

***Preparing Students for the World of the Future***  
**Questions and Answers About New Tech**  
**At Eastside Memorial High Schools at the Johnston Campus**

Eastside Memorial High Schools at the Johnston Campus will open in August 2009 with two New Tech schools for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders and the International High School. Returning juniors and seniors will be in a college preparatory program within the New Tech schools. All three schools will be part of the Eastside Memorial High Schools at the Johnston Campus and will compete together as the Eastside Memorial Panthers. Every student in the New Tech schools will be issued a laptop computer that will be used for class work at school and at home.

The New Tech model is part of AISD's **High School Redesign** that seeks to provide choices and options to Austin students to better meet their needs and learning styles. These schools join other small, innovative schools within AISD that seek to individualize education and provide an exciting curriculum that engages students and keeps them interested in learning.

**What is a New Tech school?**

New Tech schools are small, innovative schools that prepare students for the world of the future and provide them with the skills they need to be successful in college and at jobs. New Tech schools provide students with a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Students in New Tech schools work in teams with other students and use computers every day in class. Lessons are taught using a "**hands on**" approach that brings real life experience into the classroom. New Tech high schools change the way students received education so that they are interested in learning and engaged in school.

**What are the two New Tech High Schools on the Eastside Memorial campus next year?**

***Eastside Memorial's Green Tech High School*** will be a science, math, engineering and technology school that focuses on environmental studies, "green" technologies, and "green" design. Students will have the opportunity to take career classes to prepare for well-paying jobs in the future, especially the growing field of "green" jobs in environmental industries.

***Eastside Memorial's Global Tech High School*** will be an international studies school that will intertwine global issues into all subject areas with the intent of making students globally competent citizens. Students will have an opportunity to learn both Spanish and Chinese and to travel to foreign countries around the world.

Both schools will provide a college preparatory curriculum, career classes, and opportunities for internships, community service, dual college credit for junior and senior students.

**What is "hands-on" learning at New Tech?**

"Hands-on" learning is a style of teaching that trains teachers to use real life problems and experiences in the classroom so that students take an active role in learning subjects and understand the relevance of what they are learning in class. Students are presented with problems in each subject area, and they work in teams to prepare projects around these problems, actively researching, writing, reading, and collaborating with their team. Each team presents their project at the end of the project period so that they also develop strong presentation skills. Students take

charge of their learning and build a sense of responsibility. This style of learning also prepares students with the skills they will need for future jobs and careers.

**Why is “hands-on” learning important for students?**

Students at New Tech high schools consistently report that they want to be at school and involved in their classes. Learning by doing real life projects that connect learning to the lives of students is a new education experience for them. This new way of learning engages students by connecting class work to issues, problems, and experiences in the real world. As a result, student attendance increases, and grades often improve.

**What are examples of “hands-on” learning?**

For example, instead of learning geometry with worksheets and theoretical problems, students might design a golf course with their team, applying math skills to a real life experience. In English and Social Studies, students might develop a national plan to reform immigration laws, reading relevant articles and books about this issue, and learning how changes to the law can have an impact on this important public policy.

**What do you mean by “skills for the future and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”?**

To be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students not only need strong content knowledge in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, research has shown that students must also be able to think critically, work collaboratively, communicate effectively and use the latest technology to tackle the problems and challenges of today’s world. At New Tech schools, students work in groups to address real world problems in every class, thus developing the skills that are necessary for success in the future.

**Who are AISD’s partners in opening these two New Tech schools?**

The New Tech Foundation is working with AISD to open the two schools based on its established model, and the Asia Society’s International Studies Schools Network is providing assistance to the Global Tech High School. The Texas Education Agency has provided a grant to develop the science, engineering, and math curriculum at Green Tech, and the Asia Society has provided a grant for Global Tech. In addition, over fifty businesses, foundations, and government and civic organizations have joined a New Tech Advisory Committee to provide technical assistance, internships, and career support for students.

**Can a student enroll in New Tech if they have already chosen to attend another high school in the district?**

Yes. To enroll, parents must fill out a “choice application” that indicates they want to enroll their student in the New Tech schools at Eastside Memorial (see form at end of Q & A). Any AISD student who is entering 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade in 2009-2010 is eligible.

**What grades will be included at the two New Tech schools?**

The full New Tech program will start with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders in school year 2009-2010 and add a grade each year to offer the full 9 – 12 grade program.

**Is New Tech only for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders?**

No. Although only 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders will be part of the full New Tech program in the first two years, juniors and seniors in 2009-2010 and 2010 - 2011 will also have an opportunity to share in

the New Tech experience by taking classes that are taught using the “hands on” instructional approach. In addition, juniors and seniors will be issued a laptop computer that they will use in their class work at school and at home.

**What is the program for junior and senior students in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011?**

Juniors and seniors will have a strong college preparatory program led by an Assistant Principal and counselor who will focus solely on the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. A College and Career Center will be opened in partnership with Austin Community College to provide college information to students and parents and assistance with applications and enrollment. A Personal Education Plan will be completed for each student to identify the courses each student requires for graduation. An extensive summer program will provide opportunities for credit recovery, TAKS tutoring, and preparation to take dual credit college courses at Austin Community College.

