QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

A MESSAGE FROM THE
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

RECONNECT SAFELY
RETURN STRONG
SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

I hope you are as excited as I am to embark on a new adventure of learning for the 2020-2021 school year. It is our year of flexibility as we prepare to Reconnect Safely and Return Strong.

With the health and safety of our students, families, and staff as our top priority, all students will begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually on September 8, 2020. Virtual instruction for all students will continue for six weeks through Friday, October 16, 2020.

The decision to begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually and delay the start of the school year for two weeks was due to the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases in the area.

On Monday, October 19, 2020, face-to-face instruction for students will begin. This date is subject to change based on COVID-19 conditions across the City of Houston and guidance from local, state, and federal health officials.

There also will be an option for parents to opt out of face-to-face instruction entirely for the fall semester and 2020-2021 school year. All parents will be asked to complete the 2020-2021 Parent Introduction to Virtual Learning Online Course by September 4. The course will be available on August 10.

I understand you may have questions about how the plan for 2020-2021 will impact you. To assist you, we have produced this helpful guide to the new school year. For more information and resources, please visit HoustonISD.org/Reopening.

I look forward to Reconnecting Safely and Returning Strong for the new year.

Sincerely,

GRENITA F. LATHAN, PH.D.
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

PARENTS: FILL OUT THE SOCIOECONOMIC FORM

This form replaces the free and reduced-price lunch application and will be distributed at schools. It can also be downloaded at:

HoustonISD.org/ParentForms

FILLING OUT THIS FORM HELPS OUR SCHOOLS GET THE FUNDING THEY NEED!
In May 2020, HISD formed a Communicable Disease Plan (CDP) Task Force—a working group made up of employees, educators, parents, community members, and healthcare officials.

The task force was charged with reviewing guidance from local, state, and federal health and education officials, as well as feedback from HISD parent and teacher surveys, and then providing recommendations that prioritize health and safety.

The group worked diligently through June to identify ways HISD could return students and teachers to classrooms and employees to office workspaces while following public health guidelines and mitigating transmission of COVID-19.

The HISD Communicable Disease Plan outlines its recommendations—as well as accompanying procedures, protocol, challenges, and needs—for all facets of the country’s seventh-largest school district. To learn more about the CDP, go to HoustonISD.org/Reopening.

In order to incorporate lessons learned and improve upon instructional practices utilized during last year’s launch of HISD @ H.O.M.E., HISD’s virtual learning approach, an Instructional Continuity Plan was developed to guide virtual instruction for the 2020-21 school year.

The goal of this plan is to provide a deeper level of guidance and support to parents, students, and staff members during periods of virtual instruction. During the first six weeks of 2020-21 school year, HISD will be implementing asynchronous learning. Asynchronous learning is an instructional experience in which students will be able to work at their own pace and teachers will be available to provide live support and intervention through a daily instructional support schedule.

HISD will use strategies and best practices associated with virtual learning to design learning activities to meet the needs of the learner where they are. Microsoft Teams and The HISD Learning Management System, The Hub, will be utilized to provide instruction. For a full summary of the plan, please visit HoustonISD.org/ICP.
What is the plan for the 2020-2021 school year?
All students will begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually on September 8, 2020. Virtual instruction for all students will continue for six weeks through Friday, October 16, 2020. On Monday, October 19, 2020, face-to-face instruction for all students will begin. However, this date is subject to change based on COVID-19 conditions across the city of Houston and recommendations from local, state, and federal health officials.

How will grading take place?
Students enrolled in remote instruction follow the same grading guidelines as in-person instruction. Teachers receive support and guidance on effective grading practices to ensure that grading guidelines are followed in both instructional models. Teachers will post grades on a weekly basis.

Courses taken as Dual Credit or Dual Enrollment will be subject to the grading policies of the Institution of Higher Education (IHE) issuing the college credit.

Additional information on grades:
- Grades will be taken during each grading cycle of the 2020-2021 school year.
- All cycle grades will be used in the calculation of the final average for any class.
- Final exams will be administered for all high school credit courses.
- Teachers will be recording grades, which will be available for parents and students to access through the HISD Connect Parent Portal (log-in information will be provided by campuses).

