



# Victoria Independent School District

## Communications

### School Matters: What is GenTX?

It's that time of year where students are applying to college, submitting their FAFSA's, and taking the ACT and SAT assessments. However, some students are feeling left out during this time. This is not because they can't or don't want to do any of these things, but simply because they don't have enough knowledge of *how* to do these things. This is where GenTX and VISD step in.

Generation TX, better known as GenTX, is a project of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), initially funded through a federal College Access Challenge Grant. GenTX launched in 2010 and has expanded across Texas since.

GenTX consists of a movement to get high school students across the state of Texas excited about their futures by providing the information and support they need in order to determine the right path for them. Whether it's college, the military, or a career, GenTX has the resources students need readily available. Sound familiar?

As many know, VISD seeks to help all of its students find their 'And'. It is the district's goal to have 100% of its students each year having found their 'And', meaning they will leave high school prepared for a successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

This reflects a key Finding of VISD students Finding their 'And' in the District Strategic Plan.

Key Findings in the District Strategic Plan are goals captured by the VISD Strategic Planning Committee, which included the VISD Board of Trustees, administration, key community leaders, teachers, students, and parents. For students, finding their 'And' has many directions, including:

- Through multiple opportunities of exposure, experience, and pursuit, all students will explore pathways for learning through project-based, traditional, and technology-rich learning experiences and will engage in additional opportunities for advanced learning.
- Through flexible and fluid career-focused pathways, students will have the opportunities to pursue training and career-focused courses.
- Academic and technical skills will be integrated throughout all learning opportunities.
- Innovation will occur at the middle school level by providing choices for students to engage in traditional, technology-rich, project-based learning, or STEM learning environments.
- Ensuring that students will have the opportunities to develop life skills such as but not limited to financial literacy, communication, collaboration, negotiation, and creativity.
- Through learning experiences, students will develop responsibility and ownership for themselves and others.
- VISD is rich in opportunities for students to find their &. VISD works with students to promote the opportunities available to enroll in advanced courses (Pre-AP, AP, Dual Credit, Dual Enrollment), thus increasing the number of students who take part in participating in advanced courses. These advanced courses prepare students for the rigor of post-secondary education and increase the number of students graduating with

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technical, industry-based certifications which will ensure that all students achieve their 'And'.

VISD's Counseling Department and Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability Department (CIA) work together to ensure district students have as much information as possible about all of the opportunities beyond high school.

November was GenTX Month, which is an annual, month-long campaign combining statewide the College Application and Financial Aid Awareness campaign, the nationwide American College Application Campaign initiative (ACAC), and the 60x30TX Texas Challenge to Reach Higher efforts. During the month, GenTX hosted the GenTX Week Application Campaign's adoption of the nationwide ACAC initiative and sought to increase the number of students who are applying to college early in their senior year.

Victoria ISD's Counseling Department, CIA Department, and East and West high schools hosted their own GenTX event on Thursday, November 18 at the Emerging Technology Center for 60 students ranging from freshmen to seniors. This event focused primarily on first-generation students who may not otherwise apply to college.

Students at the event learned about the various routes they can take after high school, financial aid opportunities, ACT/SAT information and testing dates, heard testimonials from former and current VISD students, and learned where to find help at their respective schools.

As GenTX said themselves, "It's starting. All over Texas, students are stepping up, finding their voices, and fueling the movement called Generation TX. Equal parts inspiration and information, Generation TX connects us to each other and clarifies the steps we need to take on the path to college and career education, from taking the right classes and tests, to applying to colleges, and then finding the money to pay for school."

VISD is striving to do its part and provide all students who leave this district an opportunity to find their 'And' so that come GenTX's Decision Day on May 2, 2022, they can proudly show off their plans after high school.

*Brandi Henke is the counseling director for VISD.*