



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

IMPACT Early College High School provides opportunities for students

The first graduating class from Goose Creek CISD's IMPACT Early College High School walked across the stage at Lee College recently to receive their high school diplomas. For some of the 89 graduates, this was not the first time they had received a diploma at Lee College. A few weeks before, many of them were handed diplomas for earning associate degrees from Lee College, and others will complete the requirements for their associate degrees this summer.

Three IMPACT students received their associate degrees from Lee College in May 2013 – a full year before they graduated from high school. Pablo Chavez, Azalia Sprecher and Alondra Uribe completed the requirements for their associate degrees early, graduating from IMPACT June 5, 2014.

"IMPACT ECHS targets first generation college goers with the goal of allowing them the opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma in one hand and a college diploma in the other hand," said Dr. Salvador Cavazos, Goose Creek CISD superintendent.

Four years ago, the first 100 students began their classes at Lee College after Goose Creek CISD arranged a lease option with Lee College. With the increased enrollment at Lee College, the District realized that this would be a temporary solution. The next year, portable buildings at the Peter E. Hyland Center were used for some IMPACT ECHS classes, and students were shuttled back and forth between the Hyland Center and Lee College.

As a result of the Facilities Condition Assessment report and long-range facility planning, the need for an Early College High School was established. The school was part of the original bond proposal, but to reduce the burden of the bond, the District decided that a new building would be funded through the General Fund Balance. In October 2013, the Board of Trustees authorized design and development of ECHS by PBK architects, and Marshall Construction Company was approved in April 2014.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the students will attend high school classes at the Peter E. Hyland Center, and transportation will be provided to Lee College for their college classes. Laura Reyes, former teacher, assistant principal and academic dean at Robert E. Lee High School, is taking the reins of IMPACT ECHS as principal. Starting her 20th year with the District, she also taught at Ross S. Sterling High School. Reyes grew up in Baytown, attending St. Joseph Catholic School, Lee High School and Lee College before transferring to Texas A & M University. She worked at Lee College from 1991-1995.

"I am so honored and excited to have the opportunity to serve as the principal of IMPACT Early College High School. IMPACT provides an amazing opportunity for the students of Goose Creek CISD. I hope to carry on the success that IMPACT has had, and I look forward to adding to that success," said Reyes. "In the short time I have been at IMPACT, I have had the pleasure of meeting several students, some faculty members, and our school's staff members. Everyone has been so welcoming, positive, and helpful; it is clear that they have a passion for what they do and take pride in their respective roles in the IMPACT community. Our IMPACT school community will continue to make positive things happen and have remarkable success with the support of our teachers, our staff, our students, and our parents."

The site selected for the new IMPACT ECHS at 1415 Market Street is where the old Goose Creek CISD Administration Building once stood. Nestled amongst a grove of live oak trees on the hill between Lee High School and Bicentennial Park, the school will be a safe walking distance to Lee College. Students will be able to attend Lee College classes and take advantage of the other resources Lee College offers.

Preliminary renderings reveal a state of the art facility, including a cafeteria/commons area that seats 500 and an administrative wing with a separate building for the 18 instructional classrooms, including science labs with technology to allow the students to compete in the 21st century.



IMPACT seniors (l to r) Freddy Martinez, Kendy Campa, Karina Patino and Keyshawn Battle prepare to attend their summer classes at Lee College.

While they are a little disappointed that the new building will not be completed before they graduate, 2014-2015 seniors Keyshawn Battle, Karina Patino, Kendy Campa and Freddy Martinez are pleased to be seniors at IMPACT and are diligently working on their college hours this summer, planning to complete their associate degrees by May 2015.

"This is a great opportunity for me. We are the second class at IMPACT, and things have gone well," said Battle. "I also run track at Goose Creek Memorial. My goal is to be an orthopedic surgeon, so I plan to go to med school. This has given me a good start."

Patino has adjusted well to the schedule of high school and college classes. She plans to attend law school and feels that IMPACT has helped prepare her to reach her goals.

"It is definitely more rigorous. At the end of the six weeks, the heat is really on, and if you want to make the honor roll, you have to push yourself to get there," said Patino.

Campa admits that she struggled her freshman year. She was not accustomed to the higher level classes and was relieved that she had support from faculty and staff members to help her get through her high school and college classes. Campa plans to become an ESL teacher in the Baytown area. She was in the Bilingual program until the 3rd grade, and her brothers also received Bilingual/ESL support, so she helped them with their studies.

"The best thing about IMPACT is the way we've all gotten along and are so close to each other," said Campa. "We help each other—we're like our own little family."

For Martinez, who wants to be involved with law enforcement, IMPACT has been life-changing.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Not many people get offered the chance to take college classes during high school and to earn an associate degree before graduating," said Martinez. "As an 8th grader, it was a difficult decision to make about whether to stay with my friends or to take this opportunity. I knew this would benefit me in the future."

All four of these students have appreciated the efforts that have been made by the faculty and staff members to allow them to have some high school experiences. Clubs and organizations, such as IMPACT Gives Back, which gives students the opportunity to volunteer at nursing homes and raise money for Relay for Life, and dances throughout the year help the students connect with each other and with their school. The school is divided into three houses, and students are randomly assigned to a house. Friendly competitions among the houses also increase school spirit.

As the IMPACT seniors travel from the Peter E. Hyland Center to

Lee College, they will be able to see the progress of the buildings even though they won't attend school at the new IMPACT ECHS. The Class of 2016 will no doubt be glad to give them a tour.

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