Temple ISD OKs nuclear power study through A&M; program promotes STEM-related careers

BY JOEL VALLEY | TELEGRAM STAFF
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An extracurricular program with an emphasis on furthering student engagement with STEM-related careers is headed to Temple High.

During a Monday meeting, the Temple ISD board of trustees approved the proposed partnership related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics with Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, through its Nuclear Power Institute.

“The program is designed to bring about awareness and encouragement, preparing students for STEM-rich programs at universities, two-year technical colleges and technical certificate programs,” a letter agreement between the two parties said. “By participating in the Workforce Industry Training program,
students gain exposure to higher education and career opportunities while building the confidence to consider further STEM education.”

Denise Ayres, Temple ISD's CTE director, said Temple High teachers Wendy Collier and Krystal Battreal will sponsor the program.

“They’ve already begun to outline a lot of the ideas, and have started to put details in place in anticipation of board approval,” Ayres told the Telegram. “We haven’t fully developed the ideas ... But there will be tours — either in person or virtually — to colleges that promote STEM careers.”

She added there is the possibility of touring industries or organizations such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in Houston.

“It’s really just to expose students to the various ways they can be leaders for their generation in this (region),” Ayres said. "We want to give them real world experiences for students to apply the knowledge they’re gaining in the classroom.”

The Nuclear Power Institute will contribute $5,000 in funding to Temple ISD for them to carry out that effort, according to the letter agreement.

“Anyone who implements the program gets a specific amount of money for required activities related to the program,” Ayres said. “We’ll need to involve 50 students at the high school level, and provide opportunities for them to have university connected experiences or business and industry or community organization experiences throughout the year.

Ayres, who first learned about this opportunity during a conversation with a Troy ISD counselor, said it is gratifying to introduce a program of this stature to students.

“Temple ISD is known for our collaborations across the region and this is just one of those examples,” Ayres said. “It is very rewarding when we’re able to introduce a concept to a small group of students, and provide another avenue for them to learn.”

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