

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. 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 of HISD's classrooms.

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 Strategies in support of the overall Core Initiative.

The *Strategic Direction Management Report* is produced Quarterly. Color indicators are used to 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.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.1 Strengthen recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent	
Main Element	Progress
1.1.1 Refine recruitment and staffing practices	
1.1.2 Implement improved teacher recruitment and staffing practices	
1.1.3 Build awareness and support among internal and external stakeholders	
1.1.4 Implement a "Talent Acquisition System"	

Accomplishments

In this period, we have focused our efforts on supporting displaced employees impacted by the reduction in force as well as recruiting, selecting and placing highly effective teachers in critical shortage areas, such as secondary math, secondary science, foreign language and elementary bilingual candidates, from top universities nationwide.

We have held three teacher placement events with a combined attendance of 1,038 employees. These events were designed to connect hiring managers with displaced and external teachers in the recruitment pool. To date, 101 employees that lost their job in the reduction in force (RIF) have secured another teaching position in the district. Human Resources has made changes in processing to ensure that candidates offered teaching positions by principals are transitioning from *offer* to *hire* in a timely manner. We are committed to reducing the number of candidates lost to other districts because of processing time and increasing the candidate satisfaction levels in hiring process.

Our displaced employee support efforts have included: 7 information sessions, 3 placement events, 40+ twitter updates, monitored employee support inbox, web site dedicated to displaced employees, 100+ recruiter referrals for open positions as well as 17 targeted workshops on social media, resume development, interview practices and online portfolio creation.

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Our work on implementing the Talent Acquisition system has been solid this period. We have been working with teams across the organization to identify all our current processes that will need changes as we implement a system that allows us to streamline our processes. We are in the midst of redefining many of the processes going forward.








Planned for Next Period

For next period, we will focus on staffing all vacant positions for the first day of school. In addition, we will collaborate to develop a comprehensive plan for 2011-2012 to improve the effectiveness of our recruitment, selection and placement efforts.

We continue to work on the implementation of our new talent acquisition system. We have made significant progress on defining our processes to map into the new system. We made some changes that will cause us to push back full implementation several months, but in the end will allow us a more efficient process.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.2 Establish a rigorous and fair teacher appraisal system to inform key decisions	
Main Element	Progress
1.2.1 Develop and implement a districtwide staff review process for all teachers in every school	
1.2.2 In depth review of the faculty in nine of HISD's lowest-performing schools	
1.2.3 Design a model of teacher competency and behavior	
1.2.4 Develop measures of student learning	
1.2.5 Define the teacher performance appraisal process	
1.2.6 Incorporate performance appraisal data into key decisions	
1.2.7 Gather stakeholder input	

Accomplishments

This period focused on preparing the final proposal for the new teacher appraisal and development system for Board approval and developing a plan for implementation throughout the district. Additional feedback from the community, school-based shared decision-making committees, and working groups was used by the District Advisory Committee to develop final recommendations for the proposed system. During this period, we made significant progress in identifying and defining the measures of student learning that will be part of the performance criteria in the new appraisal system. The new appraisal system was approved by the Board on May 12th. Since then, we have been preparing for a series of training and support that will enable our school-based staff to effectively implement the new teacher appraisal system. School Improvement Officers have already received training on the new appraisal system and will train the appraisers on their campuses in mid-June.

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Planned for Next Period

Implementation support will continue throughout the summer, with additional training of our school-level staff. As part of the restructured Professional Development Services (PDS) organization, the new team of Teacher Development Specialists (TDS) will participate in appraisal training during the month of July as part of their on-boarding process. This training will support TDS' goal of helping teachers improve their practice by providing the right tools and a common language to assess teachers' instruction, provide feedback and coaching, and identify individualized opportunities for development. All teachers will receive training on the new appraisal and development system during two days of In-Service training that is scheduled for August 15th – 18th.

Working groups of volunteers will continue to meet to refine the measures of student learning and build the tools and instruments (i.e. technology platform, standardized forms, assessments) that will be used to support appraisers and teachers throughout the appraisal process. In addition, we will determine the processes that will be established to audit the fidelity of the system and capture feedback across all stakeholder groups, which will help improve the system for the following school year.

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Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.3 Provide individualized teacher support and development	
Main Element	Progress
1.3.1 Identify and track centralized TSD needs via Staff Review and appraisal ratings	
1.3.2 Develop a long-term centralized TSD strategy	
1.3.3 Implement a long-term centralized TSD strategy	
1.3.4 Establish PD clearinghouse	
1.3.5 Identify and track school-based TSD needs via Staff Review and appraisal ratings	
1.3.6 Develop a strategy for school-based TSD	
1.3.7 Establish metrics for measuring the effectiveness of school-based TSD	
1.3.8 Identify and execute training for principals to identify and respond to teacher development needs	

Accomplishments

We have restructured the PDS organization to become more effective at providing the right support to schools in aligning high quality, meaningful development opportunities for teachers to do their best work in the classroom. In the new structure, resources are being decisively shifted to provide campus-based on the job support & development for teachers, while maintaining a vital core of support to ensure scalability of priority professional development across the district. We have created and are staffing a team of 130 Teacher Development Specialists, content experts who partner with a group of teachers to support their continuous growth and development through observation, coaching, and connecting with relevant learning experiences.

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To compliment this larger field-based team's work, we've created a smaller Professional Development Central Support Team to provide centralized coordination and design of districtwide tools as well as development opportunities. This team will also focus on improving the quality and ease of access to online learning opportunities. We have designed and will execute training with this team throughout the month of July in preparation for their work with teachers and campus leaders beginning in August.

