



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center

4400 West 18th Street • Houston, Texas 77092-8501

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Houston Independent School District is working to address overcrowding at certain elementary schools across the city. This is being done in order to help schools comply with a state law requiring classrooms in grades kindergarten through 4 to have no more than 22 students. As part of this process, the school district is analyzing class size, enrollment trends, and future housing growth.

You are receiving this letter because the school your child attends is likely to be affected by HISD's plan to address classroom overcrowding. Possible solutions to overcrowding will vary depending on each school's unique situation and needs. In some cases, the district may determine that it is necessary to add temporary buildings to a campus. In other cases, the best solution may be to redraw school attendance boundaries or make changes to grade-level configurations and programs.

In the coming weeks, HISD will be conducting community information meetings where you will learn specifics about the plan and how it may affect your school. These meetings will also provide the community with an opportunity to provide feedback before a final proposal is presented to the HISD Board of Education for approval in March. The district's goal is to implement any board-approved changes in time for the upcoming 2015-2016 school year.

Please be on the lookout for future communications regarding this important issue. HISD is committed to partnering with parents to come up with a plan that benefits all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Smith", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mark Smith
Chief Student Support Officer

FAQ

Attendance Boundaries

Why is HISD adjusting attendance boundaries?

The Houston Independent School District is working to readjust attendance boundaries at 22 schools in an effort to reduce the number of class-size waivers submitted each year to the state. The goal of the boundary readjustment is to alleviate overcrowding, while still maintaining the traditional demographic makeup of each affected school.

Why do we have to decrease the number of class-size waivers we submit?

The Texas Education Agency has asked HISD to decrease the number of class-size waivers the district submits each year. This school year, HISD had to submit nearly 1,500 class-size waivers to the state education agency. In response to TEA's request, we're now attempting to cut that number in half for the 2015-2016 school year, with plans to continue the decrease incrementally through 2019.

Why does the Texas Education Agency care how big our classes are?

The TEA requires all kindergarten through fourth-grade classes to have no more than 22 students per classroom. Classes that exceed that number must be granted a state waiver by the TEA.

What schools are potentially affected?

Affected schools include Anderson, Ashford, Askew, Bastian, Burbank, Bush, Daily, Emerson, Highland Heights, Kelso, Love, Lyons, Memorial, Northline, Shadowbriar, Sinclair, Smith, Stevens, Tinsley, Walnut Bend and Young elementary schools, and Halpin Early Childhood Center.

Why were these 22 schools selected?

These 22 schools have been identified for possible boundary adjustments because they are either overcrowded or have space for students currently living within the attendance boundaries of neighboring overcrowded schools. Other schools that are overcrowded but don't have surrounding campuses with available space could see programmatic changes or portable buildings installed to address the issue.

What else is HISD doing to address overcrowding?

District officials also are proposing some policy revisions including adding an extra layer of scrutiny to the waiver review process, eliminating waivers for district charter schools, and capping the number of transfer students that schools may accept from outside their attendance boundaries.

How do we find out more information about the proposal for our school?

Informational community meetings designed to provide additional details on the proposals and gather feedback from parents will be held over the next month. Parents at affected schools will be notified directly once dates for those meetings have been set.

Who makes the final decision on attendance boundary changes?

The HISD Board of Education makes the final decision. This proposal was submitted to trustees for discussion on Thursday. The board is set to vote on the issue in March after receiving community input.

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