

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1.0 Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

What we will do




Our district employs about 12,700 teachers in almost 300 different schools, and we are putting into place a thoughtful, bold, systemic, and comprehensive plan of action that will dramatically transform the district's human capital systems and ensure that a highly effective teacher is in place in every one HISD's classrooms. This includes a grassroots, aggressive recruitment plan, with a four-phase selection process.

Why we will do it

We are committed to improving student achievement across our district, and research tells us that teachers are by far the most powerful school-based factor in a child's academic success or failure. Specifically, studies have shown that students who had very effective teachers for three years in a row were able to improve their performance on standardized tests by more than 50 percent in comparison to students who had three ineffective teachers in a row (Sanders and Rivers, 1996).

What we will report

The following *Strategic Direction Management Report* answers the question: Is HISD acting on the priorities identified in the strategic plan with fidelity? It measures HISD's accomplishments and risks for each Key Strategy in support of the overall Core Initiative.

The *Strategic Direction Management Report* is produced Quarterly. Color indicators are used as an indication of whether administration is on track to accomplish a Key Strategy's quarterly goals. A "Green" indicator  means the district has made acceptable progress with respect to budget, scope and timeliness. A "Yellow" indicator  means the district has identified risk with respect to one or more aspects. A "Red" indicator  means progress has stopped or has a significant deficiency. As the Strategic Direction builds a foundation towards achieving the district's goals over a multi-year period, not all Key Strategies will have information to communicate in a given period.



Green indicates acceptable progress







Yellow indicates a concern with timeline, budget and scope



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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1.0 Effective Teacher in Every Classroom	
Key Strategy	Progress
1.1 Strengthen recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent	
1.2 Establish a rigorous and fair teacher appraisal system	
1.3 Provide effective, individualized support	
1.4 Offer career pathways and differentiated compensation	

Accomplishments

In this period, Progress Conferences were conducted in which appraisers shared midyear feedback to each teacher as a part of the new appraisal system. Nearly 11,000 conferences were held, with preliminary ratings provided in each criteria of the new system. In addition, 89 teachers have already been screened into a pool of candidates to be selected by principals as new teachers for next school year. In reviewing our new efforts towards individualized professional development for our teachers, a midyear survey showed that over 75% of teachers who had more than four observations from their Teacher Development Specialist (TDS) agreed or strongly agreed that their TDS was useful in their professional growth. Also, we have finalized six of the video exemplars that illustrate HISD teachers demonstrating the instructional practice criteria at a highly effective level, and many more are in the editing and field testing phase. Finally, we have begun to develop a plan for piloting a set of three to five teacher leadership roles across roughly 25 schools next year as the first step towards creating true career pathway for our teachers.

Planned for next period

In the next period schools will conduct end of year conferences and convey a final, year-end performance appraisal rating to each teacher. In addition, the TDS team will plan for revisions to the TDS model for the 2012-13 school year, including more prioritization of campuses and teachers that receive intensive support, decreasing the amount of time that TDS spend on activities outside of coaching teachers, and strengthening the partnership between TDS and principals. Finally, the pilot schools and teachers will be selected for the new career pathways teacher leadership roles for next school year.



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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2.0 Effective Principal in Every School

What we will do




We are going to make certain that we have a highly effective principal at the head of every school. To do that, we will improve our recruiting system to be more aggressive in recruiting talented individuals into principal positions, starting with our own internal pipeline of best performing teachers and assistant principals and supplemented by strong external candidates. We will also provide all of our principals with the ongoing supports, careful evaluations, and individualized professional development they need while also placing all necessary tools at their disposal to lead their schools into becoming the best in the nation.