Planned for Next Period

We are currently working to identify data sources that can be used to create the metrics by which all campus-based and centralized professional development will be evaluated. We are also developing a strategic plan for additional training and support for principals to assess and respond to individual teacher development needs.

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Core Initiative: 1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

1.4 Offer meaningful career pathways and differentiated compensation to retain and leverage the most-effective teachers	
Main Element	Progress
1.4.1 Implement the ASPIRE Award program	
1.4.2 Establish career pathways	
1.4.3 Implement a new compensation model	

Accomplishments

The ASPIRE Advisory Committee is working on changes to the model going forward. We have been working with focus groups of teachers to roll out a teacher leader role, for full-time classroom teachers with additional compensation, to support professional development in schools, with the expected launch of the program to take place midway through the school year. We have also released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a vendor to come on site to support HISD in building a new compensation model for teachers. The RFP was re-released to allow for additional responses from firms with this expertise, which creates a slightly more aggressive timetable for implementing a new compensation model but one that is still manageable.

Planned for next period

Changes to the ASPIRE Award model for 2011-12 will be developed and presented to the board. In addition, the chosen vendor for design and rollout of the new compensation system will be presented to the School Board for approval in August.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

What we will do

We are going to make sure 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, STAARting 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 the necessary tools at their disposal to lead their schools into becoming the best in the nation.

Why we will do it

There is a 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.


What we will report

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.1 Design and implement a rigorous, fair principal appraisal system	
Main Element	Progress
2.1.1 Develop a comprehensive principal appraisal system that includes multiple performance measures (e.g., student performance, school safety, teacher support and integrates feedback from teachers and principals' supervisors, and identifies principals' individual needs.	

Accomplishments

Over this time period, we continued to work with our partner, Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning to refine the new appraisal system for school leaders. Our goal is to ensure that our principals are empowered instructional leaders and decision-makers with clear expectations. We know that with the right supports and standards, principals are best positioned to improve the quality of instruction within schools and strengthen parent and community engagement.

Principals received a detailed update on the progress of the new principal evaluation tool on June 8th during the principals' meeting. During the presentation, milestones were discussed:

1. Principal Advisory Committee has been involved in key decisions;
2. Fifteen schools completed field tests;
3. Focus groups were conducted to solicit valuable feedback;
4. Principals have been surveyed;
5. SDMC feedback has been captured; and
6. District Advisory Committee feedback has been captured.

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Measures of Student Learning were also discussed. These measures are still in draft form. Measures will differ by school level and will also align with Superintendent, Chief School Officer and School Improvement Officer appraisal metrics.

Draft Measures of Student Learning:

1) Value-added growth (e.g. EVAAS)
2) STAARR Passing Rates by Subject
3) STAARR Achievement Gap
4) STAARR Commended by Subject
5) Stanford on grade-level
6) Average Student Attendance
7) Completion Rate



Planned for Next Period

We will continue to solicit input from stakeholder groups. Additional training and support will also be offered. Districtwide implementation will begin in September; McREL will also provide ongoing support through the district's Leadership Development teams.

We have systems in place for ongoing feedback from key stakeholders for system improvements. Year-one feedback through principal Ad Hoc and other venues will be collected and analyzed. We will also review the new STAARR measures for implementation in year two and will continue the school administrator survey

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.2 Implement quality assurance standards and recommended practices that guide principals' decision-making, with high expectations and clear accountability.	
Main Element	Progress
2.2.1 Develop standards and recommended practices to guide principals' decision-making	
2.2.2 Align practices and policies (e.g., principal's evaluations, job descriptions, training, career path preparation) with the new model of standards for principal decision-making.	

Accomplishments




School Offices, in conjunction with Human Resources Leadership Development, worked on a comprehensive plan to improve systems for providing support to principals. These plans include strategically aligning decision-making, creating automated supports, streamlining assessments, creating clarity around expectations for time-efficient documentation, appropriate artifact collection, quarterly legal check-ins and proactive steps to improve teaching and learning. Although plans are in the formative stage, we recognize the need to blend additional support into our current management systems. The rollout of the new Teacher Appraisal and Development System provided the opportunity for us to create some of the automated systems that will make principals more efficient in their efforts to capture strong, supporting documentation of growth and development in classrooms.

Planned for Next Period

Our PeopleSoft team is working alongside the Teacher Appraisal and Development System Team to design web-based applications that will streamline decision making at the campus level. These supports ultimately will strengthen the links between teacher practice and student achievement. Additionally, we are working to strategically identify, align and plan professional development that will increase each principal's ability to access data, utilize the district's systems and ultimately improve overall decision-making.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.3 Strengthen recruiting and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent.	
Main Element	Progress
2.3.1 Create a high-quality leadership preparation program to prepare, recruit, and select best-in-class talent internally (e.g., teachers, assistant principals) in order to create an exceptional pool of candidates to fill school vacancies	
2.3.2 Strengthen HISD's recruiting practices to attract top principal talent from sources external to HISD	
2.3.3 Create systems to ensure ongoing effectiveness of HISD recruitment programs	

Accomplishments

During this period, we concentrated our efforts in four key areas: continuing to develop our internal talent so they will be ready for administrator positions in the future, to cultivate our internal people so that are ready to assume principal positions, to travel to conferences and schools to recruit experienced external principals, and to screen and select highly-qualified external applicants for leadership positions.

