SAISD awarded $8.4 million grant from the Valero Energy Foundation

College exposure, acceptance and completion focus of multiyear grant

Nov. 8, 2017 – The San Antonio Independent School District – through the SAISD Foundation - has been awarded a five-year, $8.4 million grant, from Valero Energy Foundation (VEF), the philanthropic arm of Valero Energy Corporation. This will fund the District’s “Pipeline for College Success” program, a one-of-a-kind initiative in San Antonio and first for the state of Texas focused on increasing the number of students who enroll in and complete college.

While college acceptance is an important milestone for SAISD students, the District is expanding its role to ensure that even more students, especially first-generation college-goers, have exposure to college campuses prior to applying and those who are accepted enroll and have the District’s support through that critical first year of college and beyond.

“This new program, thanks to the Valero Energy Foundation, is going to be transformational for our District, where so many students are the first in their families to attend college,” SAISD Superintendent Pedro Martinez said. “College acceptance alone can no longer be the goal, and this new source of funding will allow us to be a support for our students even while they are in college, to help ensure their successful completion.”

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“The Valero Energy Foundation was created to make investments that improve the quality of people’s lives,” said Joe Gorder, Valero Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer and VEF Chairman. “This is a historic announcement for San Antonio and Texas because it features a unique collaboration between SAISD public schools, KIPP charter schools, and Valero; all sharing one common goal: educate and equip students for success.”

Grant funding, which began this school year, allows the District to provide for two new College Bound Advisors at all seven comprehensive high schools to: increase the focus on college readiness; increase the number of students going on to attend two-year and four-year colleges and universities; triple the number of students who are able to participate in college tours; and establish an office that tracks SAISD graduates through college completion.

The new Pipeline for College Success program will be instrumental in helping the District achieve its five-year college goals, which call for having 80 percent of graduates attend college, with 50 percent attending a four-year institution and 10 percent enrolled in a Tier-One university – all by the year 2020.

The funding follows a $3 million Valero grant in 2015 to KIPP San Antonio Public Schools for their KIPP Through College system (KTC), with a portion going to support a collaboration with SAISD to share best practices and improve student college-completion rates. The partnership began with a pilot program at Jefferson High School to adapt elements from the KTC system and includes ongoing professional development for counselors and advisors at all SAISD high schools.

This new grant will be used to add 14 full-time College Bound Advisors to support seniors at each of SAISD’s seven traditional high schools, with SAISD funding an additional college bound advisor for each of its four non-traditional high schools.

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The new advisors will be dedicated to juniors and seniors and ensuring they are bound for success after high school. This will free up existing college-readiness counselors at each high school to focus on students in earlier years and ensuring they are engaging in college-readiness activities.

Funding also will be used to create the Postsecondary Support Office, which will be staffed by two alumni support coordinators to track students through college. The office will be dedicated to supporting students after high school graduation to encourage college completion.

To help ensure more students see college as part of their future, the district will use grant money to cover the cost of annual college visits across the country for 250 students – significantly increasing the number of high-achieving students who are able to participate in a proven successful program.

About Valero Energy Foundation:
Valero Energy Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Valero Energy Corporation, is committed to improving the quality of life in the communities where the company has major operations. The foundation provides funding to a variety of nonprofit agencies for programs and services supporting education, basic human needs, health care and civic projects. Annually, Valero, its employees and the foundation collectively generate more than $41 million in charitable support for worthy charities through direct donations or fundraising. Additionally, Valero employees log more than 148,000 volunteer hours each year for hundreds of projects in these same communities. Through the overwhelming support of sponsors, the foundation raised $11 million in 2017 for children’s charities across the United States through the Valero Texas Open and Benefit for Children. For a fourth consecutive time, Valero was named to the Civic 50 list by Points of Light as one of America’s most community-minded companies – the top energy company on the list.

About the SAISD Foundation:
As the Education Foundation for the District, the SAISD Foundation operates as a 501 (c) (3) public charity, securing investments from the private sector to support SAISD in becoming a model urban school district through innovation towards educational excellence. The SAISD Foundation invests in Teacher Grants, Innovative District Schools and Programs, and Strategic Initiatives aimed at increasing student success. Annually, the SAISD Foundation awards more than 300 grants and 120 scholarships impacting the more than 50,000 students across the District. Since its reactivation in 2007, the SAISD Foundation has raised 17,752,000 to benefit students in SAISD.