

Houston Independent School District



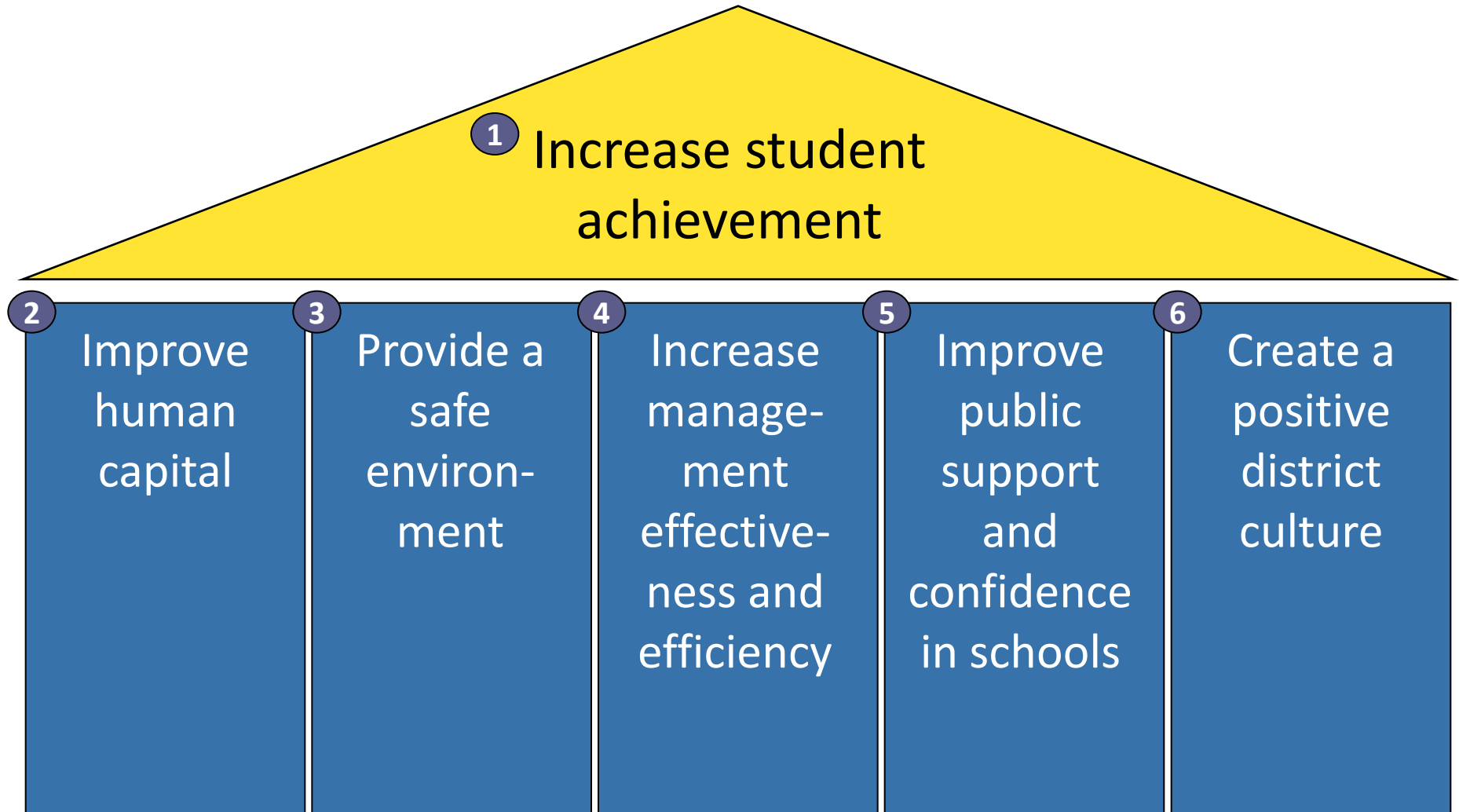
Update with Board of Education

April 29th, 2010

Agenda

- Review overall strategic planning process
- Update on stakeholder engagement strategy
- Discuss key findings from Phase I diagnostic research
- Review Phase II process for designing core strategies and key initiatives

The Board's Beliefs and Visions provide HISD with a clear set of goals



***Transformation* is required to make HISD the nation's leading district**

What is transformation?

- Transformation is a reinvention of the district based on an identification of the key barriers preventing breakthrough improvement and the implementation of bold new solutions to overcome them
- The national Department of Education envisions transformation as a change strategy that takes aggressive action by primarily leveraging existing talent and systems rather than replacing them wholesale

Why is it necessary?

- Despite the best efforts of HISD, the achievement level in the district has not met the ambitious objectives set by the district's leadership
- The bar for success has been raised, and HISD must evolve in order to meet the new standards of excellence:
 - Districts and states around the country are responding to the national agenda by adopting aggressive reform strategies
 - Houston's leading charter networks have set college achievement as the standard against which to judge success

What does it mean?

- A transformation strategy involves building on the successes of the district to date – it therefore means that HISD is *not* fundamentally broken and that there are clear strengths that can be used as a foundation
- Transformation is not a rejection of what HISD has accomplished, but rather a recommitment to doing whatever it takes to support its children and a reimagining of the district to meet the needs of 21st century Houston

Deciding where to focus and executing on the most important issues creates results

In war: concentration of forces

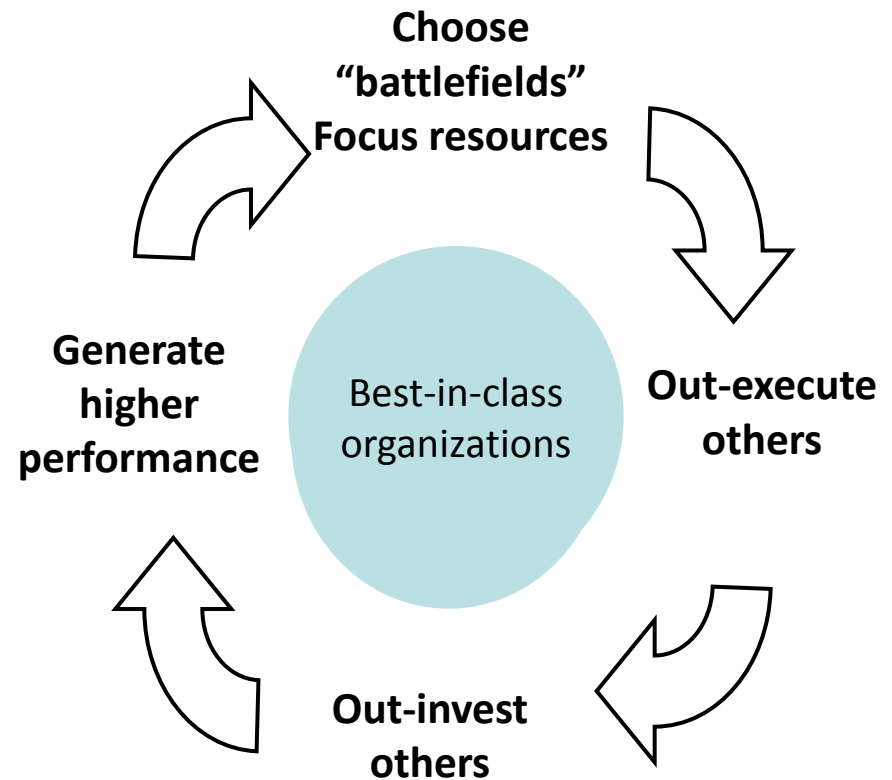


von Clausewitz

"The best strategy is always to be very strong first in general, and then at the decisive point."

"There is no higher or simpler law for strategy than keeping one's forces concentrated"

In business: the virtuous cycle



Lack of focus highlighted by staff as major inhibitor to district becoming more effective

“We really need to concentrate on what is truly important for us to focus on. We give everything on our plate equal attention, and this lack of focus prevents us from realizing our potential.”

“There are too many changes going on without clear direction or priorities.”

“For us to be a truly effective organization, we need to be united around a few things that will drive our future instead of obsessing with all the minutia.”


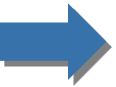
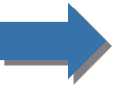

“There are too many initiatives that aren’t pursued to completion.”

“Too many projects and unnecessary assignments which keep us from the most important work.”

“Too many programs that some people are so overworked that it is breaking their spirit.”

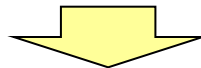
“Too many priorities at one time that our messages get lost.”

Transformation requires making big moves against big things!

- Small moves on small things  A waste of time
- Big moves on small things  The tyranny of incrementalism
- Small moves on big things  Fool ourselves we are making a difference
- Big moves on big things  Necessary and risky

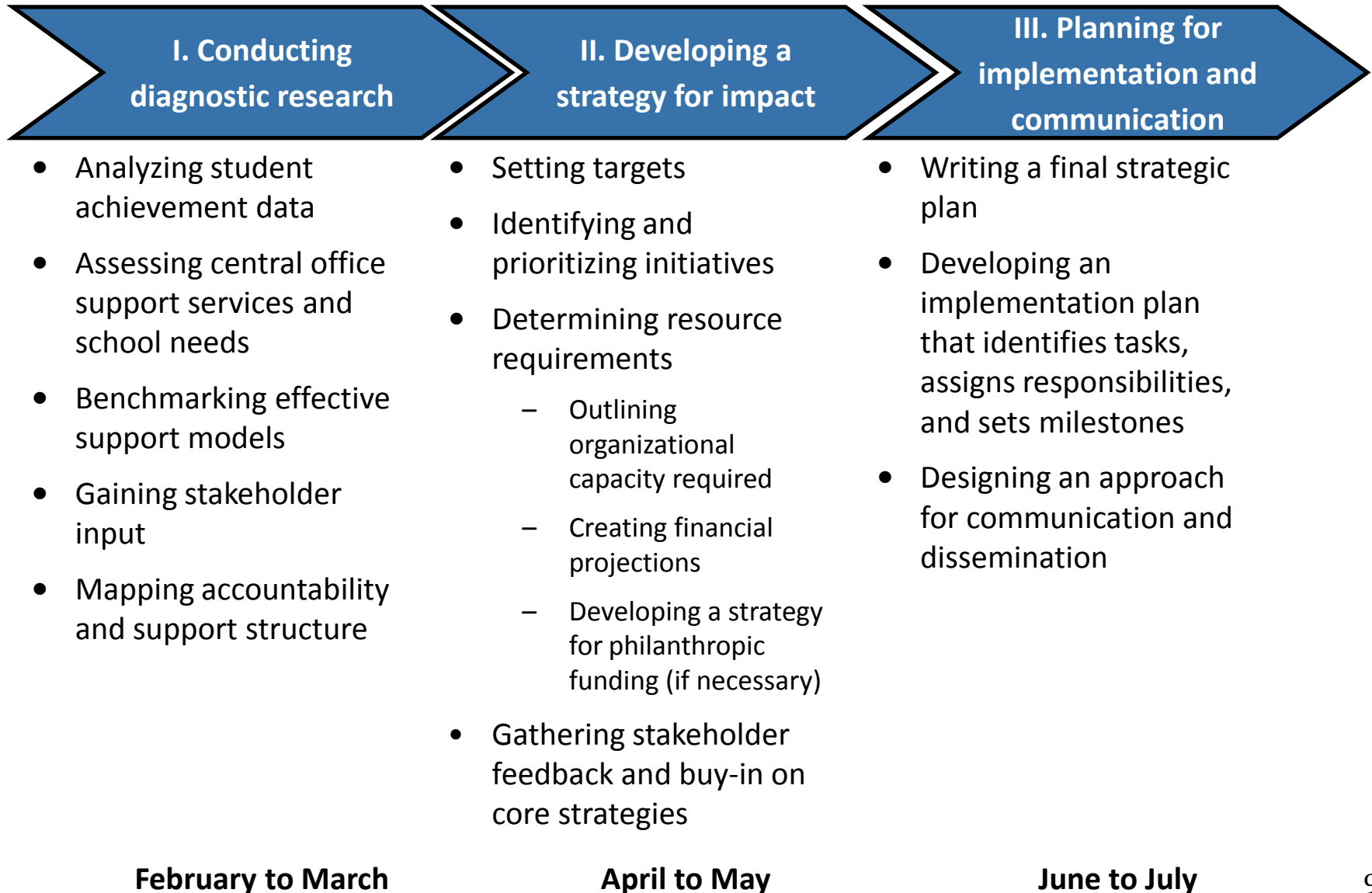
Objectives of strategic planning process

- Develop a Strategic Direction that will chart the best course of action for HISD in order to realize the goals outlined by the Board of Education in its Beliefs and Vision (what/why)
 - Create a clear picture around current efforts to increase student achievement
 - Integrate findings from other ongoing efforts (e.g., TNTP human capital project)
 - Outline a set of strategic initiatives that enable HISD to meet its goals, assembling current efforts into a single picture and identifying any gaps
 - Determine any adjustments required to current resources (human and financial) to support the strategic initiatives
- Create an implementation and communication plan to support action and gain alignment from key stakeholders on path forward (how/who/when)



**The end result will be a blueprint that will
help guide the transformation of HISD**

Strategic planning process will take six months, with three distinct phases of work



HISD strategic planning project progress update (April 29th)

Phase I component	Objective	Progress
Analyzing student achievement data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the current picture and the factors that drive different levels of student achievement in schools across the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed preliminary view of student achievement, and are close to completing on-track and post-secondary analysis
Assessing central office support services and school needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the procurement process for instructional services and identify potential opportunities for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed analysis of purchasing patterns at schools and central office and surveyed principals on procurement process (n = 86)
Benchmarking effective support models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather valuable lessons from other districts and charter management organizations that can inform HISD's Strategic Direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesized findings based on research on reform efforts in more than 30 districts and charter networks across the country, and interviews with national experts
Gaining stakeholder input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the district's key stakeholders are aware of HISD's strategic planning process and have an opportunity to provide input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed stakeholder engagement plan, synthesized input from students and website, and are gathering input from other key stakeholder groups
Mapping accountability and support structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify current strengths and opportunities for improvement within the central office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed organizational diagnostic survey of central office staff (n = 350)

Agenda

- Review overall strategic planning process
- Update on stakeholder engagement plan
- Discuss key findings from Phase I diagnostic research
- Review Phase II process for designing core strategies and key initiatives

Stakeholder engagement will be a key element of the strategic planning process

PRELIMINARY



Goals	<i>Awareness and input</i>		<i>Feedback and buy-in</i>		<i>Dissemination and mobilization</i>	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate objectives of strategic planning process to key stakeholder groups • Gather input from select key stakeholders on core elements of transforming HISD 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate emerging strategic initiatives to obtain buy-in from key stakeholders, with “champions” established to lead efforts • Gather input about the role different stakeholders would play in the implementation of HISD’s strategic plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design an approach for communication and dissemination of strategic direction that best positions HISD to take advantage of the strategic planning process • Publish Strategic Direction • Work with key stakeholder groups to identify their next steps 	
Approximate Timing	February to May		May to June		July to August	
Board workshops	March 4	April 29	May 20	June 17	July 15	August 5

We identified 10 key stakeholder groups to engage throughout the process

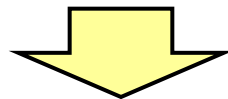
PRELIMINARY

1 Board of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members 	2 Philanthropic partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top current and potential local funders (e.g., Houston Endowment Inc) • Major current and potential national foundations (e.g., JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo) 	3 Business community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education committee of the Greater Houston Partnership • Other area chambers of commerce • Large corporate partners • Media 	4 Elected officials and political leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners court • Harris county state and federal delegation • Mayor and City Council members • Texas Education Agency officials 	5 Parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Advisory committee • Parent Teacher Association (PTA) • Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
6 Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HISD senior staff • HISD central office staff • Principal Advisory Committee 	7 Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston Federation of Teachers • HISD teachers • District Advisory Committee 	8 Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current HISD students • Alumni associations 	9 Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith-based leaders • Nonprofit partners (e.g., Project Grad) • Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee • Realtor association • Law enforcement and fire fighters • Voters • Early childhood groups (e.g., One Voice) 	10 Higher education institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston Baptist University • Houston Community College • Lee College • Rice University • San Jacinto College • St. Thomas University • Texas Southern University of Houston • University of Texas at Houston

NOTE: ALL NAMES ARE EXAMPLES AND NOT MEANT TO BE EXHAUSTIVE

The focus of Phase I is to generate awareness and gather feedback

- Engagement with the different stakeholder groups in Phase I has several purposes:
 - Introduce HISD's transformation effort, review goals set by the Board of Education, and review the strategic planning process (e.g., major milestones)
 - Generate open discussion on HISD's strengths and areas for improvement
 - Encourage attendees to remain involved throughout the strategic planning process
- In order to maximize outreach, a number of different communication channels are being utilized:
 - Broad channels that reach multiple stakeholder groups to provide progress updates and gather feedback: dedicated section in HISD's Web site about Strategic Direction with feedback capability, community survey, and monthly eNews updates
 - Targeted outreach to specific stakeholder groups (e.g., one-on-one meetings, focus groups, large audience discussions)



Feedback from stakeholders will be synthesized and serve as a key input into developing a strategy for impact

We have completed or scheduled meetings with each stakeholder group to gather input

PRELIMINARY

Stakeholder group	Activity	Status
1 Board of Education	• Board workshop	• Scheduled for 4/29
2 Philanthropic partners	• One-on-one meetings with BofA, JP Morgan Chase, and Wells Fargo	• Scheduled for 5/2 and 5/10
	• Discussion with HISD Foundation Board members	• Scheduled for 5/13
3 Business community	• Discussion with various local chambers of commerce	• Scheduled for 5/10
	• Discussion with large corporate partners	• Scheduled for 5/17
	• <i>Memo signed by Greg Meyers and Dr. Grier to be sent to the Greater Houston Partnership to generate awareness, inform about progress, and invite feedback</i>	• Planned for 4/30
4 Elected officials and political leaders	• <i>Memo signed by Greg Meyers and Dr. Grier to be sent to officials to generate awareness, inform about progress, and invite feedback</i>	• Planned for 4/30
5 Parents	• Discussion with Parent Advisory Committee	• Completed on 4/28
6 Leadership	• Focus groups with principals	• <i>Scheduling in process</i>
	• Central office survey	• Completed on 4/9
7 Teachers	• Survey and focus groups (TNTP)	• Completed on 4/15
8 Students	• Student roundtable	• Completed on 4/8
9 Broader community	• Discussion with faith-based groups	• Scheduled for 5/7
	• Discussion with non-profit partners	• Scheduled for 5/21
10 Higher education institutions	• <i>Memo signed by Greg Meyers and Dr. Grier to be sent to leaders to generate awareness, inform about progress, and invite feedback</i>	• Planned for 4/30

Phase II stakeholder engagement will focus on gaining buy-in and support

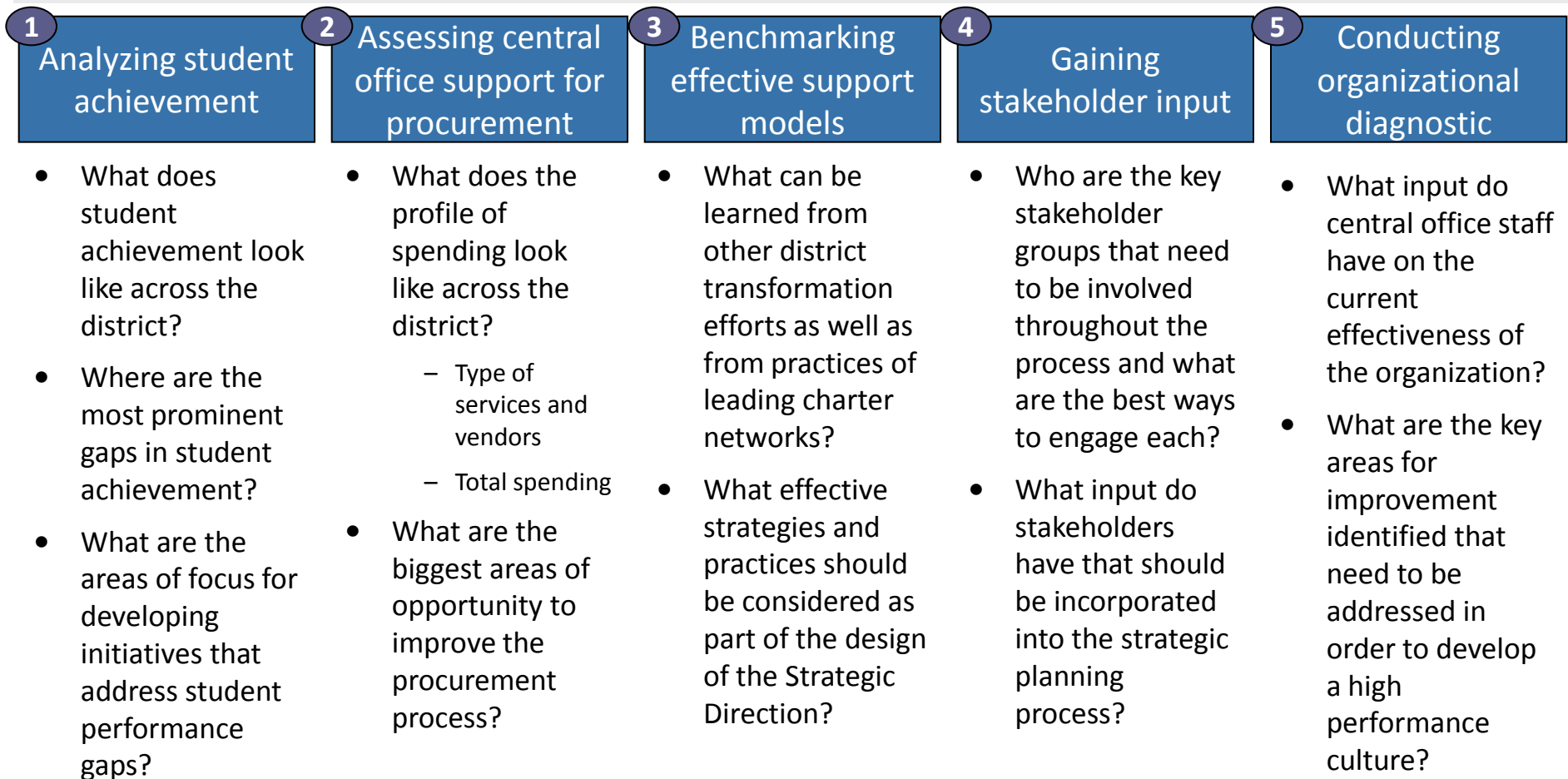
PRELIMINARY

- Engagement efforts will be centered on two goals:
 - Sharing the core strategies that emerge from the planning process and gaining input and buy-in on them
 - Discussing the role each stakeholder group is willing to play in implementing the Strategic Direction
- New communication channels will be used in Phase II (e.g., live TV show with Dr. Grier and Board of Education members), in addition to those used in Phase I (e.g., focus groups, eNews updates) to reach stakeholders
- Planning and scheduling of efforts is currently under way and will be finalized soon

Agenda

- Review overall strategic planning process
- Update on stakeholder engagement strategy
- Discuss key findings from Phase I diagnostic research
- Review Phase II process for designing core strategies and key initiatives

Phase I focused on research in five main areas, determined by HISD and Apollo



Findings from Phase I diagnostic research provide a common understanding of HISD's current situation from which to identify key initiatives

Phase I research to date identified a strong foundation for the Strategic Direction

- Effective high schools exist within the district at different levels of poverty, which provide examples and lessons to build upon
- Many of HISD's current practices and strategic initiatives are at the leading edge of innovative approaches nationally, including:
 - Decision-making at the school-level, combined with effective support services provided centrally
 - A focus on improving human capital, using data to differentiate professional development and inform key decisions
 - A reorganization of the district that better facilitates best practice sharing
 - Investment in comprehensive data systems to enable data-driven decision making
 - Use of outside organizations to supplement internal capabilities
 - A focus on mobilizing stakeholders behind the transformation effort
- Central office morale is generally high and the organization perceives that it is performing well across a number of key dimensions

Five big ideas worthy of further exploration emerged, several of which are under way

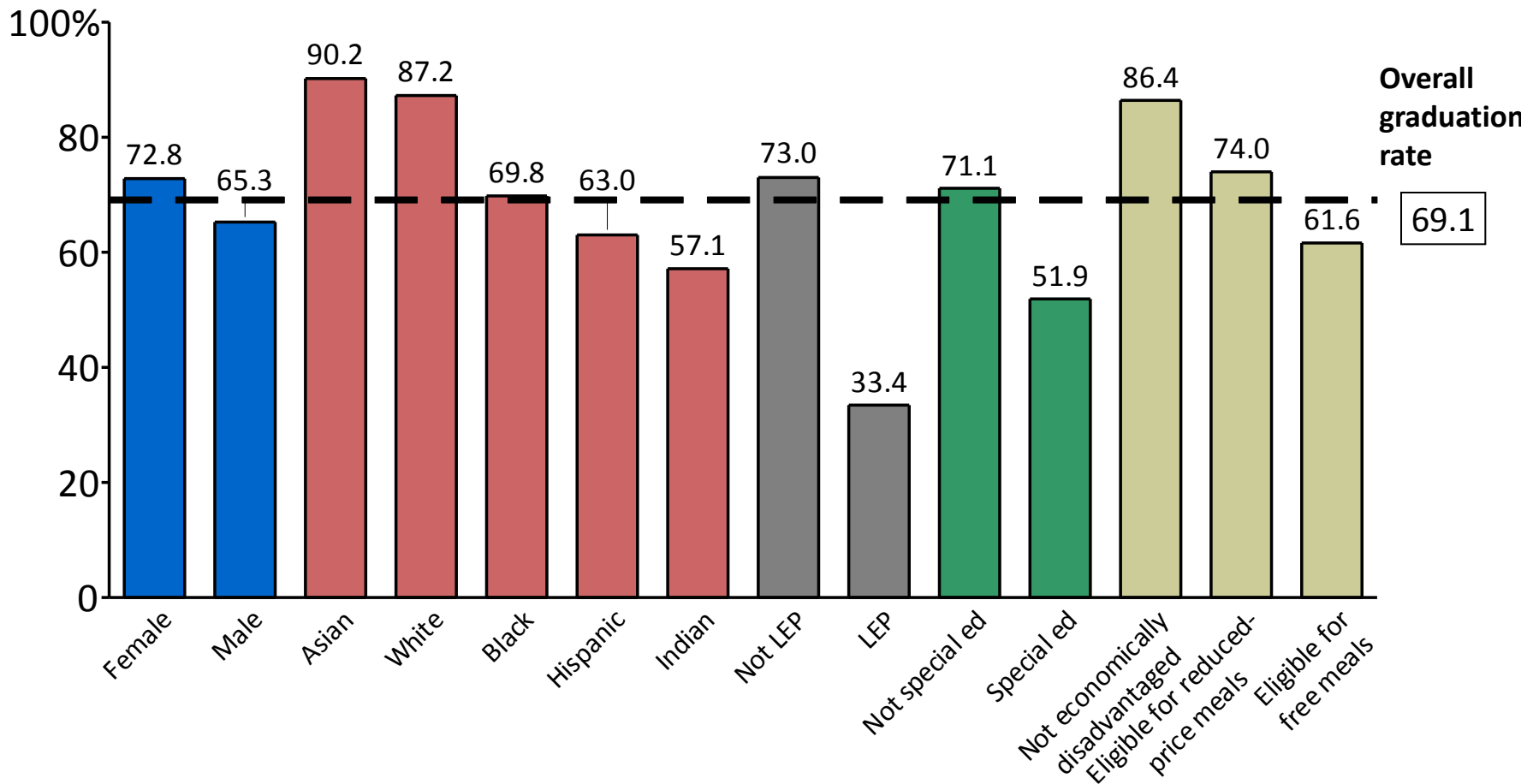
PRELIMINARY

1. Developing a distinct and aggressive strategy for turning around HISD's chronically low-performing schools
2. Revamping the procurement process for schools to offer principals a menu of providers that have been pre-selected based on quality and principal input
3. Mobilizing Team HISD to serve as the frontline promoters of the school transformation process
4. Channeling HISD graduates to post-secondary options with a track record of success, while working with local institutions to ensure they have adopted best practices for supporting low-income students
5. Instilling a customer-service mindset within HISD's central office that is focused above all else on increasing the amount of time spent by effective principals on improving instructional leadership within their buildings

Four-year graduation rates in the class of 2008 cohort differ within socioeconomic and demographic groups

Percent graduating

PRELIMINARY



Notes:

[1] "Class of 2008" cohort is comprised of students who were first-time ninth graders in 2004-05. See full factbase for a detailed explanation of the cohort.

[2] "Eligible for free meals" graduation rate on this chart includes both students eligible for free meals and those classified in "Other economic disadvantage"

[3] There were seven Indian students in this cohort, of whom four graduated. This is a significantly smaller group than all other ethnic groups in the cohort.

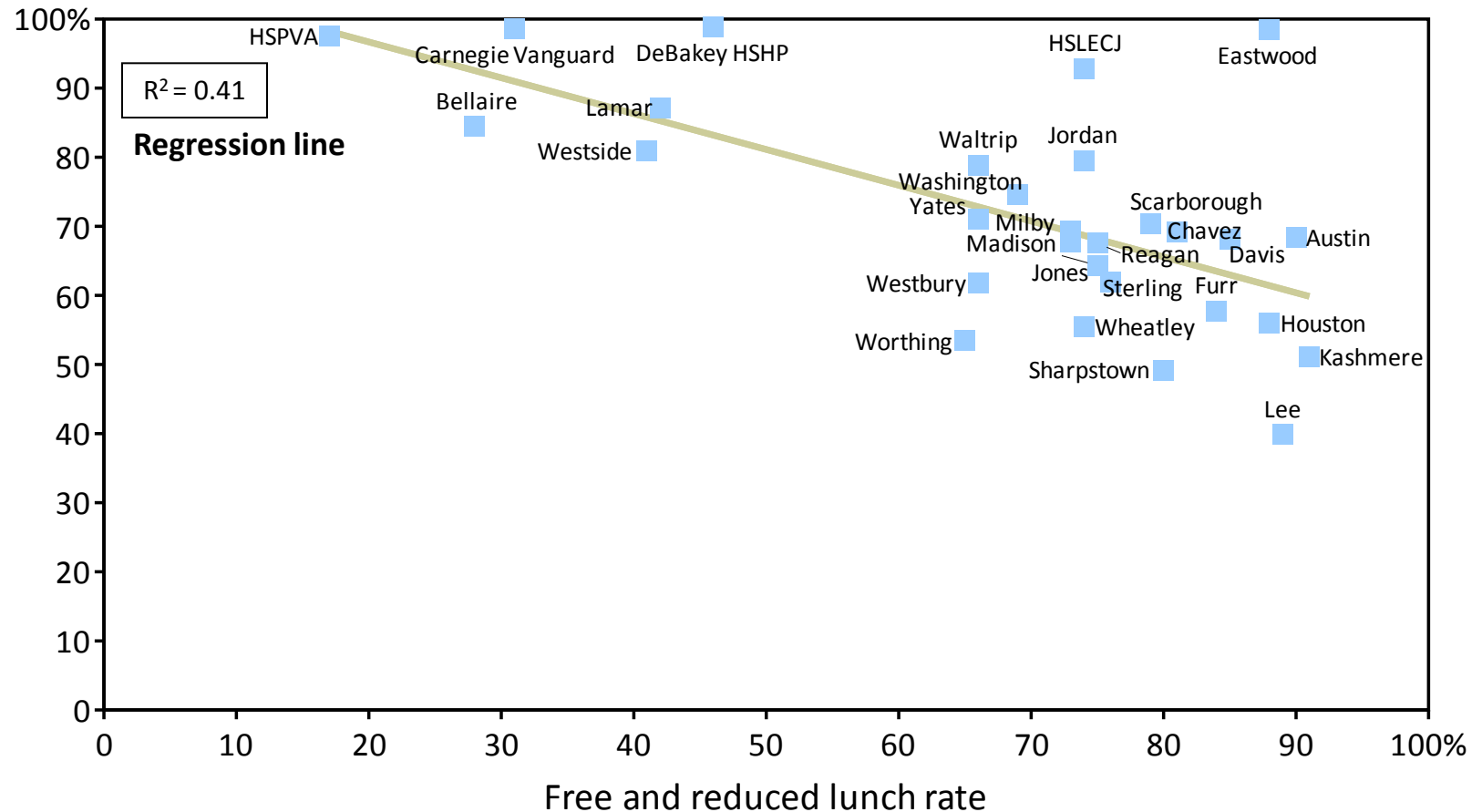
[4] Source: HISD student achievement data.

21

Correlation exists between graduation and poverty rates, although outliers do exist

Graduation rate (class of 2008)

PRELIMINARY



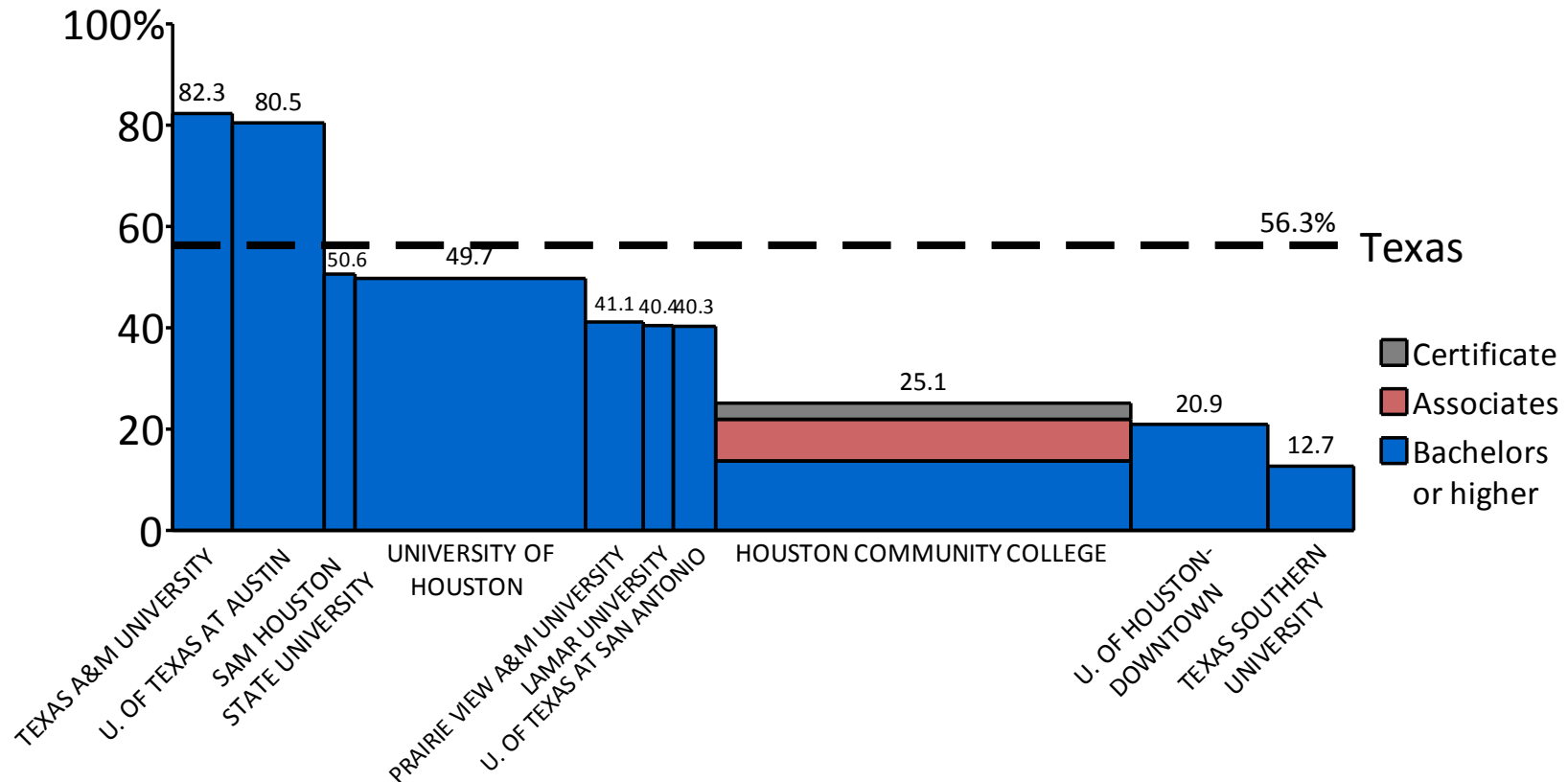
Notes:

- [1] Students who spent at least 2/3 of their time in a given school are attributed to that school. Otherwise, all cohort members are attributed to their 9th grade campus.
- [2] Analysis includes standard accountability high schools, except for Early College High Schools. It thus exclude alternative and DAEP (disciplinary alternative education programs) campuses.
- [3] Data are for a four-year longitudinal cohort of students who were first time 9th graders in HISD 2004-05. See factbase for methodology.
- [4] Source: HISD district profile and student achievement data.

8 out of the 10 postsecondary institutions in Texas where the highest numbers of HISD graduates enrolled have lower graduation rates than the state average

Graduation rate - all students (2008)

PRELIMINARY



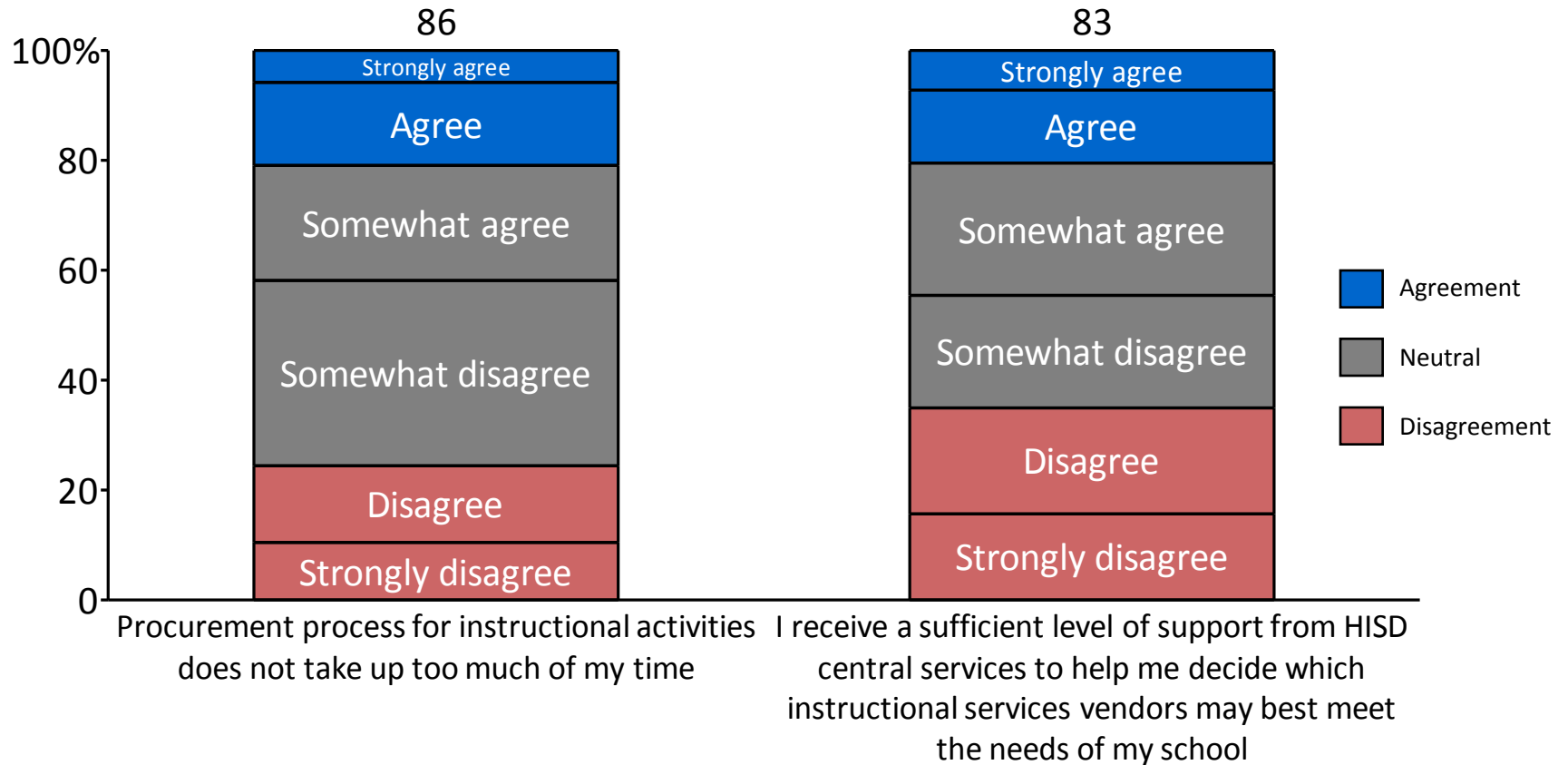
Number of HISD students enrolled (2008)

Notes and sources:

- [1] For all institutions except Houston Community College, graduation rates are calculated as sum of students who, by end of school year 2006-07, earned a baccalaureate or above, from either the same institution where they enrolled in fall of 2001 or a different institution, divided by the total number of students enrolled at the institution in fall of 2001
- [2] For Houston Community College, the graduation rate is calculated as the sum of students who, by the end of school year 2006-07, earned a baccalaureate or above from any institution, earned an associate's degree, or earned a certificate divided by the total number of students enrolled at the institution in fall 2001
- [3] Data are for first-time students entering in the fall semester of 2001 who enrolled in at least 12 semester credit hours for at least their first semester
- [4] Source: <http://www.txhighereddata.org/>. Enrollment data are from THECB report, "Texas High School Graduates FY 2008 Enrolled in Texas Public or Independent Higher Education Fall 2008. Graduation data are from THECB reports, "Baccalaureate Graduation Rates – First Time Entering Undergraduates, Fall 2001" and "Community and Technical Colleges 6-year Graduation Rates of First-Time Entering Undergraduates, Fall 2001."

Principals desire a reduction in the time they dedicate to purchasing and increased support from HISD central services

Percent of principals surveyed



Help in selecting the “right” vendors was an area where principals agreed that central services could provide additional support

“I get NO assistance. Earlier in the year, I requested a recommendation for a good program that I could use for TI/IAT with my bilingual responses. NOTHING - NO IDEAS. We had to figure it out for ourselves - I am not sure that we chose as wisely as we might have.”

“It would be really nice if HISD could recommend vendors based on the schools that are actually implementing the programs.”

“I want information about the success and credentials of the individuals providing the services.”

“A recommendation list of programs and practices would go a long way in helping to make purchasing decisions.”

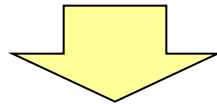
“I want to know which instructional services are proven and successful and used by other schools.”

“I would like to know which vendors high-performing HISD schools use with a report of achievement results.”

“We need consistency. There are too many vendors with too many prices.”

Charter school central offices serve three core functions in supporting school effectiveness

	Set rules	Establish a framework and share best practices	Provide centralized services
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the non-negotiables that schools must follow in order to meet the defining characteristics of the network, remain solvent, create a safe environment, and comply with legal regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a framework for delivery of education that sets parameters for content and guidelines for teaching methods, while identifying emerging innovations and sharing them across the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage and deliver a core set of high-quality services that are integral to the success of the school and where there are economies of scale to be gained by providing them centrally



The overarching purpose of a central office is to maximize the amount of time spent by high-quality principals and teachers on improving instruction. As one CMO leader described it: “Loose and tight elements in a model is not what it’s about. I do not think this is what causes a CMO to be successful. It has to do with who are your instructional leaders, who are your superintendents, and how much of their time are they spending working with schools to improve instruction.”

Stakeholder engagement comments centered on opportunities to improve parent involvement and collaboration

PRELIMINARY

Parental involvement

"As long as the parents and the environment do not change, nothing will change."

"There are many things missing that would contribute to an environment conducive to learning. One of the most important is that HISD needs to commit money and time to educating parents and increasing parental involvement at schools."

"Hold parents to an honorary contract to attend more parent conferences, volunteer/donate items, let the campus know if they are noticing studying difficulties with their children, other related duties..."

"It is time to take HISD Parent Engagement Department to another level."

Collaboration among key stakeholders

"I am a new teacher at a low performing school.. . In order for a student to be successful there needs to be team work. The teacher can't do it alone. The parents can't do it alone. It has to be a team effort. The team being PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS."

"This is not about finger pointing. It's about solving the problem. I think parents, teachers, and administrators all need to be on the same page for these kids to make it."

"I think there is a need and a place for change. However, I am concerned that relationship building is not taking place and because of that there is little buy in... Parents, teachers, campus based administrators and the community are apprehensive about the rapid change. Better PR might help, but also- some participation in the change process from the ranks and the community could be powerful."

Students suggested a number of areas in need of improvement

High-quality options and programs for all students across schools

"At my school tutoring is only for the kids that are behind. We also need tutoring for the ones that are doing OK but want to do better."

"We need more support from the school to give the kids options to get them motivated and to stay in school."

"We need more AP classes."

"We need after-school activities. These makes student more well-rounded."

Teacher motivation and quality, especially around technology

"Teachers need to be better at motivating students."

"Yes, we have smart boards but we do not use them because teachers do not know how to."

"Our teachers do not know how to use a calculator."

"Some teachers do not really know what they are teaching."

Consistency in technology availability across schools

"Every class at my school has a smart board. We also have laptops for every student."

"My school lacks technology."

"All our classrooms have smart boards."

"I've never seen a smart board in my school."

"We got calculators the day of the test...but we did not know how to use them."

Parent and community involvement

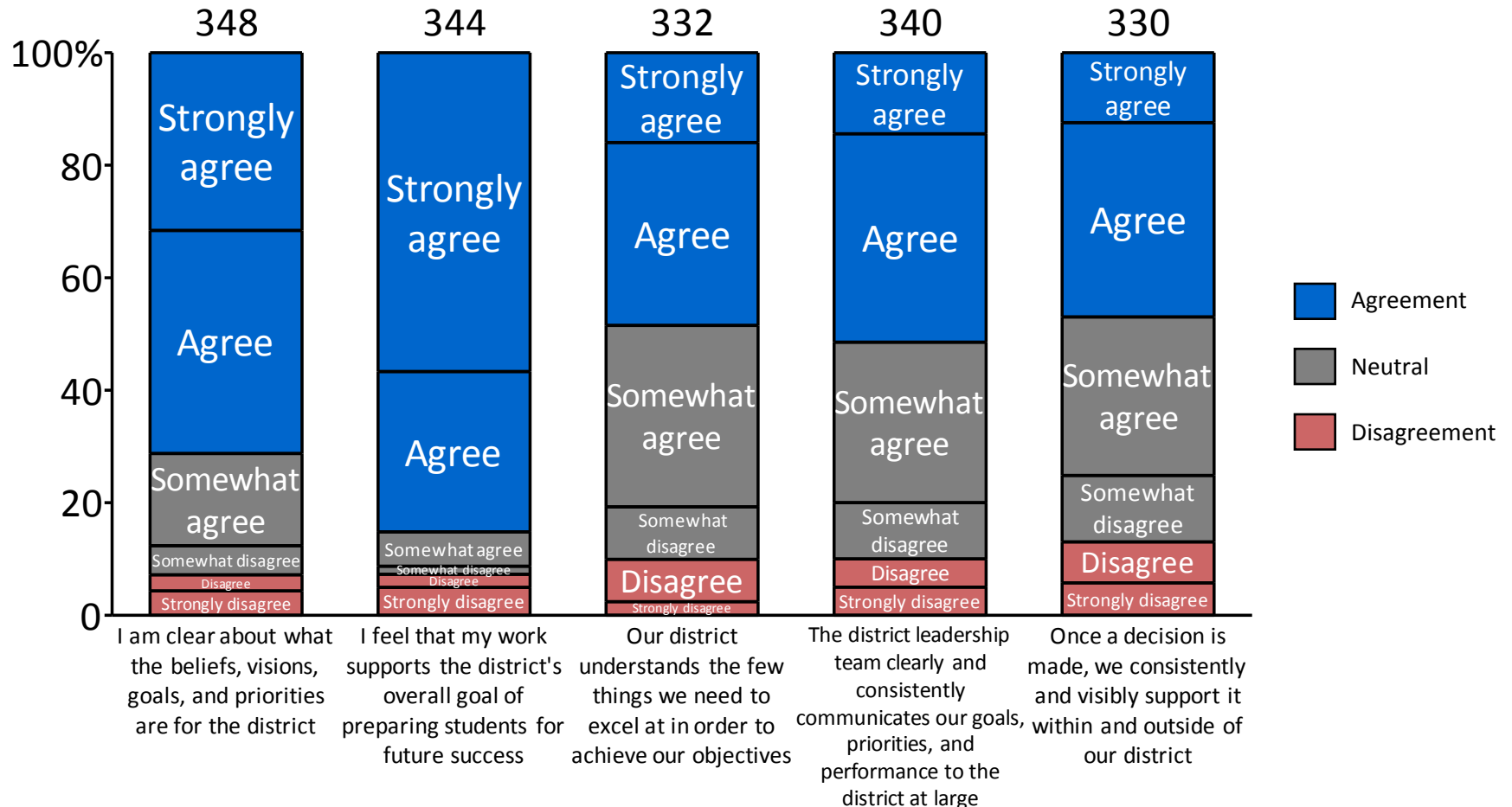
"HISD should build supplementary programs for the community to get involved in the schools."