What safety protocols will be in place at district schools and facilities?
Once in-person instruction resumes, safety protocols will include requiring all HISD employees, students, and visitors to undergo entry screenings, wear face coverings, wash hands regularly, and practice physical distancing.

The district will provide enough hand soap, paper towels, tissues, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant to accommodate frequent cleaning of high-touch areas. Additionally, it will be mandatory for nurses, custodial staff, food service workers, and special education staff to wear gloves.

Classrooms must be reconfigured to ensure physical distancing, with student-teacher ratios capped at one teacher for every 10 students. Student assemblies will be held virtually. All campus-based employees and students must follow infection and high-touch area protocols. Campuses must establish isolation areas for students and adults who are flagged during entry screening.

How will physical distancing measures be ensured on school buses? Which students will be eligible for transportation?
Transportation will be provided to special education, homeless, elementary and specialty school students. Service may also be provided to some students in middle school or who live along high-risk routes if resources are available. Bus capacity will be limited to 26 students, with one person per seat required to sit by the window. Students must wear masks, and drivers must wear masks, shields, and gloves. Upon boarding, students must sanitize their hands and scan their bus badge. Seats must be filled from the back to front and emptied from front to back to minimize contact. Four-to-six bus windows will be down whenever possible for air circulation.

Will uniforms be required for the new school year?
HISD has announced the suspension of the student uniform policy for 2020-2021. If students already have uniforms and wish to wear them, they are still welcome to do so. Students will still be expected to follow the dress code specified by each individual campus.

Those guidelines can be found on each campus website. For more information about planning for the 2020-2021 school year, visit HoustonISD.org/Reopening.
All district parents are required to complete the 2020-2021 Parent Introduction to Virtual Learning Online Course. This course will outline student expectations, attendance, grading, and more. Course is available at HoustonISD.org/Reopening and the deadline is September 4.

PARENTS: COMPLETE YOUR VIRTUAL LEARNING COURSE

In HISD, ensuring the safety of our students and staff is our top priority. We want schools to remain safe at all times so that productive academic instruction can occur. We all have an essential role to play in keeping our children safe from gun violence. As a district, we believe that our role is to educate parents about responsible storage of their firearms. We believe that gun safety starts at home and that proper gun storage is a critical component of keeping children safe. Texas state law imposes penalties on individuals who make a gun accessible to a child due to improper storage.

This year, all HISD parents will receive an acknowledgment form in first-day-of-school packets. The form outlines the law regarding making a firearm accessible to a child.

GUN SAFETY AWARENESS

Please sign & return to your campus
All parent forms are available at HoustonISD.org/ParentForms

REGISTER FOR CAMP SPARK

Get a jump-start on virtual learning at interactive academic enrichment camps!

WHAT: Camp Spark will provide students of all grade levels with FREE enrichment leading up to the first day of school — with engaging activities in science, math, literacy, technology, and art.

WHEN: August 24 – September 4
REGISTER: HoustonISD.org/CampSpark

HISTD @H.O.M.E.

HOTLINE | 713-556-INFO (4636)
Monday through Friday from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.
DID YOU KNOW? The district will have a new Student Information System (SIS) for the 2020-2021 school year. HISD Connect by PowerSchool will include student contact, enrollment, and demographic information, as well as grades and online resources. Parents will be given a unique code, or access ID, for each of their students and will be able to use those codes to set up an account to access their student’s profiles through a new parent portal. Parents can contact their child’s school for their access IDs. Check for updates at HoustonISD.org/ParentPortal.

ENROLL YOUR CHILD FOR FALL

- PreK registration is underway. More information: HoustonISD.org/PreK

SCHOOL MEALS FOR 2020–21

HISD’s Fresh Bus produce distribution program will deliver student meals to families during the district’s virtual-only first six weeks of school. The deliveries will complement the curbside student meal program, which will continue throughout the school year for students enrolled in virtual learning.

FRESH BUS: Will deliver student breakfast and lunch daily to select community sites located throughout the district. Service begins Tuesday, Sept. 8, running until in-person instruction resumes.

CURBSIDE STUDENT MEALS: Offered at schools with at least 60 percent of enrolled students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (45 sites). Students at schools without curbside pickup may participate at neighboring sites.