Our internal development efforts included initiating a partnership with the University of Texas Collaborative Urban Leadership Program (UTCULP) that has yielded a pipeline of 18 individuals who will be ready to serve in districtwide leadership positions. We have also been working with our ACP program for principal certification to screen over 120+ candidates to find top potential leadership talent for our certification program. The participants in this program are eligible to work in leadership roles throughout the district, thus providing us with another great source of candidates.

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

We began discussions with REEP again to determine what marketing events and what relationship we can develop to get HISD employees to attend their programs for additional people in our pipeline to be trained for school leadership. In the fall, we will launch some targeted marketing efforts about REEP.

Our work to recruit externally included visits to conferences, schools and other districts to look for leadership talent. Since this year is HISD's first venture to recruit from the national and state leadership organizations, we have been learning which organizations, schools and events are the right ones to attend to meet our district's strategic goals. Our efforts this spring have been focused on attending these events to meet potential candidates and to network with the leaders of these organizations so that they will assist us in our recruitment efforts. We have had good results from our attendance at NASSP, NAESP and ASCD, as we have met over 40+ interested candidates and have 11 that have made it through our screening process. These individuals are currently being considered for leadership opportunities.





In order to ensure we have the best talent for our schools, we continue to utilize a screening process to select candidates to a pool that can then be considered further by our CSOs, SIOs, and School Selection Committees for specific school openings. The Leadership Selection team has screened over 1,000 applicants for our school leadership positions.

Planned for Next Period

We continue to work on the implementation of our new talent acquisition system. We have made significant progress on defining our processes to map into the new system. We made some changes that will cause us to push back full implementation several months, but in the end will allow us a more efficient process.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.4 Establish a comprehensive instructional leadership program to develop and retain top talent.	
Main Element	Progress
2.4.1 Define leadership pathways/ladders for HISD staff and administrators to become principals, and for principals to advance into higher leadership roles	
2.4.2 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of HISD's current supports to principals	
2.4.3 Provide ongoing professional development to principals who are already working in HISD, tailored to individual needs while also addressing key topics in principal development (e.g., coaching of teachers, mentoring, APs, and data-driven decision-making)	
2.4.4 Provide new principals with a high-quality, three-year mentorship program	

Accomplishments

During this period, the district, in collaboration with The University of Texas Collaborative Urban Leadership Project (UTCULP) began a two-year, 36 hour Master of Education program. The program is focused on raising student achievement through leadership preparation. The program will include graduate level course work followed by a job-embedded internship. The first cohort consists of 18 district employees. At the end of the program, cohort members will have earned a Master of Education degree and principal certification. This program is specifically designed to prepare secondary school leaders for Houston ISD. Participants will be qualified to enter the principal pool. Classes began June 6, 2011.

Also, in conjunction with the district's strong commitment to developing human capital and establishing multiple pathways for leadership development, we launched another cohort of the Alternative Certification Program – Principal Academy for Collaborative (PACE). This program is a two-year state-approved cohort-based principal certification program that recruits, trains, certifies, and retains a number of high-quality talented individuals fully prepared to assume responsibility as school instructional leaders in a large urban setting who create a culture of continuous improvement and effectively promote increased student achievement and progress. This is a rigorous academic program designed in collaborative partnership with the University of St. Thomas School of Education,

the University of St. Thomas Cameron School of Business, and HISD departments. Part of the program is underwritten by a Department of Education School Leadership Grant.

Additionally, we have developed a School Leadership Academy. This academy targets HISD teachers who have been identified by district leaders as potential school leaders. Academy members will participate in seminars focused on improving student achievement in an urban environment, data-driven decision-making, being a reflective practitioner, ethics, and the importance of supervision of teaching and learning. Upon successful completion of the seminars and successful completion of all HISD screening processes, these participants will become part of a pool from which principals may hire assistant principals-ensuring a steady stream of talent for school leadership.

We have conducted a rigorous audit of our current mentor program that supports first year principals and assistant principals. Audit results indicate: 1) Support for new administrators is uneven and therefore inequitable; 2) Many mentors appear not to be committed to the process; 3) program accountability is weak; and 4) with the role of the principal becoming more complex and the demands on school leaders increasing, the model of utilizing sitting principals as mentors has outlived its effectiveness. We have concluded that considering the history of new administrator hires, it is imperative that the district provide a more effective means of supporting new administrators. As a result of the audit, we will develop a hybrid model for mentor support during the 2011-12 school year, utilizing principals who have a history of providing quality support combined with part-time, successful, retired principals who will provide concentrated and personalized support for new administrators.

Also, we contracted with Rice University and will offer a focused training on strategic marketing for district principals. Preliminary training will kick off Friday, June 24, 2011. This training will empower targeted principals with the knowledge and skills to better identify customer/community needs, better communicate information about programs and services to potential customers, and understand the power of branding. Principals will also learn how to respond to growing demands by using creative, analytical leadership skills.

S3, an international organization that specializes in building master schedules, has also spent several months in the district studying school data, reviewing systems, determining learning needs and working with secondary schedule builders. S3 is providing comprehensive training that equips principals with strategies to create viable master schedules that meet students' needs.

Staff Documentation and Investigations training will be recalibrated based on what we learned during the Staff Review process. Principals will have more time to practice conversations, to create documentation and engage with Thompson and Horton's staff to refine principal practices.

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School







Planned for Next Period

Over the next period, the Leadership Development Department will launch a year-long intensive readiness experience for aspiring administrators in the fall of 2011. The year-long readiness experience will serve two purposes: 1) The experience will provide aspiring administrators with opportunities to work in schools where they have substantial responsibilities, that involve direct interaction and involvement with students, staff member, parents, community and executive district staff. During this time, aspiring administrators will be totally immersed in the day-to-day workings of a school. The growth and development of the aspiring principal will be guided by the building principal, the SIO and his/her mentor.