"We learned how to use a calculator by bringing outside help to the school."

"Parents need to be more involved. We need more tutoring, maybe more people can be involved such as college students or other high school students."

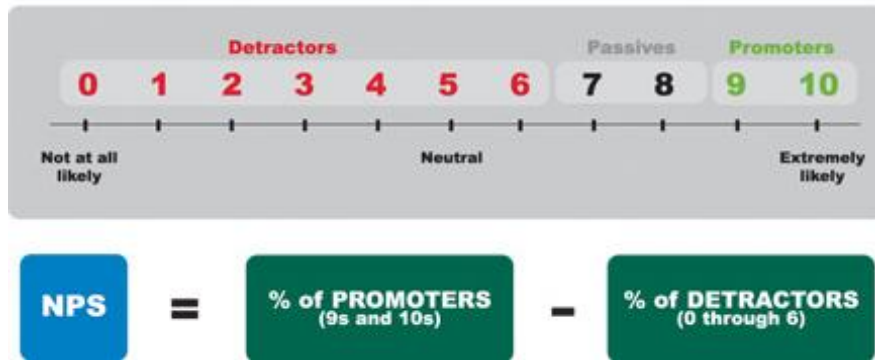
Organizational diagnostic survey results: Clarity and Alignment

Percent of survey responses



Promotion of HISD by central office staff is mixed

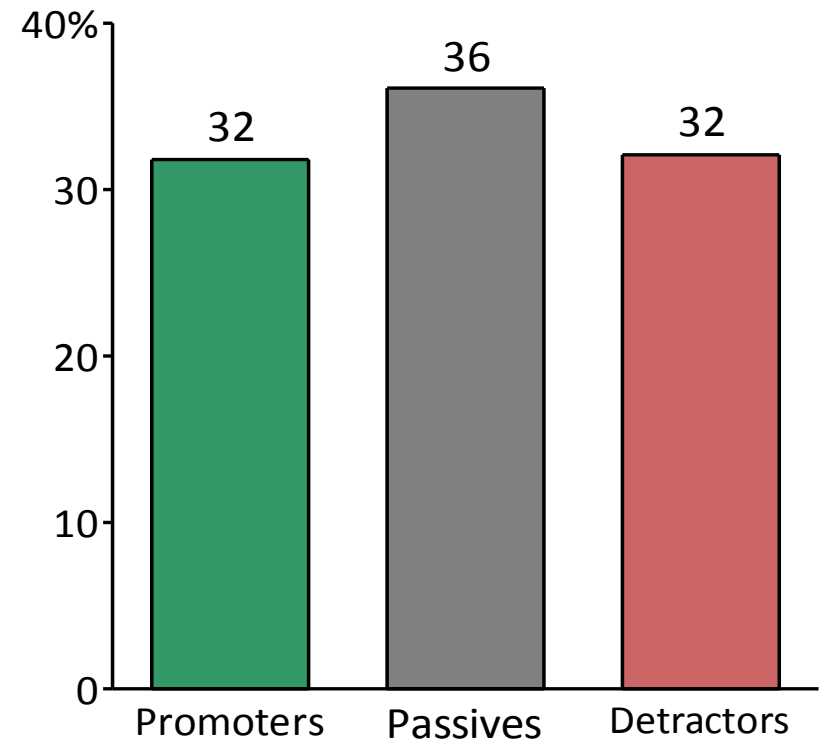
Overview of Net Promoter concept



- Building positive momentum behind an organization depends on having a cohort of strong promoters and a minimum number of detractors
- A Net Promoter Score can be calculated by subtracting the percentage of employees who are Detractors from the percentage who are Promoters

How likely would you recommend HISD as a place to work to a friend or relative?

Percent of responses



Communication was consistently mentioned as biggest area for district to improve upon

Greater consistency in messaging

"No clear, concise message of main goals and direction for each school year."

"Inconsistent messages being promoted throughout the district. What is said at that district building is not or is ineffectively carried out."

"The district needs to speak with one voice."

"There are varied perceptions of the district's vision."

"Campus based and district based administrators need to receive the same information so that they can be on the same page."

"It would be nice to have everyone on the same page. My job would be much more effective if this was the case."

More effective input and dissemination

"Employees believe they do NOT have a voice."

"There are few mechanisms in place for soliciting or encouraging suggestions from employees."

"There needs to be effective proactive communication – people don't feel unified because they read the information in the paper before we tell them."

"A suggestion box set-up would be a great idea since it would promote creative ideas.."

"The 'top' operates under the assumption that information 'trickles down.' If it does, it gets changed; if it does not, rumors are relied upon for information."

"There needs to be clear communication protocols and expectations."

Increased frequency and timeliness

"Not enough communication, so information is usually convoluted."

"Lack of communication between different programs within the same building."

"The biggest issue is the lack of communication within the same department. Lack of communication from management to the lowest level."

"Open and timely communication is a big issue."

"Internal communication could be better. I don't know where we are going with the new leadership."

"I feel sometimes that directives are given without enough notice and preparation for efficient implementation."

Agenda

- Review overall strategic planning process
- Update on stakeholder engagement strategy
- Discuss key findings from Phase I diagnostic research
- Review Phase II process for designing core strategies and key initiatives

Phase II of the project involves developing a strategy for transforming HISD

PRELIMINARY

Goals for Phase II of the strategic planning process

- Identifying and prioritizing initiatives
- Setting targets
- Determining resource requirements
 - Outlining organizational capacity required
 - Creating financial projections
 - Developing a strategy for philanthropic funding (if necessary)

The strategy for impact has two main layers

PRELIMINARY



**Core
strategies**

Key initiatives

Description

- Main elements of Strategic Direction HISD will pursue in order to realize the goals outlined by the board
- Major components of work that fall within each core strategy that require successful execution in order to achieve set performance targets

Example

- Implementing diverse and effective instructional models
- Redefinition of roles and structures, systems, processes, and services to schools to align with academic goals

Core strategies – initial draft

PRELIMINARY

Core strategies

1

Implementing diverse and effective instructional models

- Providing schools with the supports required to ensure students have access to a high-quality education and post-secondary options with a track record of success

2

Empowering leadership through accountability

- Using data-driven systems, tools, and processes to measure and manage performance and quality

3

Cultivating high-quality human capital

- Creating a comprehensive plan that puts effective principals, administrators, and teachers into every school and classroom

4

Improving engagement and communications

- Developing clear programs, processes, and guidelines to inform and engage all major key stakeholders groups

Next steps

- Incorporate comments from today's discussion into strategic planning process
- Share completed student achievement analysis
- Work with Board members to decide how to engage constituent groups
- Share draft of core strategies at May 20th workshop
-
-
-
-