CLASSROOM MEALS: Students opting to return for in-person instruction will be served individually wrapped breakfast, lunch, and snacks in the classroom. Dinner will be distributed after dismissal to students participating in the At Risk Afterschool Supper Program.

Cafeteria staff will wear masks and gloves while serving meals. Students must maintain physical distancing during all meal periods and may only remove masks to eat and drink.

For updates as program logistics are finalized, visit HoustonISD.org/Nutrition.

HISD HUB HOW-TO

The HUB is a K-12 online teaching and learning platform that provides students and parents access to digital curriculum materials, communications with teachers, digital classwork and more. Access the HUB at HoustonISD.org/HUB

For a quick how-to guide on the HUB, go to HoustonISD.org/HUBHowTo
## 2020-2021 Academic Calendar

### School Days
- **Elementary**: 7:30-3:00
- **K-8 and Middle School**: 8:30-4:00
- **High School**: 8:30-4:10

### Significant Dates
- **August 24, 2020**: Teachers report to work
- **September 8, 2020**: First day of school
- **January 29, 2021**: Last day of first semester
- **February 1, 2021**: First day of second semester
- **June 11, 2021**: Last day of school for students
- **June 14, 2021**: Last day for teachers

### Grading Periods
- **Sept 8-Oct 16**: 28 days
- **Oct 19-Dec 4**: 29 days
- **Dec 7-Jan 28**: 28 days
- **Feb 1-March 12**: 29 days
- **March 22-April 30**: 28 days
- **May 3-June 11**: 29 days

### Report Card Dates
- **School Year**: 28 days
- **October 23, 2020**: October 23, 2020
- **December 11, 2020**: December 11, 2020
- **February 5, 2021**: February 5, 2021
- **March 26, 2021**: March 26, 2021
- **May 7, 2021**: May 7, 2021
- **June 11, 2021 (ES/MS)**: June 11, 2021
- **June 18, 2021 (HS)**: June 18, 2021

### Holidays
- **September 7, 2020**: Labor Day
- **September 28, 2020**: Fall Holiday (Students Only)
- **November 23-27, 2020**: Thanksgiving
- **December 21, 2020 - January 1, 2021**: Winter Break
- **January 18, 2021**: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- **March 15-19, 2021**: Spring Break
- **March 29, 2021**: Chavez-Huerta Day
- **April 2, 2021**: Spring Holiday
- **May 31, 2021**: Memorial Day

### Teacher Service Days
- **November 23-27, 2020**: Thanksgiving
- **December 21, 2020 - January 1, 2021**: Winter Break

### Important Dates
- **March 22-April 30**: 28 days
- **February 1, 2021**: First day of second semester
- **March 26, 2021**: Last day of second semester

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Last updated on 07/17/20
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ALERTS | Text “YES” to 68453

SAFETY FIRST

What safety measures will be in place at campuses when face-to-face instruction resumes in October?

For the in-person classroom phase:

All HISD students and employees required to undergo temperature screenings before entering an HISD building

Appropriate face coverings and routine handwashing required, as well as adherence to social distancing protocols

Mandatory gloves for nurses, custodial staff, food service workers, and special education staff

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Due to required physical distancing, HISD school bus service will resume on a limited basis as students begin to return to classrooms for in-person learning in October.

Bus capacity will be limited to 26 students, with all riders required to sit in their own seat by the window. Students will be required to wear a mask while on the bus, sanitize their hands upon boarding, and maintain physical distance at all times, including loading and off-loading.

All buses will undergo cleaning and sanitizing upon completion of each route, as well as an additional deep cleaning and disinfection each week. Additionally, all buses will be equipped with designated supplies, including personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, towels, and first aid kit.

Transportation will be provided to special education, homeless, elementary and specialty school students. Service may also be provided to some students in middle school or who live along high-risk routes if resources are available.

For updates as logistics are finalized, visit HoustonISD.org/Transportation.

IMMIGRATION & YOUR RIGHTS

HISD remains committed to educating every student – regardless of their immigration status. No HISD personnel will ever report a student’s immigration status to authorities. Available resources can be found at:

HoustonISD.org/CommunityResources