

**MESSAGE TO PARENTS ...**

## Olanga's Words



Pictured to the right of Olanga is his mother, Ms. Bora who continues to master her seamstress skills. His sister sitting to his left, serves our country in the U.S. National Guard. Olanga currently focuses on his studies in becoming a Registered Nurse.

The Olashkoko Family represents one of many families who immigrated to the United States many years ago. We met with Olanga, one of five children who along with his parents left their home, Congo, seven years ago to begin their journey to the United States. The family left behind an older sister, married and a mother of three who was unable to make the journey. Olanga recalls how difficult it was to leave his sister behind; they remain in communication but have little hope of being reunited.

Due to the unrest and Civil War in Congo, his parents made the decision to leave home and pursue a sounder life for their children. They spent two difficult years living in refugee camps in Kenya. Moving from their home in Congo to living in tents was a contrast he and his siblings were not prepared for. The harsh conditions, a semi-desert environment where their tent homes were often carried away by flooding. The conditions in Kenya did not lend itself for growing their own food, only limited canned foods were available. It was here that their protector and father, who was ill grew more sick requiring medical care.

After two years in Kenya, the family began the second phase of their flight for a better life leading them to Nairobi. Here their father's health was restored. The Olashkoko Family's hope for seeking a life in the U.S.

remained with them until they made their journey 5 years later.

Today, Olanga fondly reflects on the 3 years he and his family have spent in their new home, Houston, Texas. He expresses his appreciation for the new life he now has in Houston as well as the support his teachers at Houston Independent School District have provided.

Olanga was asked if he regretted his family's choice to come to the U.S. He stated, "At the beginning I had questions of coming here. It was totally different. Could we survive here? Once living here all those fears went away. Then we met Ms. Shirin, she became our Mentor. She helped our family get on the right path."

That path led Olanga's older sister, Prista, to serve our country in the Military Branch of the National Guard. Her interest in pursuing this career began while attending one of our leading campuses, Westside HS.

Olanga's path has guided him towards a career in the medical profession as a Registered Nurse. While he dedicates himself to his studies, he does not relinquish his goal of becoming a professional dancer. He explains with such enthusiasm how he would like to be in movies and teach dance. In his own words, "Everything is possible. God really works miracles."

The immigration process for the Olashkoko Family has not come without hardships. They have been resilient and now the family is prospering; his father has fully recovered and is receiving training in farming and Ms. Abora, Olanga's mother, is continuing to develop her seamstress skills, a talent she brought from home.

When asked "what would you share with others who may have recently immigrated to the U.S.?", Olanga responds with such gratitude for the schools, teachers and district that reached out to him and his family. He welcomes others to come and experience change in a good way; to partake in the amazing schools where educational internships are available and students have access to sports clubs, community, and a caring extended family.

During the last three years, Olanga has learned a dedicated work ethic. Sharing how "hard work pays off; if you put in 100% and you are humble, you receive 100% in return."

**DROP OF WISDOM**

I bring you greetings on behalf of the Houston Independent School District. Happy New Year! The year 2021 shows promises to be a great year for us all. There will be changes in the world in which we live, but one thing that will not change is that students are our NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. There are many ways you as parents can help your child be successful.



Nicole Moore

Here are a few things that parents can do to help with the success of their child(ren):

- Provide a quiet workspace for your child to read, virtual learn, or do homework. Children will concentrate better with an assigned place to study or read.
- Create a home library with books, magazines, newspaper comics, etc. This will motivate your child to read which can lead to your child becoming a good writer.
- Continue to keep in touch with your child's teacher to make sure they have completed all assignments and they are passing all subject areas. This can also be monitored on the HISD Parent Connect portal <https://www.houstonisd.org/psc>
- Most importantly, make time to connect with your child regarding school, this can happen during daily dinner where children are able to share their day and parents are able to keep in touch with their child's feelings or concerns. Provide encouraging words daily that will keep them motivated.
- Another great resource is HISD@Home <https://www.houstonisd.org/home>.

Let's maximize the time we have with our children. HISD administrators and school staffs are ready and available to assist parents and students. Let's make 2021 a great year.

**Nicole Moore, Achieve 180 – Area Superintendent**

**HISD | School Choice**  
HUNDREDS OF OPTIONS. ONE APPLICATION.

Be one of our latest and greatest Magnet School candidates! Take your knowledge and skills to its potential and register to join your choice of Magnet schools. Start the registration process today by visiting <https://www.houstonisd.org/enroll>

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**PHASE 2: NOV. 7, 2020 – FEB. 26, 2021\***  
**PHASE 3: FEB. 27, 2021**

\*Deadline for current HISD students to apply for transfers

**2020-2021 TESTING CALENDAR**

The Texas Education Agency's testing calendars are available for review. Assessment information for STAAR/ STAAR Alt and TELPAS/ TELPAS AI may be accessed by clicking <https://bit.ly/3psRRov>

## METRO STUDENT FARES INFORMATION

Metro is the major public transportation agency based in Houston, Texas. It operates bus, light rail, bus rapid transit, HOV and HOT lanes, and paratransit service in the city as well as most of Harris County.

