

HISD is first in opening law enforcement school

BY NANCY STANCILL
Chronicle Staff

The nation's first special curricula high school for students interested in police and criminal justice-related careers opened its doors this week to more than 200 students.

The opening Monday of the Houston Independent School District's new High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice went well, said the principal, Dr. Judy Morris.

"Students are transferring in daily and they are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed," said Dr. Morris Tuesday.

The new HISD magnet or special curricula high school is located in the former George Washington School, which served

grades kindergarten through eight before it was closed last May due to low enrollment.

The school is located at 4701 Dickinson in the Shepherd-Memorial Drive area. Dr. Morris said the site, close to the main police station at 61 Riesner, is ideal for the students, since many of them will be serving as student interns in police-related jobs.

Dr. Morris said the school is "recruiting heavily" and hopes to gain an enrollment of 600 by next September.

Formerly the district had a law enforcement magnet program located at Sam Houston, Madison and Austin high schools, but decided to consolidate and expand the program at one site.

The school will offer special courses for students interested in police work, court reporting and other law-related work, and in human services jobs such as parole officers, social workers and criminologists.

The school, with a staff of 21 teachers, will provide "a standard comprehensive high school with a career option," said Dr. Morris.

Ninth through 11th graders will take special courses designed for their career interests and seniors will be offered internships with the Houston Police Department, attorneys' offices and in other criminal justice-related areas. Dr. Morris said 74 seniors currently are participating in the internship program and about half of them are working with Houston police in "non-street related areas."

"They don't drive cars or do anything hazardous," Dr. Morris said.

She said HISD is planning a \$2 million rehabilitation program for the building this summer to add a full-scale courtroom, crime laboratory, ROTC rifle range and court reporting facilities, she said.

The school, as a regional magnet program, is open to students who wish to transfer from other Harris County school districts, officials said.



Photo by David Breslauer, Chronicle Staff

Dr. Judy Morris, left, principal of HISD's new High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, studies evidence with students, from left, Alex San Miguel, Lizette Cutaia and Arnold Schnur.

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