



Op-Ed in support of Pasadena Independent School District's bond election

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership supports Pasadena Independent School District's Bond 2011 election for several reasons. Right now, Bay Area Houston is one of the best places in the country to be in terms of a growing workforce demand. The Panama Canal expansion project, due to be completed in 2014, is driving new investment in our region. Since January 2010, more than 2,800,000 sq. ft. of industrial space has been leased right here, and the demand for highly skilled employees in the maritime and shipping industries is on the brink of explosion.

Our region is seeing strong distribution business tied to the Port of Houston Authority, as well. Additionally, the chemical industry in East Harris County employs more than 33,000 people, and this industry is expanding to meet the demands of consumers. Highly skilled labor is definitely in demand by regional employers, and this demand will only increase.

The new career/tech program that is proposed in Pasadena ISD's Bond 2011 election will give students opportunities for employment at all levels within the chemical industry, maritime industry, and other supporting businesses. In turn, as these students become more highly trained in these jobs, which offer above average pay, our local businesses and community will profit through the creation of a strong tax base.

It is also important that our school districts provide students avenues for a variety of career paths. Bond 2011 will provide the appropriate career/tech programs needed to meet this obligation as well as the rising workforce demand. The new career/tech program is an excellent example of a win-win situation for students, businesses and our community.

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership fully supports Pasadena ISD's Bond 2011 election. The funding for these programs will be good for our children's future, good for providing a pipeline of skilled workers, and a good business decision for the growth of our community.

Bob Mitchell
President
Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership