

A BIG BOOST



From left, ECISD's Chief Innovation Officer Jason Osborne, Chevron Representatives Kayleigh Dunn and Molly Laegeler, and ECISD's Executive Director of Career & Counseling Services Carla Byrne talk to the media after receiving the donation. Chevron donated \$150,000 to Ector County ISD Monday, October 1, 2018 in front of the ECISD Administration building.

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Chevron provides boost for education initiatives

BY RUTH CAMPBELL
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Project Lead the Way and PICK Education got an infusion of funds Monday from Chevron.

Project Lead the Way is Ector County Independent School District's engineering and biomedical science program and PICK Education, an initiative of the ECISD Innovation Department that uses hands-on professional development for teachers and brings real-world science and

research projects to students.

Officials from Chevron and ECISD were on hand for the presentation on the steps of the administration building.

Project Lead the Way will receive \$100,000 and PICK Education will get \$50,000, a news release said.

Carla Byrne, executive director of career and counseling services, said she has received funding from Chevron for Project Lead the Way for at least three years.

The company has funded JASON Learning and PICK

Education longer than that, Byrne said.

"We couldn't do half the things that we do if it were not for the funding. Project Lead the Way is ... a very costly program to implement. The training each teacher has to undergo for each course that they teach is two weeks long at UT Tyler, so that get to be a little costly, too, with travel and registration fees," Byrne said.

ECISD has Project Lead the Way in kindergarten through 12th grade and that is made possible by Chevron, she added.

The funding also has enabled the district to buy updated equipment, and most recently, implement biomedical science at Permian High School.

Biomed is a four-year career pathway and is in its second year of implementation.

Joey Escalante, principles of biomedical science and human body systems teacher at Permian High School, said he's glad to have the support from Chevron. He was formerly a high school chemistry teacher in Crane.

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"It has been amazing having the technology where I don't have to dig through my own pocket. ... It's been unreal. I have not been in need of anything because it's right there ready to go. Between Chevron and our crew here, everything's been running incredibly smoothly," Escalante said.

Along with continuing its mission of providing hands-on professional development for teachers and bringing real-world science and research projects to ECISD students, PICK Education will use the donation to continue creating partnerships with other school districts, colleges and universities, the release said.

"With these funds, we have opportunities to do things that most school districts would never even dream of doing," Chief Innovation Officer Jason Osborne said.

He said the innovation office has partnerships with about 10 universities. Teachers are able to learn from the experts themselves or at their universities or institutes and then



Chevron Representative Molly Laegeler and ECISD's Executive Director of Career & Counseling Services Carla Byrne hug after the donation.

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bring that knowledge back to the students.

"This year we're pretty excited, too, about incorporating a lot of this into CTE (career and technical education) programs in biomed and how we can bring real-world work or discoveries into the classrooms through those avenues, as well," Osborne said.

"... Funding is tight everywhere, so it's companies like Chevron that are willing to step up and look at innovative ways of supporting education, STEM (science, technology, en-

gineering and math) and making learning exciting for kids and teaching exciting for teachers," he added.

Kayleigh Dunn, public and government affairs for Chevron, said the company appreciates the partnership with ECISD.

"I think we both have a focus on bringing science, technology, engineering and math into the classroom. ... Having a highly educated workforce is integral to what we do, but it's also important for us to give back to the communities where we live and

work. We have employees here; their kids go to school here; so it's our kids that we're helping and our partnership," Dunn said.

Molly Laegler, Chevron area manager for the Midland Basin, said the more children they can get involved in STEM education, the more it benefits Chevron.

"But also as an industry, we ... need to support the broader economic development of Odessa and the whole Permian Basin, so having that educated workforce supports that," Laegler said.