**Will my student at New Tech be prepared for college?**

College and career will be a strong focus for every student at New Tech. Every teacher will encourage students to develop the skills that are needed for college and career success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. College preparatory activities include:

- a rigorous, college prep curriculum;
- college and workplace visits;
- a college & career center through which relevant information and activities may be accessed; and
- opportunities to earn college credit while in high school.

**What career classes will be offered at New Tech?**

Career classes will be available to every New Tech student in areas that will prepare them to pursue well-paying jobs in the future, including: engineering, multi-media technology, biotechnology, health care sciences and international business. A series of classes will be developed to provide a solid foundation for each of the established career pathways.

**Will my student have a computer?**

Yes. Every student in both New Tech schools will be issued a laptop computer to use at school and at home. Students will use computers in every class in ways similar to how people use computers at work.

**Will students be trained to use the computers?**

Yes. Technology training will be part of student orientation.

**Will there be computer support available on campus?**

Yes. The New Tech schools will have a full-time computer technician to keep laptops running and to assist students with any technology problems.

**Will students graduate on the Recommended plan from AISD?**

Yes. Students will have the opportunity to earn credits towards the Recognized or the Commended graduation plan.

**Will New Tech students be prepared to pass the TAKS test?**

Yes. In fact, New Tech students at Akins High School in Austin are scoring higher than the district average in most subject areas. New Tech students will master the skills and knowledge they need for TAKS. Lessons are simply taught in a different style.

**Are there other New Tech schools in Austin and around the United States?**

Yes. Akins High School opened a New Tech Academy in 2006-2007, and the Manor New Tech opened in 2007-2008. There are 40 New Tech schools around the United States in cities such as Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Chicago.

**Will students be able to participate in sports, choir, band and other extracurricular activities?**

Yes. Students of all Eastside Memorial Schools (including the New Tech schools and the International High School) will have an opportunity to compete together in athletics and extracurricular activities as the Eastside Memorial Panthers.

**Will students still be eligible for the top 10% ranking?**

Yes. Each New Tech school will have its own top 10% of students who are automatically eligible for admission to Texas colleges and universities based on their grade point average.

**Are the New Tech schools charter schools, magnet schools or private schools?**

No. The New Tech schools are public schools within the Austin Independent School District, and there is no cost to attend. They are not magnet schools, and enrollment is not by academic standing or grades.

**Is an application required, or is enrollment based on student grades or achievement?**

No. New Tech is open to all incoming AISD 9th or 10th grade students. Parents must complete a choice application (see form below) and return it by mail or in person to the Office of Student Services, 1111 West Sixth St., Austin, TX 78703.

**Who can attend the New Tech schools?**

Any entering 9th or 10th grade student in AISD is eligible to attend the Eastside Memorial New Tech schools. If more applications are received than slots are available, then students will be selected by blind lottery. Priority will be given to students in the attendance zone for Eastside Memorial.

**Will transportation be provided to New Tech?**

Yes. AISD will provide bus transportation.

**How do I enroll in one of the New Tech schools?**

Choice applications are available at the Eastside Memorial High School office (1012 Arthur Stiles Road), at the Office of Student Services (1111 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street), or on-line at [www.austinisd.org/eastsidenewtech](http://www.austinisd.org/eastsidenewtech). The applications should be mailed or dropped off at the Office of Student Services, 1111 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78703.

**Why is Eastside Memorial becoming two high schools?**

The AISD Board of Trustees approved the New Tech model as part of the agreement with the Texas Education Agency when it closed Johnston High School and allowed AISD to open two new schools on the campus. After an extensive community input process, parent and community leaders recommended the New Tech model to the AISD Board. Because the New Tech model only allows approximately 125 students per grade level, for a total of 450 students per school, it was determined that two schools should be established so that all students currently being served at Eastside Memorial could benefit from this program.

**How do I get more information?**

Call Eastside Memorial High School at 414.2319 for information about enrolling at New Tech schools, or go to the web site at [www.austinisd.org/eastsidenewtech](http://www.austinisd.org/eastsidenewtech). An open house will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. at Eastside Memorial in the cafeteria, 1012 Arthur Stiles Road.

**For more information, please visit the following websites:**

- The New Tech Foundation  
[www.NewTechFoundation.org](http://www.NewTechFoundation.org)
- Student Empowerment Academy of Jefferson High School in Los Angeles, California (a New Tech school)  
[http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/District\\_5](http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/District_5)
- The Asia Society’s International Studies Schools Network  
[www.AsiaSociety.org/education/issn](http://www.AsiaSociety.org/education/issn)
- International School of the America in San Antonio, Texas (a Global Studies school)  
[www.neisd.org/isa](http://www.neisd.org/isa)

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**CHOICE APPLICATION TO ATTEND NEW TECH HIGH  
SCHOOLS AT EASTSIDE MEMORIAL**

\_\_\_\_\_ **My student chooses to enroll in the New Tech High Schools at Eastside Memorial High Schools.**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ AISD Student Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Current Middle School \_\_\_\_\_ Current High School for Fall 2009 \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Contact Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

***Return by mail or in person: AISD Office of Student Services, 1111 West Sixth Street, Austin TX 78703***