

**AISD/ACC College Connection**  
**January 6, 2004**

We are very proud to enter into this historic partnership with Austin Community College. I want to thank Dr. Mink, Dr. Aguero, Doyle Valdez and the AISD Board of Trustees for their vision in building this bridge from high school to college that all of our graduating seniors will be able to cross.

That's our goal: that every senior in AISD, starting this May, will leave high school enrolled in college. Austin Community College is meeting us more than halfway. This collaboration is designed to bring college directly into our high school classrooms, resulting in a seamless transition to higher education. Through this partnership, we hope to provide all AISD high school seniors with a jumpstart on college and career before they leave our hallways.

As we all know, today's world requires post-secondary study as preparation for a successful career. ACC is helping our students realize that their high school diploma is their ticket to the next step up the ladder to success. When they walk across the stage to receive their diplomas in May, they will also receive letters of acceptance to ACC. These letters have no time limit. A student may go to another college and return to ACC for summer school. Or a student may decide to get a job for a year or two before enrolling in college. The ACC letter of acceptance covers those contingencies.

I also want to mention that we are honored to have with us today Dr. Raymund Paredes, the Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Dr. Paredes has also helped pioneer the idea that a strong passing score on the TAKS exit test allows a student to waive the entrance test required by Texas public colleges and universities. This waiver points out the relevance of TAKS to the requirements of college is another positive step in building the bridge from high school to college.

We thank all these important partners, who, clearly care so deeply about the future success of our public school students. And I want to thank Carlos Rios, the excellent leader of Travis High School, for hosting this press conference today and for preparing the students of Travis High for successful futures.

It is now my honor and pleasure to introduce a great educator, a great partner, and a great new member of our Austin community, Dr. Robert Aguero, President of Austin Community College.

**Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.**  
**Superintendent of Schools**  
**Austin Independent School District**