METRO's mission is to provide safe, clean, reliable, accessible, and friendly public transportation services to our region.



### Metro Student Fares Information

#### Kindergarten to 12th Grade Students

Middle and high school students can pay with cash (on the bus only) and receive a 50 percent discount using their student ID card. Elementary students can also pay with cash (on the bus only) without having to show an ID.

#### Student METRO Q® Fare Card

Students can obtain a Student METRO Q® Fare Card or METRO Day Pass. You will need a current school ID, class schedule, enrollment form, report card (on school letterhead) or student METRO fare card registration form signed by the parent or guardian

Apply for the card online or print and mail the form. For more information click <https://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/FareStudent.aspx>.

## WHEN YOU ARE NEW TO U.S. SCHOOLS...

### Routines and Expectations

School-wide values, systems and routines reinforce a school's culture that fosters a positive learning environment and strong relationships. They are less about compliance with rules and more about creating an environment that is valued by everyone.

Examples of school routines and educational expectations are:

- Following a schedule and rotating classrooms or teachers
- Co-ed classes
- Raising a hand to speak
- What to do in emergency drills
- Discipline in the school context
- Lining up to leave the classroom
- Wearing or not wearing a uniform
- Importance of class attendance and report card grades
- Working independently and/or quietly
- Sitting still for periods of time (may vary, but usually between 30-to-90-minute classes)
- Changing clothes for physical education classes in an open locker room
- The roles of school personnel and who to go to with specific concerns
- How students and teachers relate to, and address, one another

Make every day as predictable and routine as you can. Follow the same schedule before and after school. It can look something like this: Wake up, wash face, eat breakfast, get dressed, brush teeth, leave for school or join online class. Planning is key to having a great day!

### Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services.

Welcoming and Orienting Newcomer Students to U.S. Schools.

Retrieved December 9, 2020, from <https://brycs.org/schools/welcoming-and-orienting-newcomer-students-to-u-s-schools/>

## SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS IN TX

Houston ISD Supports - <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/184314>

List of linguistic accommodations

#### Student Digital Resources

- Imagine Language and Literacy
- Includes non-digital resources in 6 different languages -- Urdu, Swahili, Polish, Karen, Farsi, Burmese <http://bit.ly/3osYYf5>

#### Parent Resources

#### Texas Education Agency Supports

Supporting English Learners in Texas - <http://bit.ly/3t69k8k>

Take the *Parent and Family Survey* to provide the TEA with your feedback, so that the agency and district can better support you and your children.

## RAISING A BILINGUAL CHILD

# How the State Monitors English Learner's Language Progress

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is a yearly assessment for students in Texas public schools who are learning the English language. It evaluates the progress that each EL makes in the four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing to become proficient in the use of academic English.

For students to reach their full academic potential, it is important for them to make steady progress in learning English. Below you will find some activities suggested by Texas Education Agency (TEA) that may assist your child in preparing for TELPAS.

- Create an environment rich in literature
- Read together or independently
- Listen to audio books and talk about the theme, the characters, or the best parts of the book.
- Write daily.
- Tell Stories
- Talk Daily



For more information on how to implement these activities please access the following link:

English: <https://bit.ly/3clsG3q>

Spanish: <https://bit.ly/3iWMHOU>

## HEROD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Nowadays being bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural is almost every parent's dream for their children. In a fast-changing and evolving world, being able to communicate in several languages is not only a skill, but the gift that keeps on giving. When you are bilingual (or multilingual) the opportunities that open for you are endless; therefore, providing your child with the ability to fluently speak at least two languages from an early age is the best way to set them up for success.

When you consider the mission statement at Herod Elementary School in HISD you understand that this is exactly what the teachers and administrators at Herod have dedicated themselves to do, "At Gary L. Herod Elementary School, it is our mission to work as a committed community to provide an engaging respectful learning environment where all students are encouraged to reach their full potential socially, emotionally and academically."

After 25 years of opening the first Dual Language Program in HISD, Herod ES continues to offer the great opportunity of bilingualism to support children in achieving their full potential. This is the very reason why we would like to acknowledge the tireless work and effort that educators along with their entire community of parents, students, and administrators have been successfully accomplishing by equipping students with the necessary skills and tools to become bilingual, biliterate and bicultural citizens that give back to their community, the society, and the world.

Thank you, Herod family, for continuing to encourage our HISD students to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural, to be able to give back to their communities through their knowledge and talents. For more information about please visit <https://www.houstonisd.org/herodelem>

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Enjoying Herod Elementary's 25<sup>th</sup> year Dual Language Anniversary is the Hidalgo Family. Their children, Kristel Hidalgo (3rd) and Joel Hidalgo (2nd) enjoy attending HISD's Pioneer DL campus. The family looks forward to pursuing the academic benefits Dual Language offers their scholars.