



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### EDUCATION FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$35,000 GRANT TO START NEW MUSIC PROGRAM IN ECTOR COUNTY ISD

(Odessa, TX.) The Education Foundation of Odessa is excited to announce that they are the recipients of a grant from the **Rea Charitable Trust** in the amount of **\$35,000** to purchase approximately 200 string instruments for a new music program for ECISD fifth-grade students.

ECISD plans to roll out the new 5<sup>th</sup> grade strings program over a 3-year period, beginning with the first 10 schools in 2022-23. If further funding is obtained, 10 more elementary schools would have the opportunity to add 5<sup>th</sup> grade strings in 2023-24, with 5 more schools added in 2024-25. The Fine Arts Department is ready to advance the fifth-grade strings program and the staff are excited that the program can be offered to all students, even if families cannot afford an instrument.

Dr. Aaron Hawley, Director of Fine Arts in ECISD stated, “On behalf of the ECISD Fine Arts department, I would like to express our appreciation to the Rae Charitable Trust for its amazing generosity. With these funds, we will be able to restart our Elementary Strings program and bring high quality instruments to our students. Current research shows that music education helps children attain their full intellectual, social, and creative potential. We are so thankful that the Rae Charitable Trust is helping make this more accessible to our ECISD students.”

The importance of music education in the academic, social and emotional growth of students is well documented by scholars. According to research published by *The Royal Conservatory* in 2014, developing music in young children accelerates the development of speech and reading. Additionally, musical training helps students build their attention span and gain precision in auditory processing. The brains of young musicians have stronger neural connections, better information processing abilities, better memory and improved motor coordination. It is noted that young musicians have higher IQs and more empathy for others as well. The cognitive benefits of training young children in music can be manifested after as few as 20 days of music training. Other benefits of pursuing music in elementary school include building positive self-esteem, encouraging better engagement in studies,

developing connectedness to school; and, enjoying a higher level of success in all subject areas.

### **About Education Foundation of Odessa**

The Education Foundation of Odessa is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt, philanthropic organization of citizens who share a vision of enhancing education in ECISD. The Education Foundation of Odessa provides a new and innovative source of funding to support the school district's educational plan. The Foundation does not attempt to replace lost state funding, nor does it attempt to take the place of the district's operating budget. When considering the level of funding required to educate students, the Foundation can expect only to provide funds for those projects and activities that go beyond the normal classroom experience. Such initiatives provide enrichment, research opportunities, teacher training, intervention and prevention strategies and extend the educational effort.

The mission of the Education Foundation is to create opportunities for education in Ector County ISD. Our vision is that every student in ECISD will be school-ready, college-ready, work-ready... WORLD-READY!

Website: [www.educationfoundationodessa.org](http://www.educationfoundationodessa.org)

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