

# Better, Stronger Schools for Now ... and the Future



**HISD**  
*Proposed School Closure,  
Consolidation, and  
Reorganization Plan*

FEBRUARY 2014

# Better Information Leads to Careful Reflection

The Houston metro area continues to grow and evolve. As the largest school district in the city, serving over 210,000 students, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) must also adapt and evolve to the city's changing landscape. That's precisely why the district recently took an extensive look at Houston's changing demographics and HISD's mobility and enrollment rates.

Two recently released reports were presented at the Board of Education's November workshop. The first presentation provided detailed data on Houston's changing demographics and outlined growth forecasts with specific information on predicted household characteristics for Houston's diverse neighborhoods.

A second complementary report outlined detailed enrollment and mobility data for all HISD schools. For the first time ever, the district has detailed information about students who choose to transfer in and transfer out of each school's respective attendance zone. This data was very revealing — identifying both real challenges and great opportunities.

To most effectively address these opportunities and challenges, the district has begun intense conversations around workable proposals to ensure that HISD can achieve its mission to educate and empower all students. Focused on creating better, stronger schools for now ... and the future, we need your help to ensure that:

- HISD is well prepared to support the needs of the Houston community in the years to come
- All HISD schools offer robust programming and support services
- All HISD schools should strive to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve
- HISD uses its resources effectively and efficiently
- HISD capitalizes on its investment in great teachers, principals, and staff

## Our Assets

As we look to the future, HISD is able to leverage many assets as it positions itself to serve the needs of the Houston community.

- Through our bond programs, HISD is building the infrastructure to support long-term enrollment growth and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.
- We have made strategic investments in technology, which will support digital-age instruction in our schools and greatly enhance our ability to create individualized learning programs for all students.
- As a pioneer and leader in school choice, HISD has the foundation to create innovative career pathways and programs aligned with fields that are in high demand both in Houston and nationwide.



# Addressing Our Challenges Together

## THE EFFECTS OF LOW ENROLLMENT

HISD operates many schools that are under-enrolled and under-utilized. Because every school requires administrative, academic and maintenance support, the district often spends disproportionately high sums on noninstructional staff in small and/or under-enrolled schools.

This then often results in inequity, with some schools not being able to support the same type of academic programming that schools with full enrollment can provide. Additionally, small schools and/or under-enrolled schools often do not allow staff to work collaboratively, or they may limit flexibility on class sizing and student grouping, which in turn can minimize the impact of highly effective teachers.

As we critically reflect on small schools and/or schools with low enrollment rates, it's important for all of us to keep top of mind the fact that fully enrolled schools are better able to invest in programs to help low-performing students, increase opportunities for advanced learners, and develop specialized programs to engage students more thoroughly.

## EVOLVING DEMOGRAPHICS

Another challenge facing HISD is the evolution of Houston's neighborhoods — some of our communities look very different today than they did just five or 10 years ago. And vastly different than they looked 20, 30, or 40 years ago.

- We have numerous schools with year-over-year declines in enrollment caused by aging populations in neighborhoods once known for young families
- We have other schools strained by the influx of young families as the result of new housing projects or rebuilds

Naturally, these types of demographic shifts are to be expected in a city with the kind of high growth being experienced here in Houston. Nonetheless, they create challenges that we must address together as a community.

## Our Proposal

In order to provide the best learning environments for our students as our neighborhoods continue to evolve, we are recommending the following school closures, consolidations, and reorganizations:

PROPOSED CLOSURE	CONSOLIDATED WITH	REASONS
Dodson Elementary-Montessori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blackshear Elementary School</li> <li>• The Rusk School</li> <li>• Lantrip Elementary School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in housing development patterns</li> <li>• Potential for facility to be repurposed</li> </ul>
Nathaniel Q. Henderson Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruce Elementary School *</li> <li>• Pugh Elementary School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual decrease in student population</li> <li>• Changes in housing development patterns</li> </ul>
Jesse H. Jones High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sterling Aviation High School</li> <li>• Worthing High School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low enrollment</li> <li>• High numbers transferring out</li> </ul>
Port Houston Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pleasantville Elementary School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential housing is being replaced by industrial land use</li> <li>• Port Houston is close to a school with larger capacity</li> </ul>
Fleming Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Middle School</li> <li>• McReynolds Middle School</li> <li>• John Marshall Middle School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual decrease in student population</li> </ul>

\* Please note that to accommodate this consolidation, there is also a proposal to shift Bruce Elementary School's attendance zone — rezoning a section of its current zone to Atherton Elementary school and a small section of Atherton Elementary School's zone to Eliot Elementary School.

Additionally, due to continued housing development in the southwest quadrant of the district and increasing enrollment projections, the attendance boundary for Billy Reagan K-8 must be adjusted:

PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGE	REASON
Billy Reagan K-8: Boundary change proposed to reduce the number of students zoned to campus.	The functional capacity of Reagan K-8 is 900 students, and the zoned population has grown over the years to exceed 1,300 students. Every year, approximately 150 students are sent to farther campuses due to lack of space at Reagan K-8. The proposed boundary change would address this issue and allow students to attend their neighborhood schools.

# Learn More about HISD's Proposal at an Upcoming Community Meeting

We value your input, and we understand you have questions about these proposed changes and how they will affect your community. Please consider attending an upcoming community meeting in your neighborhood. You will hear from district officials, and will have the opportunity to ask questions and speak directly with your school principal and other HISD team members.



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2014  
6:30 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.

**Dodson Elementary-Montessori**  
1808 Sampson Street  
Houston, TX 77003-5434

**Nathaniel Q. Henderson Elementary School**  
701 Solo Street  
Houston, TX 77020-7213

**Jesse H. Jones High School**  
7414 Saint Lo Road  
Houston, TX 77033-2797

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2014  
6:30 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.

**Port Houston Elementary School**  
1800 McCarty Street  
Houston, TX 77029-3761

**Fleming Middle School**  
4910 Collingsworth Street  
Houston, TX 77026-5150

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2014  
6:30 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.

**Billy Reagan K-8**  
4842 Anderson Road  
Houston, TX 77053

## What Happens Next?

Your feedback is important to us, and will help us better meet the needs of your school community. The HISD Board of Education will review feedback from the community meetings before voting on the proposed closure, consolidation, and reorganization plan.

**Please note: The proposed changes outlined in this document are just that — proposals.** They will not become official unless and until the Board of Education votes to approve any or all of them at its **regular monthly meeting on March 13**. Every step of the way, we will keep parents and community members informed of developments.

