



## Media Release

### **BISD Receives Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Grant**

July 11, 2018

Brownsville Independent School District is proud to announce that it has once again been awarded the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant to carry on with the Adult Continuing Education program for the 2018-2019 school year. The WIOA grant is provided through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to 28 different Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) organizations throughout Texas. TWC held a competition to apply for the funding and awarded BISD \$1,569,625 to serve adults in Cameron County who are in need of basic education. The grant award is guaranteed for two years and renewable for five years in total. The funds BISD will receive come from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), which are comprised of Federal, State, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), EL Civics, and Professional Development.

Through this grant funding, BISD will provide personnel, curriculum, Professional Development, materials, training and recruitment. Requirements of the grant include partnering with various school districts and community agencies in Cameron County to implement Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education. BISD provides ABE/ASE classes for High School Equivalency diplomas, such as the General Education Development (GED) and the HiSET, which is new to Texas. BISD ACE offers High School Equivalency classes directly from their program and through two sub-contracts they provide to YouthBuild and Texas Southmost College. Both YouthBuild and TSC provide certification and training to the High School Equivalency students at no cost to the student. ACE will implement a certification and training for Microsoft Office Specialist for HSE students at their location at the Ozanam Educational Facility, also at no cost to the student. BISD ACE teaches EL Civics classes as well, which are comprised of English as a Second Language with Citizenship lessons. WIOA requires that English Language Learners not only participate in an EL Civics class, but that they move on to receive a High School Equivalency Diploma, post-secondary education, training, and/or employment. ACE offers Microsoft Office Specialist classes to English Language Learners at no cost to the students.

BISD ACE is also providing Digital Literacy classes for English Language Learners and Career Academies for professionals with degrees from other countries. ACE partners with Workforce Solutions Cameron to educate all students enrolled in a training class about Labor Market and Career Information. Students are taught about available employment information that is more closely related to their profession to get them into better jobs. BISD ACE program director, Debbie Alford, EdD, stated that the program has changed in the last 8 years that she has supervised the program. "We have moved from a standard basic education and conversational English program to a program of College and Career Readiness with a focus on post-secondary education, training, and employment," she said. Alford also indicated that through the last four year grant cycle from 2014-2018, BISD ACE served almost 9,000 adults in Cameron County, with 1,950 being served this past year, in 108 classes, at 24 different sites, through 57 teachers.

During the last grant cycle, Alford was named Administrator of the Year through Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE), Diana Hite was named Teacher of the Year through TALAE and three students were named Students of the Year through TALAE. Most recently, the Texas Workforce Commission awarded BISD ACE top honors for having Quality Student Performance amongst all Adult Education and Literacy programs in Texas, and the program received \$150,000 as the grand champion for the state. All classes are offered at no cost to the student. The student must be a Cameron County resident and have a valid ID. To learn more about BISD Adult Continuing Education, please call 956-548-8175, or visit 708 Palm Blvd, Brownsville, Texas, 78520.