

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

What we will do




Our district employs about 12,700 teachers in almost 300 different schools, and we are putting into place a thoughtful, bold, systemic, and comprehensive plan of action that will dramatically transform the district's human capital systems and ensure that a highly effective teacher is in place in every one HISD's classrooms.




Why we will do it

We are committed to improving student achievement across our district, and research tells us that teachers are by far the most powerful school-based factor in a child's academic success or failure. Specifically, studies have shown that students who had very effective teachers for three years in a row were able to improve their performance on standardized tests by more than 50 percent in comparison to students who had three ineffective teachers in a row (Sanders and Rivers, 1996).

What we will report





The following *Strategic Direction Management Report* answers the question: Is HISD acting on the priorities identified in the strategic plan with fidelity? It measures HISD's accomplishments and risks for each Key Strategies in support of the overall Core Initiative.

The *Strategic Direction Management Report* is produced Quarterly. Color indicators are used to as an indication of whether administration is on track to accomplish a Key Strategy's quarterly goals. A "Green" indicator  means the district has made acceptable progress with respect to budget, scope and timeliness. A "Yellow" indicator  means the district has identified risk with respect to one or more aspects. A "Red" indicator  means progress has stopped or has a significant deficiency. As the Strategic Direction builds a foundation towards achieving the district's goals over a multi-year period, not all Key Strategies will have information to communicate in a given period.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.1 Strengthen recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent	
Main Element	Progress
1.1.1 Refine recruitment and staffing practices	
1.1.2 Implement improved teacher recruitment and staffing practices	
1.1.3 Build awareness and support among internal and external stakeholders	
1.1.4 Implement a “Talent Acquisition System”	




Accomplishments

In this period, Teacher Recruitment and Selection focused their efforts on staffing instructional positions for the first day of school. Recruiters worked directly with principals to ensure that top candidates were matched by principal preference to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the hiring process. As of Monday, August 15, 2011, 470 new teachers had been hired and 321 displaced teachers had secured positions in HISD.

In addition to full-time teachers, this department recently acquired the Associate Teachers department and has spent a significant amount of time redesigning the selection criteria for these roles. Because associate teachers represent 10% of our teaching force on any given day, it is essential that we uphold an unparalleled level of quality for these employees. This fall, the Associate Teachers department will only consider certified teachers that pass a screening process for hire in HISD.








Planned for Next Period

For next period, we will focus on analysis and improvements on the teacher selection process as well as embark on the 2011/2012 recruitment season. Recruiters are planning to travel to eight of the top ten education school based on ratings provided in US Newsweek as well as those known to have highly ranked special programs such as Montessori and IB\GT. It is expected that the team will continue to work with colleges and universities throughout Texas that have previously produced successful candidates in areas of critical shortage such as bilingual education and secondary math and science.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.2 Establish a rigorous and fair teacher appraisal system to inform key decisions	
Main Element	Progress
1.2.1 Develop and implement a districtwide staff review process for all teachers in every school	
1.2.2 In depth review of the faculty in nine of HISD's lowest-performing schools	
1.2.3 Design a model of teacher competency and behavior	
1.2.4 Develop measures of student learning	
1.2.5 Define the teacher performance appraisal process	
1.2.6 Incorporate performance appraisal data into key decisions	
1.2.7 Gather stakeholder input	

Accomplishments

This period has focused on training and rollout of the new appraisal system for teachers. During the summer, over 700 principals, assistant principals and other school-based appraisers received three full days of training on the system. The training included an in-depth review of the Instructional Practice and Professional Expectations rubrics, an outline of the key requirements and system timeline, and time for school teams to collaborate and discuss the new system. Teachers received roughly eight hours of training on the new system during their August in-service. Training and support materials were developed and distributed to appraisers and teachers as well. To minimize costs to the district, existing internal technology was leveraged for completion and archiving.




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Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.2 Establish a rigorous and fair teacher appraisal system to inform key decisions (cont'd)









Planned for Next Period

A plan for implementation support and communications has been developed to assist appraisers and teachers in the initial rollout of this new system. This includes an ongoing leadership training plan through the first year, as well as more specific activities such as computer lab drop-in sessions and a dedicated website and e-mail address for questions and resources. In addition, each campus will identify a representative who will serve as a key contact to disseminate reminders and updates regarding the new system. Given the phase-in of the measures of student learning as a numerical rating in 2012-13, a technology tool to support the input and tracking of these measures is also being developed. Over the course of the next period, we will also be conducting focus groups and more informal check-ins with teachers and appraisers to adjust the support based on key stakeholder input.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.3 Provide individualized teacher support and development	
Main Element	Progress
1.3.1 Identify and track centralized TSD needs via Staff Review and appraisal ratings	
1.3.2 Develop a long-term centralized TSD strategy	
1.3.3 Implement a long-term centralized TSD strategy	
1.3.4 Establish Professional Development clearinghouse	
1.3.5 Identify and track school-based TSD needs via Staff Review and appraisal ratings	
1.3.6 Develop a strategy for school-based TSD	
1.3.7 Establish metrics for measuring the effectiveness of school-based TSD	
1.3.8 Identify and execute training for principals to identify and respond to teacher development needs	

Accomplishments

We have hired, trained, and deployed to campuses, 125 Teacher Development Specialists to work with School Improvement Officers and appraisers to support all teachers through observation, feedback and connection with meaningful learning experiences aligned to the district's instructional practice rubric and curriculum.

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Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.3 Provide individualized teacher support and development (cont'd)

To compliment this larger field-based team's work, we have created a smaller Professional Development Central Support Team to provide centralized coordination and design of districtwide tools and development opportunities. This team will also focus on improving the quality and ease of access to online learning opportunities in the short term with the use of PD360 and over the long term with the development of a custom online PD delivery platform. The team is currently focused on designing exemplars, resources, tools, and trainings aligned with the instructional practice rubric from the new appraisal system to support appraisers and TDS in their campus based, individualized support for teachers.




Planned for Next Period

We are hiring and training five more Teacher Development Specialists. We are developing a strategic plan for additional training and support for principals to assess and respond to individual teacher development needs including district priority topics including STAAR and interventions.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom




1.4 Offer meaningful career pathways and differentiated compensation to retain and leverage the most effective teachers	
Main Element	Progress
1.4.1 Implement the ASPIRE Award program	
1.4.2 Establish career pathways	
1.4.3 Implement a new compensation model	

Accomplishments

Changes to the ASPIRE Awards program for 2011-12 have been developed and will be presented to the Board in September. In addition, we have developed a project outline and timeline for implementation of a new compensation model for teachers. We are in the final stages of identifying a compensation vendor to support this work, and will bring that forward to the Board soon, as well.

Planned for next period

A steering committee to govern the work around a new compensation model has been identified and will begin to advise on the draft project outline. Once a compensation vendor is hired, we will start the research and analysis necessary to provide the foundation for designing a new compensation system.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

What we will do




We are going to make sure that we have a highly effective principal at the head of every school. To do that, we will improve our recruiting system to be more aggressive in recruiting talented individuals into principal positions, starting with our own internal pipeline of best performing teachers and assistant principals and supplemented by strong external candidates. We will also provide all of our principals with the ongoing supports, careful evaluations, and individualized professional development they need while also placing all the necessary tools at their disposal to lead their schools into becoming the best in the nation.




Why we will do it

There is a broad consensus among educational experts that having an effective principal at the head of every school is of utmost importance to assuring student success. The more challenging and/or underprivileged the student population in the school, the more this is true. In HISD, we have ample evidence of this, as there is broad variation in the on-track-to college-readiness rates of our elementary, middle and high school students, even among schools with very similar poverty levels.

What we will report


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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School




2.1 Design and implement a rigorous, fair principal appraisal system	
Main Element	Progress
2.1.1 Develop a comprehensive principal appraisal system that includes multiple performance measures (e.g., student performance, school safety, teacher support), integrates feedback from teachers and principals' supervisors, and identifies principals' individual needs	

Accomplishments

Over this period, we continued to solicit feedback to refine the appraisal system for school leaders. We conducted four focus groups regarding the measures of student learning, which have been differentiated by school level and refined based on feedback. Survey results from principals revealed that they want a streamlined evaluation process and that additional measures for early childhood learning need to be developed.



Planned for next period

Over the next period we will work to roll out training and communications for the new system, in particular regarding the new rubric developed with McREL and the new process and timelines to be followed. In order to implement this new system effectively, it will be essential that school leaders understand the elements of the rubric as well as the specifics of the requirements. We will also continue to capture feedback regarding the measures of student learning to be included in the evaluation of school leaders. As with the teacher appraisal system, we are proposing to phase in the student performance as a formal component of the system in 2012-13, which allows us additional time to engage stakeholders on the appropriate measures to be used and become more familiar with the use of STAAR test data in the appraisal system.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School




2.2 Implement quality assurance standards and recommended practices to guide principals' decision-making, with high expectations and clear accountability	
Main Element	Progress
2.1.1 Develop standards and recommended practices to guide principals' decision-making	
2.2.2 Align practices and policies, (e.g., principal's evaluation, job description, training, career path, preparation) with new model of standards for principal decision-making	

Accomplishments

In this period, Leadership Development worked with representatives from the School Offices, Accountability and Rewards team, and external consultants to align the implementation of the Teacher Appraisal and Development System, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessment, and the components of Staff Documentation and Investigations training to provide a strategic, multi-layered support system for school improvement officers, principals, and other school leaders. As a result of these meetings, the group is developing a strategic implementation plan that will include deliverables and descriptions of work. This plan will support the coordination and implementation of long-term professional development around quality assurance standards and recommended practices to guide principals' decision-making.




Planned for next period

In the next period we plan to implement a preliminary professional development plan designed to deliver ongoing trainings and resources that build capacity in leaders' to identify specific learning targets which align the Teacher Appraisal and Development system with the rigors of the STAAR assessment to guide teaching and learning and increase student achievement. Differentiated learning opportunities will be offered through both online and face-to-face learning seminars. We will continue to develop support topics by soliciting feedback and engaging in ongoing communication with school leaders throughout the district.

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Strategic Direction Initiative Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School




2.3 Strengthen recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent	
Main Element	Progress
2.3.1 Create a high-quality leadership preparation program to prepare, recruit, and select best-in-class talent internally (e.g., teachers, assistant principals) in order to create an exceptional pool of candidates to fill school vacancies.	
2.3.2 Strengthen HISD's recruiting practices to attract top principal talent from sources external to HISD	
2.3.3 Create systems to ensure ongoing effectiveness of HISD recruitment programs	

Accomplishments

During this period efforts were concentrated in one key area: to screen, select and staff highly-qualified internal and external applicants for campus leadership positions. The initial goal for the 2010-2011 year was to ensure a pool of leadership talent of 65 Principals and 75 Assistant Principals by July 15, 2011.

This goal was met and exceeded. As of July 15, 2011, 524 Principal candidates were screened and 93 were selected for the principal pool. In addition, 1,040 Assistant Principal/Dean candidates were screened, resulting in a selection pool of 138 future campus leaders.

All of the candidates participated in a rigorous screening and selection process to gain entry into the pool, which included: (1) resume and cover letter review; (2) verification of principal certification; (2) internal review with the candidates' principal and/or SIO; (3) Star Administrative Questionnaire Online Assessment; (4) In-Person Skills Demonstration measuring readiness in the areas of Decision Making, Instructional Leadership, Written Communication and Data Analysis; (5) an In-Person Haberman Interview; (6) the solicitation and verification of three references, including the candidates' most recent supervisor; and (7) a full personnel file review for internal candidates and a thorough criminal background check for external candidates.

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Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.3 Strengthen recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent (cont'd)

Planned for next period




In the next period, we are planning the implementation of a new talent acquisition system, which is an upgrade to PeopleSoft version 9.1, that is expected to take place in the next 12 to 24 months. In the meantime, a “stop-gap” system is being developed for use by mid-fall that will support data-driven decision-making and a culture of accountability.

Also, recruitment plans for the 2011-12 school year are being finalized as university visits and professional conferences are being scheduled. Future plans include a commitment to improve systems that will track candidates' sourcing data and develop metrics to identify programs which have the most cost-effective impact on the district's final strategic hiring goal.

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Strategic Direction Management Report




Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.4 Establish a comprehensive instructional leadership program to develop and retain top talent	
Main Element	Progress
2.4.1 Define leadership pathways/ladders for HISD staff and administrators to become principals, and for principals to advance into higher leadership roles	
2.4.2 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of HISD's current supports for principals	
2.4.3 Provide ongoing professional development to principals who are already working in HISD, tailored to individual need while also addressing key topics in principal development (e.g., coaching of teachers, mentoring APs, and data-driven decision-making)	

Accomplishments

In this period we reviewed and refined our grow-your-own leadership development model. We launched the Readiness cohort in the spring. The cohort consisted of 56 internal candidates deemed “ready” for principalship. Of the new principals hired this year, approximately 50% participated in the Readiness program. Additionally, we worked with school chiefs and school improvement officers to recruit and select promising school leaders who will participate in a full year internship. Interns are aspiring administrators who will have opportunities to lead, not just observe, the day-to-day operation of a school. The internship is designed to develop future principals who are well prepared to lead diverse schools.

Also, Rice University in partnership with HISD, provided a three-day course for School leaders entitled, “Strategic Marketing Management”. The course was designed to ensure that school leaders developed a broad understanding of the internal and external environmental factors that affect the success of their schools. During the three day workshop, HISD school leaders examined political, economic, social, and technological factors, as well as environmental and legal issues associated with marketing their schools. Other schools will have the opportunity to participate in the strategic marketing course later this year.




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Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.4 Establish a comprehensive instructional leadership program to develop and retain top talent (cont'd)



Planned for next period

In the next period we will continue the second semester of the UTCULP principal preparation program and the PACE principal preparation program. We will also begin working with school leader cohorts providing differentiated support based on school success.

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Strategic Direction Management Report




Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.5 Create a healthy environment conducive to learning in all schools.	
Main Element	Progress
2.5.1 Support positive behaviors in schools	
2.5.2 Increase healthy options for HISD students.	

Accomplishments

As a result of student and parent feedback, Food Services has created new dishes and expanded the number of nutritious options offered for lunch. For example, the August menu features the new “Latin Bowl” (full of heart-healthy black beans, corn, lettuce and tomatoes over a bed of seasoned brown rice) and “Chicken Tortilla Soup” (hearty blend of diced chicken, onions, cabbage, and tomatoes in a savory chili broth topped with crisp tortilla strips). The new printed menu lists calorie and fat content for the day’s featured entrée and features labels for whole grain, heart healthy, vegetarian, and Texas grown menu items.

In order to address concerns about breakfast food waste, Food Services has extended the “offer vs. serve” delivery model to all interested schools with First Class Breakfast. To date, 50 schools across HISD have signed up! This method offers students a choice of entrée and side selections and does not require them to take all items of the meal. Students are allowed to choose the items they want to take but are only required to take a minimum of two items. Although this method takes a few extra minutes per classroom, allowing students to choose their food items drastically reduces food waste.

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Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.5 Create a healthy environment conducive to learning in all schools. (cont'd)

Planned for Next Period






In the next period Food Services will implement the “Tortilla Fresh Mex” and “Green Street Deli” dining concepts into more high schools! Those schools scheduled to receive these new concepts include Lee, Sharpstown, Davis, Bellaire, Chavez, Milby, Reagan, and Madison. Pilot implementations at Westside and Lamar during 2010-11 showed increased student lunch participation and overall student satisfaction.

The Police Department will continue to identify schools with increased numbers of citations issued to students for disruption of classroom activities. The department will also continue to monitor crime data captured on and around our schools. The department will take proactive measures to address safety and security issues or concerns that impact the learning environment in school. Additionally, the Police Department will work with HISD Risk Management to complete the Senate Bill 11 security audit.

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Strategic Direction Management Report




Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.1 Equity in access to educational programs	
Main Element	Progress
3.1.1 Ensure that all schools have high quality programs to meet the diverse needs of students	
3.1.2 Broaden access to dual credit, Advanced Placement (A), and International Baccalaureate (IB) and improve exam success rates	
3.1.3 Increase consistency of Magnet Schools	
3.1.4 Provide specialized instructional opportunities throughout the district for students seeking alternative instructional programs	
3.1.5 Launch a post-secondary access effort	

Accomplishments

The district has developed many high quality programs meeting the diverse needs of its student population. In this period, we opened separate Boys and Girls College Prep Academies as well as the CLC- DeVry Advantage Academy at H. P. Carter, continuing the expansion of choice options within the district.

Goals were set for all comprehensive HISD high schools to offer 15 AP courses for 2011-12. This is an increase from last school year as the goal was 10 AP courses for 2010-11. Therefore, over the summer period, the district offered summer AP and IB training. A kick-off meeting with AP Coordinators was held August 10th to discuss 2011-12 AP/IB activities and provided updates in addition to an overview for the Laying the Foundation (LTF) Pre-Test presentation that gave participants an overview of how to set up their LTF Pre-Test online. LTF Pre-Testing will occur 9/12/11 through 10/28/11. Also, during this period, the Board's Policy Committee and the Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee (PEC) studied potential magnet program revisions. The PEC met with the Superintendent of Schools to discuss specific areas of the Magnet programs and potential changes. Meetings were conducted with Magnet Coordinators to review Magnet program guidelines which are currently in place.

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Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports




3.1 Equity in access to educational programs (cont'd)

The district has made progress closing the achievement gap. When examining the percentage of students passing at the state standard on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in 2010 and in 2011, the differences between White students' and Hispanic and African American students' test scores overall decreased from 2010 to 2011. In 2011, the gap between White students' test scores and Hispanic students' test scores decreased in all six subtests reported. The 2011 gap between White students' test scores and African American students' test scores decreased from 2010 on all tests taken for mathematics, science, and social studies.

The district has also made significant progress reducing dropouts and increasing graduation. The percentage of students in the ninth grade cohort who dropped out of school by the end of four years decreased from 15.8 percent for the class of 2009 to 12.6 percent for the class of 2010. This is the lowest rate the district has seen since Texas adopted federal dropout definitions. The percentage of students who graduated in the class of 2010 cohort increased over the class of 2009. The graduation rate for the class of 2010 was 74.3 percent, which is 4.3 percentage points higher than last year's graduation rate of 70.0 percent.

The HISD Foundation is supporting the district's educational programs on many levels from scholarships, to computers, to uniforms as well as the district's school transformation model. The HISD Foundation gave \$10,000 in scholarships to 10 HISD graduates on August 14th, 2011 at the Cool to be Smart event. Additionally, the HISD Foundation gave \$6,000 in new laptops to seven students at the same event. One lucky student received a car.

HISD Foundation provided \$25,000 for the boys' uniforms at the new boys' school. Those funds were raised from the golf tournament proceeds based on the golf committee's vote on fund allocation. The United Way also gave \$20,000 primarily toward uniforms for the girls' school but was also able to direct funds in support of the boys' uniforms as well.

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Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.1 Equity in access to educational programs (cont'd)




Planned for Next Period

Over the next period it is expected that the Magnet program design will continue to be discussed. The district has scheduled site visits to other districts which implement a centralized selection process such as the Metropolitan Public Schools of Nashville. In an effort to collect data to support next step decision-making, MATS (independent Magnet database) will be migrated to the Program Manager on Chancery. All Magnet data will not be housed on Chancery.

Additional events are planned to support the schools offering AP classes. An AP Teacher Orientation will be held Saturday 9/10/11 at Reagan HS as a professional development opportunity required for new AP teachers and open to experienced AP teachers who would like additional PD. New AP Coordinator training will be offered in September 2011 to welcome new APCs to the world of HISD AP, the expectations, the requirements and the how-to's.








Issues/Concerns/Requests

An issue was raised concerning the need to adjust pay scales for teachers attending Saturday training. In order to effectively support AP implementation, the district recognizes that more work is needed to be done with parents. A group is being formed now to build communication with parents as well as identify additional AP prep resources.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.2 Develop and implement an aligned standards-based curriculum and assessment plan	
Main Element	Progress
3.2.1 Communicate high expectations for instructional delivery and establish district-managed curriculum guidelines	
3.2.2 Arrange an independent external analysis of the district's curriculum in order to establish a well-crafted, focused, valid, and comprehensive curriculum	
3.2.3 Promote academic rigor for all students by updating the current curriculum to meet standards for college and career readiness (CCR)	
3.2.4 Train teachers on implementing the aligned/updated curriculum, and train principals on supporting teachers in achieving campus and district goals	
3.2.5 Identify a robust assessment system that will provide customized predictive and diagnostic assessments that are aligned to the district's curriculum scope and sequence	
3.2.6 Establish a clearinghouse that identifies high-quality, research-based instructional materials aligned to the district's curriculum	
3.2.7 Pursue an online platform for curriculum management and access	







Accomplishments

An RFP has been developed to solicit interest in building a robust assessment system for HISD. This RFP has been released and 11 proposals are currently under review and evaluation. The new Deputy Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Alicia Thomas, has hired Nancy Gregory as the new Officer of Curriculum and Instruction. This new, aggressive curriculum leadership is now in place and is positioning the department to provide leadership in the development of interim assessments measures and the development of a managed curriculum. It is expected that significant progress will be made in the next reporting period. The team is developing the district's implementation plan for STAAR as communicated in the July workshop.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.3 Implement Response to Intervention model districtwide to provide early, effective assistance to children	
Main Element	Progress
3.3.1 Train teachers and principals on how to diagnose students' needs and differentiate support within the classroom	
3.3.2 Implement a school-level approach to designing holistic intervention strategies for helping Tier II students and accurately referring Tier III students	
3.3.3 Improve district-level solutions for Tier III students	
3.3.4 Provide tactile materials and supports to assist all teachers in determining strategies to meet student academic/social emotional needs and challenges	
3.3.5 Improve the instructional climate by offering technology-based applications to identify research-based strategies and solutions to meet the social/emotional needs of students	
3.3.6 Articulate the Intervention Assistance Team/Response to Intervention process for parents	

Accomplishments

Due to the budget reductions experienced by the district as well as the desire to better align resources, the Response to Intervention (RTI) portion of the Strategic Direction has changed departments and is now housed within the curriculum department as of July 2011. This realignment will strengthen collaboration and impact the curriculum adaption to include more students and productively engage them in the learning process. Modifications have been made to the Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) platform on Chancery to include RTI interventions. With the new screens, campus personnel and Intervention Assistance Teams (IAT) can go to a single online site to enter the intervention actions and monitor progress results for students. This information will travel electronically with the student so that any new campus personnel can provide appropriate interventions to seamlessly support the student. Ongoing work includes the development of a 3-phased implementation guide for both district and campus levels. The existing "major actions" (i.e., 3.3.1 through 3.3.6) will be reconfigured to fit within these 3-phased guides.




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Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.3 Implement Response to Intervention model districtwide to provide early, effective assistance to children (cont'd)




Planned for Next Period

Over the next period, district leaders will continue to meet to discuss next steps. The district's efforts have been focused on special education planning processes and retooling over the last several months. With the new leadership and shifting these efforts to the curriculum department, it is expected that there will be significant progress in this area next quarter. Main Elements in this Key Strategy may be revised/reordered.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports




3.4 Transformation Plan	
Main Element	Progress
3.4.1 Build Transformation Core Team	
3.4.2 Research and identify proven approaches for low-performing schools	
3.4.3 Implement a school-wide transformation intervention model that would begin with the 2010–2011 school year (e.g., increase learning time for staff and student support, allow operational flexibility for governance)	

Accomplishments

HISD is proud to report that 5 of the 10 Apollo schools that were under some level of state TEA sanction this were able to become Academically Acceptable after just one year under the Apollo leadership. Many of these schools are becoming strong academic performers for the first time the academic outcomes from the 2010-2011 school year.

Apollo 20 pass rates show a gain for nine percentage points in just one year, from 63% pass rate in 2010 to a 72% pass rate in 2011. The overall district pass rate gain was 2 points. Given the students enrolled in Apollo 20 schools, this is strong evidence of significant progress toward lowering the achievement gap through Apollo efforts. Similar growth and narrowing occurred with current year science outcome of the Apollo schools. Reading gains were flat over this school year compared to academic year 2009-2010.

Each of the four Apollo high schools has more than doubled the percentage of students ready to attend a four year college comparing results from last school year to the 2011 results. Over 22% of last year's Apollo students were prepared to enter a four year college, current year Apollo high schools have a 47% acceptance rate for college enrollment.

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Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.4 Transformation Plan (cont'd)

Significant additional external funding continues to flow into the Apollo effort showing the commitment from the Houston business community toward a quality education for all of Houston's children, no matter the school that they attend. Over the past year, the HISD Foundation raised \$13 million with \$700,000 in the month of August.






Issues and Concerns

Devoting a significant amount of money to ensuring a better education for our highest need children continues to be a challenge, but offsets are being evidenced as the fund raising for the Apollo effort from private sources continues to be very successful. To some degree the Apollo programs are now being managed more within the district framework as opposed to by outside management.

 Green indicates acceptable progress  Yellow indicates a concern with timeline, budget and scope  Red indicates a deficiency in time, budget or scope

Strategic Direction Management Report




Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.5 Implement a comprehensive literacy (reading) program in grades pre-k through 12	
Main Element	Progress
3.5.1 Develop a comprehensive PK-12 Literacy Plan to ensure all students have the necessary literacy skills to be college and career ready	
3.5.2 Establish PK-12 reading standards across the district to be used in the identification of above-, on- and below-grade level readers	
3.5.3 Develop and implement an aligned districtwide student literacy pathway to meet the needs of individual students at each grade level	
3.5.4 Implement PK-12 standard districtwide screening and progress monitoring reading assessments to ensure students read on- or above-grade level	
3.5.5 Provide differentiated and ongoing training to teachers, campus leadership teams and district administrators on how to implement, monitor and support literacy framework	

Accomplishments

During this period the district completed Phase 1 of the Literacy Plan work. The employment of a Deputy Chief Academic Officer and additional curriculum staffing creates a new way forward with the literacy programs of the district. The district has employed a literacy specialist to lead this effort forward with more progress to be reported next period.

The district has committed a budget line budget of over \$1 million to literacy. A foundation of reading development for English language learners was developed for grade levels 6-8 this summer. Reading documents were developed for parents that describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of the each grade level, K-12. The district launched ongoing training initiatives to facilitate quality implementation of new reading adoption including coaching and mentoring, model lessons, and classroom support to be provided by instructional specialists and curriculum specialists. The district also launched a districtwide textbook selection committee process for Pre-K, language arts, and ESL adoptions for implementation in Fall 2011.

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Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.4 Implement a comprehensive literacy (reading) program in grades pre-k through 12 (cont'd)

The HISD Foundation has partnered with the district to raise funds in support of the literacy efforts. In August 2011, the HISD Foundation received a gift of \$500,000 from the Houston Livestock & Rodeo.





Planned for Next Period

Literacy will continue to be the umbrella that all other curriculum disciplines become an integrated as reading is the threshold skill for success for all others. In the next period, we will develop specific action steps for a literacy plan framework through committee work. The district will need to develop a funding model directly assisting in the professional development for implementing the literacy work. This will be a challenge given the current budget environment. The district will need to rethink how work is to get done with a curriculum department that has seen very significant realignment of staff and resources toward other critical priorities.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports




3.6 Implement a comprehensive Numeracy/mathematics program in grades pre-k through 12	
Main Element	Progress
3.6.1 Provide equitable instruction by establishing districtwide Numeracy targets to ensure that all students are college/career ready	
3.6.2 Develop an aligned, districtwide Numeracy Coaching Model, targeted to meet the needs of teachers and students at each grade level	
3.6.3 Provide differentiated and ongoing training to teachers, principals, School Improvement Officers, and other stakeholders on how to implement, monitor, and support Numeracy instruction	
3.6.4 Develop and implement districtwide formative assessments and provide guidelines and standards of practice for targeted intervention, based on assessment data	

Accomplishments

Phase 1 of the numeracy plan has been completed. “Blue Prints” have been completed and aligned to all state, national and international standards. These blue prints are quick references on what children should learn in Math and are housed in a web-based environment for easy access by parents and teachers. Teachers of Mathematics are applying for and will be selected to work beginning this summer and continuing into the early summer next year on curriculum updating and implementation assistance and leadership.

Planned for Next Period

As with the readiness issues, numeracy must have frequent monitoring at the district level to assure adherence to the district and state curricular outcomes. Therefore, next period will focus on reviewing student data for goal setting.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure data-driven accountability

What we will do

Build robust systems and processes that enable easy access to and use of key data to inform decisions and manage high levels of performance districtwide.

Why we will do it

Currently, relevant data on students, teachers, and achievement are difficult to access, often not up-to-date, and not always accurate. Furthermore, many people across the district lack the expertise to use data to make decisions.

This creates an opportunity to arm HISD leadership with accessible, timely and accurate data and provide them with the training necessary to understand how to translate data into action. By doing so, we will get better at making the key decisions that affect the performance of the district. Funding for this initiative is focused on Phase 1 which includes minimal training and will provide initial reports. Training beyond Phase 1 is a multi-year program of training and learning through use.

What we will report




The following *Strategic Direction Management Report* answers the question: Is HISD acting on the priorities identified in the strategic plan with fidelity? It measures HISD's accomplishments and risks for each Key Strategies in support of the overall Core Initiative.

The *Strategic Direction Management Report* is produced Quarterly. Color indicators are used to as an idication of whether administration is on track to accomplish a Key Strategy's quarterly goals. A "Green" indicator ● means the district has made acceptable progress with respect to budget, scope and timeliness. A "Yellow" indicator ● means the district has identified risk with respect to one or more aspects. A "Red" inidicator ● means progress has stopped or has a significant deficiency. As the Strategic Direction builds a foundation towards achieveing the district's goals over a multi-year period, not all Key Strategies will have information to communicate in a given period.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure data-driven accountability




4.1 Build easily accessible and accurate data architecture, warehouse, and technology infrastructure	
Main Element	Progress
4.1.1 Create a data warehouse with business intelligence interface	
4.1.2 Implement a data quality and data stewardship program	
4.1.3 Re-skill and implement IT infrastructure that supports the District	

Accomplishments

This reporting period has been a productive one for Strategic Initiative 4.1. The Technology and Information Services (TIS) department has re organized, filled key positions, delivered a Capital Investment plan, and made two presentations to the Board concerning the results of audits conducted by the Council of Great City Schools and IBM Internet Security Services.

(4.1.1) The Data Warehouse base data model was developed and data element mapped for use in a proof-of-concept project. The Business Intelligence proof-of-concept step of data warehouse concluded, demonstrating the capabilities of leading-industry providers of solutions using HISD data. The next step is executing a limited scope project that will deliver the first phase of the data warehouse with corresponding dashboards to educators.

(4.1.2) Initial analysis of employee and student subject data areas indicates that there are issues with data quality and consistency which will compromise the effectiveness of the data warehouse and dashboards. This analysis is the primary step fortifying the necessity that HISD institute a Data Stewardship and Governance program to clean up the way Chancery, PeopleSoft, SAP and other source systems. This will ensure the success of the data warehouse and business intelligence initiative (4.1.1). This will entail identifying district owners for the various data areas and ensuring that standard processes are developed and adopted across HISD.

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Core Initiative: 4. Ensure data-driven accountability

4.1 Build easily accessible and accurate data architecture, warehouse, and technology infrastructure (cont'd)

(4.1.3) Additional investments in Read 180, laptop carts and instructional software, such as We Can Learn, have been made to support the low performing schools. The IBM ISS Assessment and Roadmap engagement has concluded and the findings were presented at a Board workshop. From here, HISD will embark upon a comprehensive revamping of its Information Security organization, policies and technologies in order to improve its security posture. The recruiting process for IT Director of Information Security has evaluated several candidates and the selection process is almost complete.




Planned for Next Period

The focus during the next period will be supporting schools as students return to school. Also, the Technology and Information Services (TIS) division will institute a Principals Advisory Committee and Executive Leadership Steering Committee to inform IT priorities. Additionally, the division will focus on the development of an IT Data Governance Framework aligning with the beginning of the Data Warehouse / Business Intelligence Project Phase 1 and HISD Network Re-design Project.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data – Driven Accountability




4.2 Develop and implement performance management tools and practices for decision-making	
Main Element	Progress
4.2.1 Adapt Board Monitoring System to create a dashboard that provides a snapshot of the most important district performance measures	
4.2.2 – 4.2.6 Create a dashboard that summarizes important performance metrics for key district leadership	
4.2.7 End User Training	

Accomplishments

All departments are transitioning to the ePerformance system going into the new school year, representing a major shift away from pilot groups to full-scale implementation of the use of scorecards and metrics in employee evaluation for non-academic roles. Training has been conducted for key Central Services departments and will continue as more departments begin to use this new tool and system.




Planned for Next Period

Training on ePerformance will continue. In addition, we hope to update key performance metrics for district leadership to align with the new state testing and accountability framework as well as the school leader appraisal system measures.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data – Driven Accountability




4.3 Design Effective and Efficient Business Processes and Procedures for Optimization of Resources and Results	
Main Element	Progress
4.3.1 Design and implement effective and efficient processes for selecting, obtaining, and evaluating instructional services and materials	
4.3.2 Design processes for schools to evaluate and share experiences about vendors	
4.3.3 Define a business process for the procurement of services and materials off the recommended vendor list	

Risks & Issues

While the process and program have been defined and all system components are in place there has been a change in leadership in both the Curriculum and Procurement departments. Therefore, progress is temporarily impacted and the status has changed to “yellow.” We expect to regain ground in the coming weeks as the district has hired a new leader for the Curriculum department and is actively seeking leadership of the Procurement department. The team will reconvene with new leadership in place charged with verifying that work completed to date still meets the district’s needs as well as taking the opportunity to readjust to new conditions such as the revised budgeted conditions. It is imperative that all decisions, processes, systems and procedures are re-evaluated and that all parties have buy-in prior to rolling out to the schools and departments that are impacted by Instructional Products and Services so as to minimize impact to school leaders.