Over the next period we will continue to review Leadership Development programs to determine strengths and weaknesses of the programs. Program adjustments will be made based on what we are learning.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

2.5 Create a healthy environment conducive to learning in all schools.	
Main Elements	Progress
2.5.1 Support positive behaviors in schools	
2.5.2 Increase healthy option for HISD students	
2.5.3 Develop a districtwide/school-wide discipline plan	
2.5.4 Identify the tools and practices that schools need to attain safety standards (e.g., enhanced training of security, increased safety for after-school and extracurricular activities)	
2.5.5 Promote health awareness for team HISD and increase healthy options for HISD students	
2.5.7 Create a central data source to track and monitor safety violations/breaches	

Accomplishments:

During this period HISD was recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture for the successful First Class Breakfast Initiative. We also secured a \$30,000 grant from Share Our Strength (a non-profit dedicated to ending childhood hunger) to further expand this initiative into HISD high schools.

Working with the Houston Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (HFFVA), we secured a long-term donation commitment for 20 salad bars. If successful, HFFVA has indicated additional funding could be identified for even more salad bars. This partnership will aid us in our efforts to increase student consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Core Initiative: 2. Effective Principal in Every School

Additionally, we established the School Safety Office. This unit will be responsible for addressing security issues or concerns that impact schools or facilities by ensuring that all schools and facilities are adhering to current district policies and procedures. The School Safety Office will also be responsible for proactively addressing the following: crime trends and patterns impacting schools and facilities, conducting safety inspections, working to establish safety and security policies and procedures, identifying best practices by school districts, facilitating and coordinating training, and policy enforcement.

Planned for Next Period

As it relates to bullying, ongoing training is provided for campus-level administrators on Texas Education Code Chapter 37: Discipline, Law, and Order and the HISD *Student Code of Conduct*. Our plans for the next period also include beginning the work with expanded training on preventing bullying and effective response to bullying.

In the next period we also plan to introduce a “Harvest of the Month” menu theme for each month in the school year. The “Harvest of the Month” will feature a Texas-grown fruit or vegetable. We will be working with school garden coordinators to match the planting and harvesting of school gardens with each month’s featured fruit/vegetable. In this way, school garden produce can be featured in the cafeteria through salad bars and/or “tasting tables” to establish the “Seed to Plate” connection in the minds of students and encourage them to eat this tasty produce.

We will also begin work to increase the amount of Texas-grown produce featured on school menus. As of today, about 11% of all produce served is Texas-grown. Our goal is to increase that to 25%. In order to accomplish this goal, we will work with the Texas Department of Agriculture and begin visits to local farms and farmers’ markets to build relationships and better understand the crop variety and capacity of local growers. Ultimately, we want to contract with specific growers for an entire crop and feature that harvest on school menus. When students understand where their food comes from and who has worked to grow it, we are confident that they will be more likely to choose healthy menu options.

We will also continue work to identify options for composting and recycling food waste within the district. Working with individual schools and community organizations such as the Houston Food Bank, we are confident that we can find a way to re-use these resources.

Additionally, the School Safety Office will be established with no additional expenses associated with implementing this new initiative. Our office will continue to seek initiatives and programs to improve service to the district, provide a safe learning environment, and utilize all available resources to efficiently accomplish this goal. The Threat Assessment Team, which is a cross-functional committee that consists of key components of the district, will meet monthly to discuss identified threats that impact our schools. This committee will take ownership for addressing and resolving all threats.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. 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.






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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.1 Equity in access to educational programs	
Main Element	Progress
3.1.1 Ensure that all schools have high quality programs to meet the diverse needs of students	
3.1.2 Broaden access to dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) and improve exam success rates	
3.1.3 Increase consistency of Magnet Schools	
3.1.4 Provide specialized instructional opportunities throughout the district for students seeking alternative instructional programs	
3.1.5 Launch a post-secondary access effort	

Accomplishments

The district is on target to nearly double the number of Advanced Placement (AP) tests taken within the last two years. In May 2011, 16,556 AP exams were administered representing a growth of 43% from the previous year. All comprehensive high schools were asked to offer 10 AP courses for 2010-11 and 15 AP courses for 2011-12. Currently, 30 of our 33 comprehensive high schools are offering at least 10 AP courses for the 2010-11 school year. The number of students taking AP exams has increased by 105% over the last five years with 6,262 of those exams earning a qualifying score (3 or better) representing 38% of the total number of AP exams administered. As a result of our progress, HISD was recognized nationally for high school ranking of AP participation in the top 100 in America.

In an effort to continue the expansion of choice options for families, the district created an all boys and all girls' whole school option opening in the fall of 2011.

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

Planned for Next period

Over the next period, we will focus on building our capacity and quality by focusing on professional development. A 16 course Pre-AP Summer seminar workshop is planned as well as an AP Leadership Institute that will be offered June 6-9, 2011. To mitigate concerns over the number of teachers that will attend the summer Pre-AP workshops, pay scale adjustment will be made for teachers attending Saturday training. To continue the district's progress, additional AP prep resources would be helpful and are needed. Additionally, we will continue the planning activities related to the Dell Grant.








As more work needs to be done engaging parents, a group is in the progress of being formed to build effective communication mechanisms. This will be very important as the district prepares to revise policies and procedures related to the transition from TAKS to STAAR and End of Course (EOC), state high-stakes testing change.

