of leadership development in the Fort Bend Independent School District, said the district was pleased to partner with UH on the pilot alternative certification program and praised the focus on increased support for the new teachers.

"We thought it was a way to get quality teacher candidates," Sapp said. "We knew UH runs a quality program and produces quality teachers."

Participants spent three weeks on the UH campus before beginning work as the teacher of record — earning a first-year teacher's salary — in the initial participating districts, Fort Bend ISD and Aldine ISD. Throughout their first year, the group will meet both in person and online to build their teaching skills. A site coordinator will provide formal and informal coaching through frequent classroom visits and meetings. Participants can pursue state certification after their first year on the job.

Amber Thompson, associate chair of the UH teacher education program, and Shea Culpepper, director of the program, said the goal is to translate the tenets of strong teacher preparation to the faster timeline of the alternative certification program. "We know we need multiple pathways into certification to meet the need for teachers," Thompson said. "And we're committed to delivering best-in-class preparation so teacher candidates are classroom ready to help all students succeed."

Katy ISD announces "State of the District" to be held Oct. 20



FROM STAFF REPORTS

On October 20th, Superintendent Ken Gregorski will present Katy ISD's annual "State of the District" update.

The event will be held at the Merrell Center, 6301 S. Stadium Drive in Katy, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

For more information, please contact CommunityRelations@katyisd.org.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Cinco Municipal Utility District #7 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2023 on September 21, 2023 at 4:30 pm at 2002 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 100, Katy TX 77449. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

FOR the proposal: Christopher Telschow Greg Nunn
Mark Wrzyszczyński Scott Drawdy

AGAINST the proposal: None

PRESENT and not voting: None

ABSENT: David Drake

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.300000/\$100 Adopted	\$0.280000/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$-0.020000
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		-6.67%
Average residence homestead appraised value	\$426,106	\$468,836
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled persons exemptions)	\$12,783	\$14,065
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$413,323	\$454,771
Tax on average residence homestead	\$1,239.96	\$1,273.36
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)		\$33.40
and percentage of increase (+/-)		2.69%

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code. An election is not required if the adopted tax rate is less than or equal to the voter-approval tax rate.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Online tool aims to close skills gap, help more Texans plan for future

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Austin, TX – The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has launched My Texas Future, a new digital tool that connects Texans with resources and information about postsecondary opportunities. My Texas Future will help bridge the skills gap and provide support to individuals as they work to further their careers, return to the workforce, or return to higher education.

My Texas Future includes personalized interactive features to help prospective students identify interests and skills, explore careers and programs, plan for school, and navigate financial aid. Visitors can create accounts, save preferences, and request to speak to an advisor.

"The future of Texas prosperity relies on developing our Texas talent. My Texas Future is a one-stop advising shop for Texans to explore the changing landscape of high-demand jobs, understand higher education programs and costs, develop plans, and advance their careers," said Commissioner of Higher Education Harrison Keller.

"This new tool offers resources to help more Texans earn credentials of value so they can participate in our state's dynamic economy."

Users may begin an exploration of professional interests with a career quiz. With information about jobs that might fit their interests, users can compare hundreds of Texas-based careers by local demand, pay, required education, and related skills. They may also compare credential programs by average tuition, location, and salary after graduation.

If students create an account, they can tailor their results from these interactive tools to their learning goals. They can save careers, schools, programs, and resources to their profiles and connect with advisors from partner institutions, receiving support specific to their individualized needs at every stage of their postsecondary journey.

The current release of My Texas Future is designed primarily for working-age Texans. Future releases of My Texas Future will include additional tools for middle and high school students and transfer students. Visit mytexasfuture.org to learn more.