Why we will do it

There is broad consensus among educational experts that having an effective principal at the head of every school is of utmost importance to assuring student success. The more challenging and/or underprivileged the student population in the school, the more this is true. In HISD, we have ample evidence of this, as there is broad variation in the on-track-to-college-readiness rates of our elementary, middle and high school students, even among schools with very similar poverty levels.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2.0 Effective Principal in Every School	
Key Strategy	Progress
2.1 Design and implement a rigorous, fair principal appraisal system	
2.2 Implementation of quality assurance standards and recommended practices to guide principals' decision-making, with high expectations and clear accountability	
2.3 Strengthen HISD's school leader recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent	
2.4 Establish a comprehensive instructional leadership program to develop and retain top talent	
2.5 Create a safe, secure, and healthy environment conducive to learning in all schools	

Accomplishments

In this period, the district participated in national conferences such as the Bilingual Educators Emphasizing Multicultural Settings (BEEMS) Conference, National Association of Bilingual Educators (NABE), and Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP). To address shortage areas, the district will continue to promote the district through grassroots recruitment efforts at 15-20 specific campuses in the Rio Grande Valley in an effort to increase the number of bilingual applicants for principal, assistant principal and dean.

In January, school leaders were trained on the new rubric that will serve as the basis of their performance evaluation as well as provide the feedback into the district's recruitment, professional development and support practices. Trainers from Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) were on site and, partnering with HISD staff, trained over 600 administrators and School Improvement Officers on this new rubric for school leader effectiveness.

We are continuing to implement the district's comprehensive grow-your-own leadership development model and we are seeing results from this effort. For example, the principal of the new Mandarin Chinese Language Immersion Magnet School is a member of the University of



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Core Initiative: 2.0 Effective Principal in Every School (Cont'd)

Texas Collaborative Urban Leadership Program (UTCULP). Additionally, four members of the district's first Teacher Leader Academy were hired as assistant principals. Also, during this period, fifteen employees enrolled in the Masters in Business Education Administration (MBEA) program at the University of St. Thomas. While the University of St. Thomas cohort is beginning, twenty-two veteran assistant principals are completing the one-year principal internship program.

School Support Services launched Bully Awareness Week, a districtwide event with materials and activities for schools to use in addressing bullying. Also, a comprehensive online training was launched for teachers to learn about bullying and bullying prevention. The local and national expert on bullying inside education institutions, Donna Clarke-Love, conducted training for 75 district personnel and parents in February.

Planned for next period

Our plans for the next period include partnering with the School Improvement Officers to host a Leadership Recruitment event in early May. Additionally, the appraisal advisory group will work to finalize the measures of student learning and the overall weighting of the various elements of the system. The new school leader appraisal system is planned to be brought forward to the School Board for review and the requested for adoption in May 2012, and summer training is targeted for all school leaders in June. District leaders will also participate in the annual Summer Leadership Institute in June. A four week New and Emerging Leader Institute will be held summer 2012.

We have indicated an issue with quality assurance standards and recommended practices to guide decision-making as indicated above. While over 1,800 school administrators have been trained in specific areas where a high level of decision making is embedded in the trainings provided, such as Strategic Marketing, Master Schedule Building, Principal Appraisal, Staff Documentation and the State Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Implementation and Logistics, the district is exploring options for creating specific training on decision-making models and processes.



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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3.0 Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

What we will do




Redesign the course offerings, curriculum, assessment tests, and social/emotional supports provided in schools throughout HISD, with a particular emphasis on giving all students the same access to educational programs and opportunities, regardless of which school they attend, as well as improving instruction for students at all levels. We will also implement a set of targeted reforms in order to turn around HISD's lowest-performing schools.

Why we will do it

HISD has a number of outstanding academic programs and supports across the district, but on the whole does not prepare students for college and career readiness. Our scores show that, depending on the grade, only about 40 to 70% of our students are reading or doing math at grade level. In addition, student EVAAS growth data show a slowing of growth in mathematics progress from the fifth to sixth grades, resulting in only 18% of HISD eighth-grade students successfully completing Algebra I. The end result is that the majority of HISD students who enroll in community college require remedial courses in their first year.

What we will report

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3.0 Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports	
Key Strategy	Progress
3.1 Rigorous instructional standards and supports	
3.2 Develop and implement an aligned standards-based curriculum and assessment plan	
3.3 Implement Response to Intervention model districtwide to provide early, effective assistance to children	
3.4 School Transformation Plan	
3.5 Implement a comprehensive literacy (reading) program in grades pre-K through 12	
3.6 Implement a comprehensive numeracy/mathematics program in grades pre-K through 12	

Accomplishments

In collaboration with the magnet coordinators, we have developed a series of common magnet documents: Common Notification Letters to parents, Common Magnet Student Entrance Agreements and Magnet Student Growth Plans. The Advanced Placement (AP)/ International Baccalaureate (IB) team has created an AP Teacher Toolkit which provides mini-lessons to AP teachers on AP student support and instructional strategies to use in AP classes.