Issues/Concerns/Requests

Progress on revising the district's magnet programs were put on hold. The district will resume activities in the fall. Therefore, *3.1.3 Increase consistency of Magnet Schools* is coded "yellow".

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.2 Develop and implement an aligned standards-based curriculum and assessment plan	
Main Element	Progress
3.2.1 Communicate high expectations for instructional delivery and establish district-managed curriculum guidelines	
3.2.2 Arrange an independent external analysis of the district's curriculum in order to establish a well-crafted, focused, valid, and comprehensive curriculum	
3.2.3 Promote academic rigor for all students by updating the current curriculum to meet standards for college and career readiness (CCR)	
3.2.4 Train teachers on implementing the aligned/updated curriculum, and train principals on supporting teachers in achieving campus and district goals	
3.2.5 Identify a robust assessment system that will provide customized predictive and diagnostic assessments that are aligned to the district curriculum's scope and sequence	
3.2.6 Establish a clearinghouse that identifies high-quality, research-based instructional materials aligned to the district's curriculum	
3.2.7 Pursue an online platform for curriculum management and access	

Accomplishments

An RFP has been developed to build a robust assessment system for the district. This RFP is yet to be released while interim assessments are to be reviewed by an external curriculum alignment expert. This work will commence in late June and July in preparation for interim assessments to be implemented districtwide. The district is taking a significant step this summer to jump STAAR the interim benchmarks so that next school year can begin with formative information on student achievement being provided at all schools on a periodic basis; classroom by classroom.

A significant realignment of priorities and central office staffing has been made, with nearly 100 former curriculum experts being shifted to a role of classroom coaches, providing assessment and leadership for quality teaching. With this shift, the curriculum department's role has also shifted from one of "the writing of the curriculum" toward a role of using curriculum and assessment tools already available and then working with our teachers to "tweak" those efforts with their unique circumstance and abilities. Work has begun on redefining district policies and regulations related to the TAKS to STAAR and End of Course (EOC), state high-stakes testing change.







Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

Planned for Next Period

A new Deputy Chief Academic Officer, Alicia Thomas, was hired and will STAAR on July 11th. She will continue to refine the efforts of the curriculum realignment focusing the district on literacy.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.3 Implement Response to Intervention model districtwide to provide early, effective assistance to children	
Main Element	Progress
3.3.1 Train teachers and principals on how to diagnose students' needs and differentiate support within the classroom	
3.3.2 Implement a school-level approach to designing holistic intervention strategies for helping Tier II students and accurately referring Tier III students	
3.3.3 Improve district-level solutions for Tier III students	
3.3.4 Provide tactile materials and supports to assist all teachers in determining strategies to meet student academic/social emotional needs and challenges	
3.3.5 Improve the instructional climate by offering technology-based applications to identify research-based strategies and solutions to meet the social/emotional needs of students	
3.3.6 Articulate the Intervention Assistance Team(IAT)/Response to Intervention process for parents	

Accomplishments

The Safe Schools department has been meeting with CEP and presented ideas to Dr. Pamela Randle to develop a strategy to promote behavior modification during placement, enhance communication with schools, and to monitor progress once the student has returned to the regular educational setting. Moodle training for Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) has been developed by Professional Development utilizing information developed/supplied by Safe Schools. A blog for posting questions/concerns and to receive support is being utilized as part of the training process.

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

Planned for next period




The preliminary TAKS results were released by the state and are currently undergoing analysis. This data will be utilized to make recommendations and work with campus-based IATs for interventions. Additional monitoring and support of those schools in the district's transformation model will be conducted to ensure that these schools are implementing IAT/RTI with fidelity.

Issues/Concerns/Requests

Budget cuts and reduction in force (RIF) has significantly distracted from our speed and ability to progress work in a timely manner. However, there is need for this work. Therefore, there are plans to engage the district's new Chief Information Technology Officer for a mechanism to meet the district's needs as well as develop a realistic, comprehensive plan.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.4 School Transformation Model	
Main Element	Progress
3.4.1 Build Transformation Core Team	
3.4.2 Research and identify proven approaches for low-performing schools	
3.4.3 Implement a school-wide transformation intervention model that would begin with the 2010–2011 school year (e.g., increase learning time for staff and student support, allow operational flexibility for governance)	

Accomplishments

Five of the ten transformation schools that were under some level of state TEA sanctions were able to improve their rating becoming Academically Acceptable after just one year under the transformation leadership. Many of these schools are becoming strong academic performers for the first time based upon the academic outcomes from the 2010-2011 school year. The TAKS passing rates show a gain of 9 points in just one year, from 63% pass rate in 2010 to a 72% pass rate in 2011. The overall district pass rate gain was 2 points. Given the students enrolled in transformation schools, this is strong evidence of significant progress toward lowering the achievement gap through the transformation efforts. Similar growth and narrowing occurred with this year's science outcome of the transformation schools. Reading gains were flat over this school year compared to academic year 2009-2010.






Each of the four high schools has more than doubled the percentage of students ready to attend a four year college after comparing data from the schools last school year to the 2011 results. Last year, 23% of those school's students were prepared to enter a four year college compared to this years with the same schools with a 47% acceptance rate for college enrollment.

The district continues to build capacity for transforming low performing schools. The additional elementary schools were selected and approved by the board to participate in the district's turnaround model.

