



# PRESS RELEASE

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## HISD Makes Strong Showing in Advocacy Group's School Rankings

*Houston ISD boasts top two high schools and middle schools; places  
two elementaries in the top 5*

April 18, 2011 – For the second year in a row, DeBakey High School for Health Professions has topped Children at Risk's annual rankings of 144 high schools in the greater Houston area.

The announcement was made Monday morning at a press conference hosted by T.H. Rogers Middle School, which beat out 265 other campuses to earn this year's top spot on the middle school list. HISD's Energized for Excellence Middle School captured the No. 2 spot.

HISD School Board President Paula Harris said the rankings show that Houston-area public schools are a draw to major companies considering doing business here.

"You don't have to spend \$20,000 to get a great education," Harris said. "This is where you want your business because we have excellence in education."

HISD high schools occupy four slots on the top 10 list. No other school district in the region had more than one school among the top 10.

The Houston ISD high schools in the top 10 are **DeBakey (No. 1)**, **Carnegie Vanguard (No. 2)**, **Eastwood Academy (No. 4)**, and **High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (No. 7)**.

DeBakey Principal Linda Lazenby thanked Baylor College of Medicine and the students, staff and parents at DeBakey for their hard work.

"It indeed takes all of these factors to achieve at the levels we do," she said.

HISD middle schools earned three spots on the region's top 10 list, more than any other district in the area. Those schools include: **T.H. Rogers (No. 1)**, **Energized for Excellence Middle School (No. 2)**, and **Lanier (No. 9)**.

"We have the most incredible staff," said T.H. Rogers Principal David Muzyka. "Most of all, we have incredible kids."

HISD also had more elementary schools among the top 10 than any other school district. They are **T.H. Rogers (No. 4)**, **West University (No. 5)**, and **J.P. Henderson (No. 8)**.

Children at Risk also bestowed HISD schools with honors in several special categories.

- **Eastwood Academy** topped the list of "Most Improved High Schools."
- **DeBakey, Carnegie and Bellaire** made the list of top high schools in science and math.
- **Waltrip and Austin high schools** earned spots among the top 10 urban, comprehensive high schools.

Children at Risk President and CEO Robert Sanborn said all of the top campuses have high standards.

"Schools that demand rigorous education, that demand more from teachers and students, do very well," Sanborn said.

The Children at Risk rankings consider multiple factors designed to tell whether schools are not just meeting minimum passing standards, including: percentage of students scoring at the “commended” level on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, SAT scores, graduation rates, and the percentage of students earning college credit through AP, IB or dual credit courses. Student poverty rates also factor into the rankings.

And while HISD schools were well represented at the top of the rankings work is already under way to raise performance at every Houston ISD campus by boosting the quality of teaching. Last week, the Board of Education gave preliminary approval to a new teacher development system that gives teachers more frequent feedback on how their students are progressing. If given final approval by the Board next month, the revamped evaluation system would also take student academic achievement into account.

HISD is boosting the level of academic rigor at all high schools. Beginning this fall, every HISD high school will offer at least 15 college-level AP courses. And last week, every HISD high school junior was given the chance to take the SAT exam for free during classtime.

The Children at Risk rankings are based on student data from the 2009-2010 school year, before the Apollo 20 school turnaround initiative began at four high schools and five middle schools. The Apollo 20 initiative expands this fall into 11 elementary schools, eight of which were ranked lower than 500 out of 589 schools.

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](http://www.houstonisd.org).**