



Monday, September 24, 2007

# Education gaps to be focus of Oct. forums

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Education Reporter

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The Education Equals Economics Alliance seeks people from the Round Rock ISD community willing to participate in reshaping education in Central Texas by taking part in upcoming forums Oct. 2, 9 and 16 at McNeil High School.

Of the 35 Central Texas school districts, communities participating in upcoming discussions about the impact of Achievement Gaps in Education include Austin, Bastrop, Eanes, Manor, Round Rock and San Marcos ISDs.

These moderated discussions will allow each community (which includes community leaders, teachers, parents and students) to examine options for improving education for all students and to sing the praises of programs and services for the districts and their respective communities.

"The goal of the forums is to give everyone the opportunity to voice their opinion and share their views with the community, experts and policy-makers more understanding prior to making decisions and setting educational priorities," said E3 Alliance director of communications Rick Olmos.

RRISD officials want to meet their goal of having at least 80 to 100 people attend at least one of the forums.

E3 Alliance representatives will take the information discussed at the forums and prepare it for a Central Texas Summit on Thursday, Nov. 15 in which delegates will share information about their district's best practices and areas for improvement. Then the organization will further work on generating ideas during a leadership summit in Austin.

Recent studies have shown that closing the gaps to education across all groups would benefit the Central Texas economy almost \$52 billion by 2030. Current Central Texas students also benefit tremendously from closing the achievement gaps, Olmos said. Compared to students who drop out of high school, high school graduates earn \$1 million more in their lifetimes and college graduates earn \$2 million more than students who only attend high school.

The E3 Alliance was formed in May 2006 as a collaborative effort of Austin Community College, the Austin Economic Development Organization, the University of Texas and others. The goal was to initiate a regional effort to increase global competitiveness, economic vitality and overall quality of life for Central Texas by aligning our education system with the needs of the 21st century.

fulfill the potential of every citizen, Olmos said.

"Basically, we are here to break down barriers and build a blueprint for change in Central Texas," Olmos

The E3 Alliance acts as the Central Texas pre-kindergarten through 16 (sophomore year in college) Coi community leaders who serve as E3 alliance board members are: Jesus Chavez, RRISD Superintendent ACC president and Denise Trauth, Texas State University president.

Chavez became involved with the E3 Alliance because of the Central Texas perspective of seeking inpu districts represented.

"We want to continue the momentum we already have going and focus on narrowing the achievement g "It's critical school districts know those students who are falling behind, so they can work with those stuc

For example, RRISD helps high school students who might be falling behind in a particular subject area after-school tutorials and double blocking, or devoting two class periods, to that particular subject area.

"We want to encourage community members to attend," Chavez said. "We want good representation ar events."

RRISD community members can register for one or all of the community-wide forums at the district's We roundrockisd.org.

## Related Links

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