Devoting a significant amount of money to ensuring a better education for our highest need children continues to be a challenge, but offsets are being evidenced as fund raising for the effort from private sources continues to be very successful. Significant external funding continues to flow into the district exemplifying the commitment from the Houston business community toward a quality education for all the children of Houston no matter the school that they attend. Over \$12,570,000 of external funding was raised this school year.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.5 Implement a comprehensive literacy (reading) program in grades pre-k through 12	
Main Element	Progress
3.5.1 Develop a comprehensive PK-12 Literacy Plan to ensure all students have the necessary literacy skills to be college and career ready	
3.5.2 Establish PK-12 reading standards across the district to be used in the identification of above-, on- and below-grade level readers	
3.5.3 Develop and implement an aligned districtwide student literacy pathway to meet the needs of individual students at each grade level	
3.5.4 Implement PK-12 standard districtwide screening and progress monitoring reading assessments to ensure students read on- or above-grade level	
3.5.5 Provide differentiated and ongoing training to teachers, campus leadership teams and district administrators on how to implement, monitor and support literacy framework	

Accomplishments

We have completed Phase 1 of the Literacy Plan work. Currently, teachers are being solicited to assist in readiness work to begin this summer and continue into the early summer of next year. A foundation of reading development for English language learners is being developed for grade levels 6-8 this summer. We developed and implemented reading documents called “Blue Prints” for parents that describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of the each grade level, K-12. We launched ongoing training initiative to facilitate quality implementation of new reading adoption including coaching and mentoring, model lessons, and classroom support to be provided by instructional specialists and curriculum specialists. Last, we launched a districtwide textbook selection committee process for Pre-K, language arts, and ESL adoptions. Additional work is underway to prepare for the textbook implementation activities planned for Fall 2011.





Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

Planned for next period

Literacy will continue to be the umbrella that all other disciplines will be integrated under as reading is the threshold skill for success for all others. Therefore, the district will develop action steps for a literacy plan framework through committee work under the leadership of Dr. Alicia Thomas.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports

3.6 Implement a comprehensive Numeracy/mathematics program in grades pre-k through 12	
Main Element	Progress
3.6.1 Provide equitable instruction by establishing districtwide Numeracy targets to ensure that all students are college/career ready	
3.6.2 Develop an aligned, districtwide Numeracy Coaching Model, targeted to meet the needs of teachers and students at each grade level	
3.6.3 Provide differentiated and ongoing training to teachers, principals, School Improvement Officers, and other stakeholders on how to implement, monitor, and support Numeracy instruction	
3.6.4 Develop and implement districtwide formative assessments and provide guidelines and standards of practice for targeted intervention, based on assessment data	

Accomplishments

Phase 1 of the numeracy plan has been completed. “Blue Prints” have been completed and aligned to all state, national and international standards. These blue prints are a quick reference on what children should learn in math that are easy to reference for both parent and teachers and are housed in a web-based environment for easy accessibility. Teachers of mathematics are applying for and will be selected to work beginning this summer and continuing into the early summer next year on curriculum updating and implementation assistance and leadership to our classroom math teachers.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. 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

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 Strategies in support of the overall Core Initiative.

The *Strategic Direction Management Report* is produced Quarterly. Color indicators are used to 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.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data-Driven Accountability

4.1 Build easily accessible and accurate data architecture, warehouse, and technology infrastructure	
Main Element	Progress
4.1.1 Create a data warehouse with business intelligence interface	
4.1.2 Implement a data quality and data stewardship program	
4.1.3 Re-skill and implement IT infrastructure that supports the District	

Accomplishments

CIO/CTO, Arnold Viramontes, has begun his engagement at HISD. Since his STAARt on April 4, he has been getting acclimated to his new role, and re-aligning the Technology department so that it can provide better capabilities and services to the users of the district. He has also been working with his peers in the cabinet to understand the respective technology priorities for their areas. In concert with his arrival, the Research & Accountability department was re-organized into the Technology Information division.

(4.1.1) Critical data on student and teacher performance is housed inconsistently in various locations, requiring extensive manual effort and time to pull together relevant and useful reports to inform decision making by leadership across the district. To remedy this, HISD will create a central repository (data warehouse) where all critical data will be stored and provide access to District users. The initial bids for this initiative were received and ready for presentation to the Board for approval in 3Q10. More recently, IT has begun several Proof-of-Concept projects, involving Research and Accountability and several of the leading Business Intelligence vendors in order to produce dashboard prototypes that will show value to users and increase the project's momentum.

(4.1.2) Initial analysis of employee and student subject data areas indicates that there are issues with data quality and consistency which will compromise the effectiveness of the data warehouse and dashboards. It is a necessity that HISD institute a Data Stewardship and Governance program to clean up the way Chancery, PeopleSoft, SAP and other source systems are used and to ensure the success of the data warehouse and business intelligence initiative (4.1.1). This will entail identifying district owners for the various data areas and ensuring that standard processes concerning these areas are developed and adopted across HISD. This process is in progress, and is dependent upon staffing open positions on the IT Information Management team that will lead and administer this effort.

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data-Driven Accountability

Initiative 4.1.3 consists of several independent efforts. Accomplishments for these independent work streams are detailed below:

(4.1.3.1 - Instructional Applications Architecture) HISD is revisiting its literacy application in support of the district's literacy focus. Procurement of a new solution to replace / augment Read180 is underway. Next steps are pending 2011 – 12 pending funding activities in order to identify opportunities for integration of technology and curriculum in the classroom.

(4.1.3.2 - Collaborative work environment) In support of a 21st century learning environment, HISD needs to develop a special type of instructional application called a collaborative environment, which will allow students, teachers, and administrators to work online more productively across a common platform. A successful collaborative system pilot was conducted at Lamar HS. The Microsoft "live@edu" solution is ready for scaling to the whole high school as an expanded pilot test. Additionally, as part of the Microsoft Software Assurance RFP, the district is looking to expand its investment in SharePoint, a powerful collaboration tool in limited use within the district. This solution will be used as a framework for an expanded collaborative platform districtwide.

