

City of Sanger partners with local education foundation

STAFF REPORT

The City of Sanger strengthened its partnership with the Sanger Independent School District today when it offered payroll deduction to employees who donate to the Sanger Education Foundation.

The foundation is a new

501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. It will raise community funds to support initiatives that align with the District's strategic plan.

Over the last few weeks, Cristy Koonce, the foundation's vice president of development, has been intro-

ducing the group's plan to teachers and other school staff members.

"It's been a lot more work than I thought it would be," Koonce said. "We were all a little insecure about presenting the idea of financially supporting the foundation to teachers;

they already do so much. I taught before my kids came along, and I understand how hard teachers work, and

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Sanger City Manager Jack Smith and City Secretary Rose Chavez stand in front of Sanger Education Foundation officers Cristy Koonce, Jeff Springer and Valerie Foster.



Sanger Education Foundation

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how much of their own money they already spend to make their classes successful."

Maybe that justifies the effort. According to the published figures, 80 percent of Sanger ISD's budget came from state and federal funds just a few years ago.

"That percentage is now about 30 percent," said Valerie Foster, the foundation's executive director. "Public schools are helping to do that."

The teachers apparently understand. They have overwhelmingly supported the group.

"The presentations have been very gratifying," said Koonce. "I'm not surprised that they understand what we're trying to do, but I am so happy that they have been willing to support it financially. Liz [Springer] and I were only hoping that a large percentage would support us, and they have, but they've also given enough to have a big impact on what the foundation is able to do in the 2007-08 school year."

The foundation was counting on that commitment. It plans to take the teacher's efforts and leverage them in the rest of the community.

Liz Springer got started on that early. Springer, who is on the foundation's steering committee and has been helping Koonce with the presentations, mentioned her work to Rose Chavez, city secretary. Chavez embraced the idea immediately.

"I had heard about it [the foundation]," she said, "but I wasn't really sure what it was. When Liz explained it to me, I knew it was something our staff would want to help with."

Chavez invited Koonce and Springer to make their presentation to the city staff. She also agreed to arrange payroll deductions, like the school district has offered to teachers, for any staff members who want to financially support the group.

"Payroll deductions take a lot of time and effort to arrange," Chavez said, "but the effort will be worth it if it helps our kids."