The curriculum initiative is underway and completion date is late spring 2012. During this third quarter of reporting, over 700 teachers have been involved in the curriculum development process and more than 100 hours of training has been devoted to teachers' preparation to meet the challenges of the new STAAR assessments. The literacy plan has been written and shared in various venues within the district as well as vetted with a group of seven



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Core Initiative: 3.0 Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports (Cont'd)

national experts that provided independent analysis of the district's literacy plan. The external review commended the literacy plan as well as offered recommendations for further strengthening. Next, the curriculum department will synthesize the feedback within their team and make revisions. The final product of this effort will be a quality plan that is an aligned, effective, and research-based tool to support successful teaching and learning of literacy skills for all students. The district believes leveraging technology tools as well as accompanying assessment will strengthen the curriculum efforts.

Planned for next period

Our plans for the next period are to continue the advancement of the key strategies. To bolster the efforts for rigorous instruction, the district plans to develop vertical curriculum alignment between thematic elementary and secondary programs of "like programs" citywide. The AP/IB team will begin AP exam administration monitoring and plan then conduct summer trainings including Laying the Foundation, Social Studies Pre-AP and SpringBoard. The district anticipates at least a 15 % growth in exams administered for AP in 2011-2012 moving well beyond the district's previous all time high met last year with 21,663 exams administered. Additional professional development is planned to strengthen the AP implementation fidelity districtwide such as a four-day curriculum institute to train 5,000 teachers to be conducted in July and reinforce with principals at the Leadership Institute.

There is a shared commitment to build an aligned curriculum and assessment plan effort in key strategy 3.2 and, in core initiative 4.0, to build a system of data driven accountability. As originally articulated; "Experience in other districts makes clear that, for a managed curriculum policy to be successful, all teachers and leaders within the school district must have use of an online platform for curriculum management and access."



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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4.0 Ensure Data-Driven Accountability

What we will do

Build robust systems and processes that enable easy access to and use of key data to inform decisions and manage high levels of performance districtwide.




Why we will do it

Currently, relevant data on students, teachers, and achievement are difficult to access, often not up-to-date, and not always accurate. Furthermore, many people across the district lack the expertise to use data to make decisions.

This creates an opportunity to arm HISD leadership with accessible, timely and accurate data and provide them with the training necessary to understand how to translate data into action. By doing so, we will get better at making the key decisions that affect the performance of the district. Funding for this initiative is focused on Phase 1 which includes minimal training and will provide initial reports. Training beyond Phase 1 is a multi-year program of training and learning through use.

What we will report

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4.0 Ensure Data-driven Accountability	
Key Strategies	Progress
4.1 Build easily accessible and accurate data architecture, warehouse, and technology infrastructure.	
4.2 Develop and implement performance management tools and practices for decision-making.	
4.3 Design effective and efficient business processes and procedures for optimization of resources and results.	

Accomplishments

In this period, the district acquired a majority of hardware, software licenses and consulting services necessary to integrate data for data warehouse and dashboard development. The district streamlined business processes, configured the technical setup, and created documentation for provisioning access to the PeopleSoft system, which will enable the capture and reporting of EOY performance data for all non-teacher staff. The district began development of an integrated web-based tool, Teacher Appraisal & Development System (TADS), that will provide a solution for capturing student performance data and processes for teachers for when the student performance measures are included in the appraisal and development system next year. The district has also completed the first phase of the Microsoft Active Directory upgrade to provide better management of user identities. Additionally, IBM has completed their blueprint of the Secure Network Architecture and Design Report and the district is currently adopting the framework as part of the E-rate deployment. The first cohort of 20 schools, within the 194 E-rate schools, is underway to provide the physical network and system hardware.

