



PRESS RELEASE

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HISD Board Discusses Proposal for Better Teacher Appraisal and Development System

*New system gives teachers regular feedback and takes student
performance into account*

April 7, 2011—The HISD Board of Education on Thursday discussed the final proposal for a more fair and meaningful appraisal and development system for teachers.

The proposed system would make several major improvements to the district's current, 20-year-old appraisal system. It would ensure that all teachers receive the regular, valuable feedback on their performance that they deserve as professionals, as well as individualized support that helps them serve their students more effectively. It would rate teachers based on multiple measures in three major categories—including Student Performance—rather than relying on the results of a single subjective classroom observation, as the current system does.

The proposal is the result of a six-month design process that involved thousands of HISD teachers, school administrators, parents and community members. Several teachers and principals who helped lead the design process presented the proposed new system to the Board.

"This process is an exemplary example of collaboration," said Trustee Michael Lunceford. "I've talked to teachers, principals and parents who were involved, and everyone felt engaged. They thought the process was transparent and really well done."

The design of the new appraisal system is the first step in HISD's Effective Teachers Initiative — part of the district's larger Strategic Direction — which aims to put an effective teacher in every classroom by transforming the way the district recruits, develops, and retains its teachers.

Teacher Dissatisfaction with Current System

Building a better teacher appraisal and development system became one of the district's top priorities after a survey last spring found that most teachers and principals believe the current system (the Professional Development and Appraisal System, or PDAS) fails to provide teachers with the information they need to accelerate student learning. Only 44 percent of HISD teachers and 28 percent of HISD principals believe the current appraisal system is accurate, and only 43 percent of teachers believe it helps them improve in the classroom.

Lamar High School chemistry teacher Robin Licato was among several teachers and principals who participated in the proposal's creation and presented it to the Board on Thursday.

"This is huge what you're doing because we as teachers have never been asked how we'd like to be evaluated," Licato said.

Overview of Proposed New System

The proposed system would paint a more complete picture of teachers' work by evaluating them with multiple measures in three major categories:

- **Student Performance:** Teacher's impact on student learning
- **Instructional Practice:** Teacher's skills and knowledge that help promote student learning.
- **Professional Expectations:** Teacher's adherence to objective, measurable standards of professionalism

Specific measures would include classroom observations, reviews of planning documents, and results of statewide, district-wide or teacher-created assessments. Teachers would earn a score in each of the three major categories, which would combine to form a single overall rating: Ineffective, Needs Improvement, Effective or Highly Effective.

Focus on Feedback and Development

The proposed system is designed to give all teachers the regular feedback they deserve as professionals and the individualized support they need to do their best work. Three conferences with their appraiser each year will provide teachers with comprehensive feedback on their performance. In addition, appraisers will conduct multiple classroom observations and walkthroughs throughout the year, each followed by in-person and written feedback.

The proposed system also emphasizes the importance of ongoing development throughout teachers' careers—regardless of their performance rating. Teachers would work with appraisers to create an individualized development plan based on appraisal results that identifies specific areas for professional growth and targeted learning activities to address them. Appraisers would be held accountable for helping teachers meet their professional goals.

Collaborative, Transparent Design Process

Collaboration and transparency were top priorities in designing the new system. Teachers, principals and other key stakeholders led the design effort, and HISD actively sought feedback from the entire community throughout the process. The final proposal reflects input from more than 2,600 teachers, 500 school administrators, 500 parents and 600 community members—unprecedented numbers for such a major initiative.

From September through March, more than 250 school-based Shared Decision Making Committees (SDMCs) developed four rounds of recommendations on the criteria and process for the new system. SDMCs include more than 1,100 teachers, 500 parents, 500 school administrators and 700 community members. Working groups composed of teachers and HISD staff developed the rubrics and other tools that are part of the proposal. The District Advisory Committee met regularly to shape these recommendations into the final proposal.

In February, HISD released a draft proposal for the new system and gathered feedback from thousands of community members, which SDMCs incorporated into their recommendations.

The Board will formally consider the proposed new system at its April 14 regular meeting.

The **Houston Independent School District** is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States with 298 schools and more than 200,000 students. The 301-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with nearly 30,000 employees.

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