Planned for Next Period

In addition to validating the existing process, we will work to create a roll-out plan that includes communication and training for the schools and departments, as well as the 150 or so suppliers that are interested in supplying Instructional Products and Services.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

What we will do

We will put in place structures, processes, and methods to ensure that we have effective two-way communication to engage both internal and external stakeholders, including staff, parents, and community members.




Why we will do it




A powerful sense of community and a shared direction among all stakeholders is crucial to the successful transformation of HISD. Yet, we know that current communication structures in place are insufficient to foster authentic engagement.

During the process of developing the Strategic Direction, we have attempted to begin the movement toward a communications approach that is more interactive and transparent. Throughout dozens of meetings, communication emerged as a clear area for improvement. Thousands of stakeholders shared concerns, ideas, and suggestions on how we can improve. Taking all this valuable feedback into account, we designed two strategies that will enable us to revamp our communication so we can engage internal and external audiences in meaningful ways and ensure we have authentic two-way communication. By doing so, we will prove our commitment to change, re-build trust and confidence, and start a new era in our communication and relationship with HISD's broad community.

What we will report





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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

5.1 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for internal stakeholders	
Main Element	Progress
5.1.1 Establish structures and protocols for disseminating information to and from internal stakeholders	
5.1.2 Use a variety of methods to communicate with internal stakeholders	
5.1.3 Build capacity to ensure implementation of timely, effective, two-way communication	
5.1.4 Define and implement methods to evaluate effectiveness of internal communications	

Accomplishments

This summer an Internal Communication Gap Analysis was conducted by an Education Pioneer assigned to the Office of Communications. The analysis looked at the flow of communication in three areas: Cabinet, Principals, and Department. Interviews with key staff members were conducted, materials and documents were examined, and other school districts were studied. As a result of this work, several recommendations were brought to the Cabinet and several toolkits were created that include processes, templates, and protocols for improved communication. Cabinet members are reviewing the recommendations and tools that have been developed. One short term improvement that the Cabinet is looking at critically is the memo process to principals. Some short term steps have been put into place, including the requirement for Cabinet members to provide weekly, written updates for the entire Cabinet and more structured note taking and action steps for Cabinet meetings to ensure accuracy of communication to Cabinet members' direct reports. Twitter followers in English grew by 240 since June 2011, and now total 1,932. The number of individuals who "like" us on Facebook total 460. The Spanish Twitter feed now has 52 followers. A Spanish version of Facebook was created in July 2011 and 174 individuals "like" us.




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Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

5.1 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for internal stakeholders (cont'd)





Planned for Next Period

Work will continue on the recommendations included in the Internal Communications Gap Analysis. A series of Superintendent Community Conversations for staff and community members are being organized for October to discuss progress made with the Strategic Direction and to hear questions, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. A new Central Services Advisory Committee is being developed to improve two-way communication.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action




5.2 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for external stakeholders	
Main Element	Progress
5.2.1 Establish structures and protocols for disseminating information to and from external stakeholders	
5.2.2 Use a variety of methods to communicate with external stakeholders	
5.2.3 Build capacity to ensure implementation of timely, effective, two-way communication	
5.2.4 Define and implement methods to evaluate effectiveness of external communications	

Accomplishments

The Back to School Fest was held at the George R. Brown Convention Center in August, with an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 in attendance. This joint venture between HISD and the City of Houston provided free backpacks, school supplies, uniforms, and immunizations to students as well as resources, information, and bags of fresh produce for families. More than \$100,000 in cash \$1.5 million in in-kind goods and services were donated by corporate sponsors.

The newly established African American Advisory Committee and Hispanic Advisory Committee held their first meetings in July and August. These groups will advise HISD on ways to strengthen communication and improve student achievement and will meet on a quarterly basis. Plans are being developed to bring these two groups together with the existing Asian Advisory Committee.

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Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action




5.2 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for external stakeholders (cont'd)

The first draft of a parent communication toolkit was developed by an Education Pioneer assigned to the Office of Communications. The toolkit was developed in collaboration with the Parent Engagement department and in consultation with individual parents and parent and community groups. The toolkit includes resources and templates for parents to hold meetings in their homes to learn about important information to help them navigate HISD more easily.

Results from the biannual parent and community survey were released. These results will be analyzed by the Cabinet to determine next steps and what improvements need to be made.

Planned for Next Period

A series of Superintendent Community Conversations for staff and community members are being organized for October to discuss progress made with the Strategic Direction and to hear questions, concerns, and suggestions from stakeholders. Work will continue on the parent communication toolkit.

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