(4.1.3.3 Set new standard on End-User Computing Device) New contracts for PCs, servers and printers secured 10-30% price improvements in support of expanding technology usage throughout the District. Additionally, further work continues with Apple to explore new ways that iPads and iPod Touches can be used in the classroom to contribute to the educational environment.

(4.1.3.4 1:1 Computing Strategy) Work is underway preparing the Young Women's College Preparatory Academy as HISD's first 1: 1 computing initiative. IT has been developing a device management strategy to ensure a safe and effective computing environment.

(4.1.3.5 - Implement a modern Network) In order to support the transition to new IT architectures, HISD must revamp its existing IT architecture in areas such as network connectivity and information security to ensure that the supporting infrastructure in place is safe, secure, and easy to access. A high-level network design and architecture for a new network was completed, RFP released and vendors finalized. Work continues to secure federal funding in support this effort. Some funding for past E-rate years has been approved. E-rate Year 14 Form 470 was finalized in late March. Interviews continue for Project Managers and Sr. Network Engineers for the New Network Implementation Project. Matching funds for E-rate schools is estimated \$10MM. The funds required to upgrade schools not funded through E-rate are estimated at \$12MM-\$20MM.

(4.1.3.6 - Implement a modern Information Security Program) IBM Internet Security Services is concluding its engagement at HISD. IBM has indicated that they will produce their final deliverable – a thorough assessment of HISD's Information Security posture, and a roadmap for remediation at the end of July, 2011.




Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data-Driven Accountability

Planned for Next Period

To continue our progress, the district will institute a Principals Advisory Committee and Executive Leadership Steering Committee to inform IT priorities. In support of *4.1.1 Create a data warehouse with business intelligence interface*, we will institute an IT Data Governance Framework and Operational Data Store (ODS). Also, we plan to complete a new network redesign with complimenting implementation plans. Last, we will continue to work to acquire E-rate funds from past years.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data – Driven Accountability

4.2 Develop and implement performance management tools and practices for decision-making	
Main Element	Progress
4.2.1 Adapt Board Monitoring System to create a dashboard that provides a snapshot of the most important district performance measures	
4.3.2 – 4.2.6 Create a dashboard that summarizes important performance metrics for key district leadership	
4.3.7 End User Training	

Accomplishments




All departments within central office now have clearly defined balanced scorecards that tie their services and processes to key performance measures and align their work with the strategic priorities of the district. The next step is to align these departmental goals and metrics at the individual level, through employee performance appraisals. Currently, 5,000 employees from several central office departments have been trained and are completing appraisals using the new appraisal system in PeopleSoft ePerformance. In addition, Nichole Johnson who currently serves as a Broad resident, will now manage the Performance Management team under the Office of Human Capital Accountability and Rewards. Prior to joining the district, Ms. Johnson served as a performance improvement consultant and project manager for more than twelve years.

Planned for next period

Work will continue to complete the transition to PeopleSoft ePerformance. We will work with identified departments to update their scorecard measures. Last we will continue to work on the Board Monitoring System.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 4. Ensure Data – Driven Accountability

4.3 Design Effective and Efficient Business Processes and Procedures for Optimization of Resources and Results	
Main Element	Progress
4.3.1 Design and implement effective and efficient processes for selecting, obtaining, and evaluating instructional services and materials	
4.3.2 Design processes for schools to evaluate and share experiences about vendors	
4.3.3 Define a business process for the procurement of services and materials off the recommended vendor list	

Accomplishments

In this period we modified and finalized the process of completing all subject program questionnaires for acquiring Instructional Products and Services. We also placed a link to a general questionnaire from the Supplier Registration page. Finally, we updated the Product Spend Categories to match the programs on the Instructional Products & Services Questionnaires to track costs and facilitate the future plan to link programs and their performance.

In addition, we launched the District's Supplier Scorecard application located on the Procurement Services web site. This application provides schools the ability to rate suppliers of the products and services they have acquired and experienced from those vendors. Supplier Scorecards will also have the previously rated suppliers so that other campuses can view suppliers' ratings prior acquiring the same products and services.

Additionally, we developed an instructional products and services evaluation business process. This process delineates the Curriculum Department's evaluation and vetting activities once the completed questionnaire is received. Also, we modified the supplier registration business process. This process outlines the procedure that potential suppliers utilize when registering and specifying the products & services to be provided. Finally, we tested and launched an on-line Supplier Registration application.

Plans for Next Period

In the next period we plan to communicate with currently registered suppliers to provide logon credentials and training information. We will continue our efforts to roll out 150 supplier catalogs for campus use during the next school year.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5. 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 STAART a new era in our communication and relationship with HISD's broad community.





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 Strategies in support of the overall Core Initiative.

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Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

5.1 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for internal stakeholders	
Main Element	Progress
5.1.1 Establish structures and protocols for disseminating information to and from internal stakeholders	
5.1.2 Use a variety of methods to communicate with internal stakeholders	
5.1.3 Build capacity to ensure implementation of timely, effective, two-way communication	
5.1.4 Define and implement methods to evaluate effectiveness of internal communications	

Accomplishments

As part of our continuing efforts to establish structures and protocols for disseminating information to and from internal stakeholders, a video archive of monthly Board meetings was created on the HISD web site. The webpage consolidates links for video, agendas, and minutes in an easy-to-use format. A new multimedia web page devoted to the district's college-bound seniors also was created, highlighting outstanding graduates and school-based events and programs honoring their achievements.

