



PRESS RELEASE

HISD Media Relations Department

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HISD's Government Relations Department to Host Brown Bag Luncheon on School Finance

April 12, 2011 – HISD's Government Relations Department will host a brown bag luncheon to discuss the school finance proposals being considered in the Texas Legislature and the potential impact on HISD on Friday, April 15, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Hattie Mae White Education Support Center (4400 W. 18th, 77092).

Government Relations Director Rebecca Flores said, "Texas is facing record budget shortfalls and the Legislature is proposing deep cuts to state school funding. HISD is committed to keeping parents and the community informed about what is currently going on in Austin." Participants are asked to bring a brown bag lunch and learn about the basics of Texas school finance and review several bills currently being discussed in Austin.

In anticipation of an estimated loss of \$160 million in state funding and \$11 million in projected cost increases, HISD has eliminated 277 central office positions, cut per student funding to schools by \$275 for each student, eliminated or reduced several districtwide staff stipends and reduced the budget for disciplinary alternative education programs. The cuts are expected to save more than \$100 million, leaving an estimated budget gap of \$65 million.

In the coming weeks, the HISD Board of Education will consider other measures to close that gap. The options include the possible closure and consolidation of small schools, a property tax rate increase, and a 5 percent reduction of the district's optional homestead exemption. Currently, HISD has the lowest school tax rate in Harris County and is one of only a few districts in Texas that offers an additional 20 percent homestead exemption.

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. **For more information, visit the HISD Web site at www.houstonisd.org.**
