



Southwest Schools Introduces New Online Public School Program

April 25, 2006

The Texas Virtual Academy @ Southwest is the state's first online public school program approved by the Texas Education Agency under the Electronic Course Pilot program. The online school program serves students in grades 3-6 across the greater Houston area.

HOUSTON, TX – Southwest Schools, a local charter school based in Houston, introduced their latest innovative education program today—an online public school.

Instead of bringing the student to the school, this online public school brings the school to the student.

The new program is called the Texas Virtual Academy @ Southwest (TXVA). It is the state's first program under the Electronic Course Pilot (eCP), created by the Texas Legislature to create innovative programs that use technology to deliver education.

The Texas Education Agency approved the TXVA on March 7, 2006. The school currently serves 75 students in grades 3-6 who reside in the greater Houston area (Region IV). It has the capacity to enroll up to 200 students.

The Southwest School District held an event today to demonstrate how the online public school program operates. The event featured TXVA administrators, teachers, parents and students.

The Texas Virtual Academy is the latest program unveiled by Southwest Schools. Southwest Schools also has an elementary school, middle school, and high school, along with education programs that include residential treatment, homework assistance, and college admissions. Southwest Schools serves a diverse group of students from a variety of backgrounds.

TXVA is a full-time public school program. The students in TXVA must meet the state's academic and attendance requirements, just like all public school students in Texas. TXVA students are also required to take the state's assessment tests, including the TAKS test.

Every student is assigned a certified public school teacher. The school teacher works remotely, providing instruction, guidance and support to the students. Teachers review work, help design learning plans, and communicate with students through e-mail, phone conferences, and academic workshops. They also coordinate a variety of social and academic outings for their students. The close relationship between TXVA teachers and parents creates a strong partnership dedicated to the academic achievement of the student.

Students who enroll in TXVA receive a computer, monitor, printer, access to the Online School, lessons, assessments, books, materials, planning and progress tools, and much more.

As with all public schools in the state, there is no cost for parents to enroll their children in the program.

TXVA uses the nationally-acclaimed curriculum provided by the education company, K12 Inc. The curriculum is a comprehensive, researched-based curriculum covering the core subjects of English/Language Arts, Math, Science, History, Art, and Music.

Central to the K12 learning program is the Online School (OLS), which hosts over 11,000 interactive, engaging and comprehensive lessons presented in a mix of printed and multimedia forms. The Online School also includes lesson assessments, planning and progress tools, and an attendance tracking system to determine the number of instructional hours completed by the student.

"We're very pleased about this new innovative program and how it is helping kids achieve," said Brian Johnson, member of the Southwest Schools Board. "Because students have different learning needs, Southwest Schools is dedicated to providing a variety of education programs that give parents and students options."

"The Texas Virtual Academy is not for everyone, but it will be the best education option for some kids in the Greater Houston area who excel with an individual approach that provides flexibility," said Dr. Catechis, Founder and CEO of Southwest Schools. "We're also very proud that our program is first to be authorized by the TEA under the Electronic Course Pilot program. Most importantly,

we're excited about the positive response from parents and students."

About Southwest Schools:

Southwest Schools was founded in 1999 with the goal of providing an exemplary education to students and parents through a school of choice. Students who attend Southwest Schools bring a diversity of interests, cultures, talents, and proficiencies. They have found an atmosphere that encourages students to develop lifelong values and skills.

For more information, visit: www.swschools.org

For more information on the Texas Virtual Academy @ Southwest, visit: www.txva.org