A variety of communications methods are being developed and implemented to provide internal stakeholders with timely and consistent information. During this period, an HISD Facebook page and YouTube channel were launched, as was the superintendent's multimedia blog—Talk Supe. A Spanish HISD newscast, which airs on HISD TV and is posted on the web site, also was launched. A new program on HISD TV and the web, Community Connections, was introduced that highlights outstanding community partnerships. Also initiated was “Behind the Scenes” videos that show how the work of central office departments supports schools and the district. Additional WOW (Within Our Walls) videos were produced highlighting outstanding schools and programs, which are used by principals with staff to bring attention to best practices. Videos also were produced to support the Effective Teachers Initiative. The editorial group established earlier in the year continues to meet weekly to prioritize requests from schools and departments and to ensure that all appropriate platforms are used to disseminate information.

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

Efforts continued to communicate with staff, parents, and the broader community through face-to-face meetings and events. Additional Community Conversations meetings were held at several schools to address proposed campus changes for 2011–2012. Monthly meeting with all principals and the principal ad hoc group have provided additional opportunities for face-to-face, two-way communication. HISD is partnering with the City of Houston to sponsor the first annual Back-to-School Fest that will feature informational exhibits showcasing HISD programs and services and city and community resources.

A survey of HISD chiefs and their direct reports was conducted to ascertain the ways in which individual departments are regularly communicating with stakeholders, the frequency of the communications, and the supports they need to aid in their communications efforts. A survey also was conducted of a group of principals to find out what they need to help them strengthen their capacity for communicating; principals expressed a strong desire for help marketing their schools more effectively. To build capacity in this area, a partnership was established with the Rice University Business School to provide a marketing seminar for principals, and the first three-day seminar was held at the end of June 2011. Survey results will be used to inform ongoing efforts to support principals and departments in their communications with internal and external audiences.





The first superintendent's press conference with high school journalists was held in April 2011; students representing 19 high schools attended. Additional press conferences with student journalists are being planned.

Planned for next period

Efforts are under way during the summer 2011 to develop a comprehensive toolkit for internal communications, including processes, protocols, brand guidelines, and ready-to-use templates. Work is progressing on establishing an employee advisory committee that will provide advice and feedback on internal communications.

Strategic Direction Management Report

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

5.2 Develop effective, timely, two-way communication for external stakeholders	
Main Element	Progress
5.2.1 Establish structures and protocols for disseminating information to and from external stakeholders	
5.2.2 Use a variety of methods to communicate with external stakeholders	
5.2.3 Build capacity to ensure implementation of timely, effective, two-way communication	
5.2.4 Define and implement methods to evaluate effectiveness of external communications	

Accomplishments

As part of our continuing efforts to establish structures and protocols for disseminating information to and from external stakeholders, a video archive of monthly Board meetings was created on the HISD web site. The webpage consolidates links for video, agendas, and minutes in an easy-to-use format. A new multimedia web page devoted to the district's college-bound seniors also was created, highlighting outstanding graduates, school-based events and programs honoring their achievements, and the district's dual-credit program.

A variety of communications methods are being developed and implemented to provide external stakeholders with timely and consistent information. During this period, an HISD Facebook page and YouTube channel were launched, as was the superintendent's multimedia blog—Talk Supe. A Spanish HISD newscast, which airs on HISD TV and is posted on the web site, also was launched. A new program on HISD TV and the web, Community Connections, was introduced that highlights outstanding community partnerships. Also initiated was “Behind the Scenes” videos that show how the work of central office departments supports schools and the district. Additional WOW (Within Our Walls) videos were produced highlighting outstanding schools and programs. An electronic newsletter for and about the district's community partners was launched. The first issue of the new parent newsletter—*HISD Connections*—was produced in three languages, distributed to families through schools, and posted on the English, Spanish, and Vietnamese web sites. The editorial group established earlier in the year continues to meet weekly to prioritize requests from schools and departments and to ensure that all appropriate platforms are used to disseminate information.

Core Initiative: 5. Culture of Trust Through Action

Efforts continued to communicate with parents and the broader community through face-to-face meetings and events. Additional Community Conversations meetings were held at several schools to address proposed campus changes for 2011–2012 and to provide parents at those schools with an opportunity to gather information and ask questions about other school options for their children in HISD. The district is partnering with the City of Houston to sponsor the first annual Back-to-School Fest on August 6 that will feature information on HISD programs and services and city and community resources. The newly established African American Advisory Committee will host its inaugural meeting in mid-July; the committee's objective is to advise and support HISD in furthering education and encouraging student and parent involvement and achievement.

To build capacity for effective communication with the community, HISD staff conducted communications/media training for PTA leadership. In addition, to support principals in their efforts to engage external stakeholders, a partnership was established with the Rice University Business School to provide a marketing seminar for principals, and the first three-day seminar was held at the end of June 2011.

The biannual parent and community survey was conducted in April 2011 and results are being compiled; for the first time this year, a web version was available as a pilot.

A partnership was established with Fox 26 to air a regular "Ask the Superintendent" segment. The first superintendent's press conference with high school journalists was held in April 2011; students representing 19 high schools attended. Additional press conferences with student journalists are being planned. The media tracking protocol put in place earlier in the year continues to be used to monitor coverage of the district and the effectiveness of communications with the media.

Planned for next period

Efforts are under way during the summer 2011 to develop a practical, easy-to-use "neighbor-to-neighbor" engagement toolkit for school community members.