Planned for Next Period

In the next period, the district plans to validate five years of student, campus, and district-level TAKS, Stanford, Cohort, attendance and other student related data to automate the accountability reports while continuing to find the security solution to authenticate proper access by different user roles, beginning with the principals. The district will complete the development of the web-based, TADS, IT solution and facilitate training for campus-based staff impacting approximately 13,000 teachers and 600 appraisers. Capture EOY progress towards



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Core Initiative: 4.0 Ensure Data-driven Accountability (Cont'd)

completion of department goals and evaluation of individual employee performance for the first time across all central departments in PeopleSoft. Also, the network deployment project will continue for the next several months as we continue to implement connectivity and access to the E-rate schools.

As indicated on the report, all items are given a yellow indicator due mainly to the concern with timeline and scope. The first dashboard deliverable will contain primarily official, aggregated data from accountability reports while the security authorization is being developed. As of the writing of the report, the leadership in Procurement has yet to be determined and is impacting the ability to move forward as planned. Once the new leadership in Procurement is determined, the team will reconvene to re-evaluate all decisions, processes, systems and procedures.



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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5.0 Culture of Trust Through Action

What we will do

We will put in place structures, processes, and methods to ensure that we have effective two-way communication to engage both internal and external stakeholders, including staff, parents, and community members.

Why we will do it

A powerful sense of community and a shared direction among all stakeholders is crucial to the successful transformation of HISD. Yet, we know that current communication structures in place are insufficient to foster authentic engagement.

During the process of developing the Strategic Direction, we have attempted to begin the movement toward a communications approach that is more interactive and transparent. Throughout dozens of meetings, communication emerged as a clear area for improvement. Thousands of stakeholders shared concerns, ideas, and suggestions on how we can improve. Taking all this valuable feedback into account, we designed two strategies that will enable us to revamp our communication so we can engage internal and external audiences in meaningful ways and ensure we have authentic two-way communication. By doing so, we will prove our commitment to change, re-build trust and confidence, and start a new era in our communication and relationship with HISD's broad community.

What we will report

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5.0 Culture of Trust Through Action	
Key Strategy	Progress
5.1 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for internal stakeholders	
5.2 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for external stakeholders	

Accomplishments

As the launch of a new statewide standardized test approached, the district worked to engage the community and create an ongoing dialogue about STAAR through multiple channels. A cross-functional group from across the district, including representatives from Communications, Parent Engagement and the School Offices, hosted a series of community forums in English and Spanish, which were covered on the web and allowed participants to ask questions in person, via email, or on social media. A phone bank was hosted on Univision, and more than a dozen HISD volunteers answered a total of 282 calls.

This quarter included the annual State of the Schools Address, organized by Strategic Partnerships, which drew a sold-out crowd of 2,000 business leaders, community members, elected officials, and HISD teachers and students. Strategic Partnerships, during the same semester, also coordinated presentations on topics, such as STAAR, with the African American, Hispanic, and Asian Advisory Committees.

Other accomplishments during this period included the launch of two new TV shows: *HISD Up Close* with the Board President and *Within Our Walls* with Superintendent Terry Grier. These programs highlight the outstanding accomplishments of students, teachers, and principals. The Board President toured a campus that had been renovated or rebuilt under the 2007 bond program. The district covered numerous ribbon-cutting ceremonies across the district in December and January, showcasing new LEED-certified campuses completed as part of the 2007 Bond.



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Core Initiative: 5.0 Culture of Trust Through Action (Cont'd)

Last, the district convened a workgroup to analyze the key drivers of the Core 5 initiative. In a series of three meetings with staff members, parents, teachers, principals, and students, the workgroup refined the focus of the initiative, contemplating expansion beyond the original scope of internal and external communications processes.

Planned for next period

In the coming semester, the district will be holding a series of community meetings on proposed bell schedule changes and developing communications strategies for the upcoming budget discussions. There are also plans to launch a redesigned eNews product that will increase our internal communications efforts with features designed to support employee interaction and the sharing of ideas. Also, the district hopes to draft and bring forward a recommendation to the Board of Education on a social media policy as a precursor activity in the development of a districtwide communications plan, training on social media policy and guiding the district using communications best practices.



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