

# CAST Schools Launches Alumni Network

by Melissa Vela- Williamson — May 20, 2021 in High Schools, SAISD 0

## ***Greater Texas Foundation Grant Enables Post-secondary Support***

SAN ANTONIO (May 21, 2021) –



Over 71% of seniors in the inaugural graduating class of CAST Tech High School have been accepted to 4-year colleges, bucking a citywide trend of fewer than 50%. A new alumni program offering post-secondary support, funded with \$270,000 from the Greater Texas Foundation, will help these students successfully navigate decisions along the path through college, career and in life.

In preparation for the first graduating class of CAST Tech High School, CAST Schools has created the CAST Alumni Network, and expanded mentorship programs to continue past high school. The grant from the Greater Texas Foundation enables the development of an embedded, holistic advising model that begins in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and extends beyond high school graduation. The new CAST Alumni Network and enhanced mentoring program will bridge students into college and careers – a tight-knit system built to support long-term student success.

Sustaining mentoring relationships beyond graduation will help students navigate decisions along the path through college, career and in life. This is critical in a city where fewer than 50% of high school graduates pursue a college degree, and of that group, fewer than 50% complete those degrees. According to the Urban Education Institute, of Bexar County students who started in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 43.7% enrolled in a Texas college, 2- or 4-year degrees after high school; of those who enrolled in college, 47.8% earned a 2- or 4-year degree within 8 years.

“CAST students have explored career options in high school and can continue that growth with guidance from a mentor and resources from this new alumni program,” said Greater Texas Foundation President & CEO Sue McMillin. “We’re proud to support an innovative model that is gaining national attention and demonstrating results.”

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To date, CAST Tech High School seniors have earned more than \$5.61 million in cumulative scholarships. Additionally, students at CAST Tech High School have been awarded more than 171 certifications, with 121 on the industry-based certification list, offering the potential for well-paying jobs immediately after graduation.

“At CAST Schools, we support our students in their chosen path, be it going to college, to the workforce, the military, or a combination of those approaches,” said CAST Schools Executive Director Jeanne Russell. “Bringing our CAST students together as an alumni network and maintaining their connections to key industry partners, allows them to support one another even as they continue to grow their professional networks.”

CAST Schools announced these initiatives as part of an all-day Senior Day event held on May 21 for 133 CAST Tech seniors, which included some final prep for college-going, participating in mock interviews, workshops, finalization of LinkedIn profiles, team building and more. CAST Tech seniors also participated in their own “Decision Day” by sharing their intentions for after high school. Another 18 seniors from the Advanced Learning Academy, a CAST School, joined the launch and will be part of the CAST Alumni Network. Both CAST Tech High School and the Advanced Learning Academy are part of the San Antonio Independent School District.

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See the story online at <https://saobserver.com/cast-schools-launches-alumni-network/>