



PRESS RELEASE

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HISD Approved for \$70.6 Million in Federal E-Rate Funding

June 20, 2011 - HISD Superintendent Terry Grier announced today that the district has received approval for more than \$70.6 million in E-Rate funding. The money can be used to improve internal connections including cabling, routers, switches, wireless points, servers, and basic maintenance of those devices. When completed, the upgrades are expected to benefit approximately 154,000 students at 210 of HISD's campuses that were included in the funding request.

The \$70.6 million represents the district's funding request for the 2009 funding year. HISD is still awaiting a decision on funding requests for subsequent years.

E-Rate funding to HISD was frozen in 2007 as a result of a federal investigation of alleged wrongdoing, which involved three former HISD employees accepting meals and other gifts from E-Rate vendors. Shortly after he was hired as HISD superintendent in September 2009, Dr. Grier learned that HISD was receiving no E-Rate money because of the protracted settlement negotiations with the Federal Communications Commission over how much money HISD owed because of the earlier improprieties. Dr. Grier recommended quickly settling the disagreement so that Houston classrooms could once again receive the technology infrastructure they need. The \$850,000 settlement made HISD eligible to begin receiving E-Rate funding again in 2010. Since then, HISD has been approved for a total of \$84.5 million in E-Rate funding.

"Today's announcement means that HISD classrooms will soon benefit from millions of dollars worth of desperately needed upgrades to our schools' technology infrastructure," Dr. Grier said.

The federal E-Rate program is designed to bridge the digital divide between more affluent suburban students and urban students who are at or below the poverty line. More than 80 percent of HISD students qualify for free and reduced price school meals, which is an indicator of poverty. Based on that, the funding was approved to cover 90 percent of the cost of the projects, with the district picking up the remaining amount. E-Rate funding can be used for telecommunications services, internet access, internal connections and basic equipment maintenance.

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.