



PRESS RELEASE

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Ninety-One Percent of HISD Schools Meet Tougher Texas Standards

*As State Strengthens School Ratings Formula, Vast Majority of HISD
Campuses Meet the Challenge*

July 29, 2011 – **Ninety-one percent** of Houston Independent School District campuses met the tougher new state accountability standards this year, and **59 percent** achieved the top ratings of “recognized” or “exemplary,” according to preliminary ratings released Friday.

Overall, HISD earned a rating of “academically acceptable” while coming closer than ever to meeting the standard to be considered a “recognized” district. For the first time since the current accountability system was launched in 2004, HISD hit all but one of the targets required to be considered “recognized.” HISD, the state’s largest school district with 282 rated campuses, missed the mark because “recognized” districts may not have any campuses rated “academically unacceptable.”

The district and campus ratings are based largely on student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. **The percentage of HISD students passing the TAKS math, science and social studies exams increased from 2010 to 2011, while the reading and writing exam passing rates remained strong.**

Middle school dropout rates and four-year high school completion rates also factor into the ratings. HISD’s performance on both of those measures is now the best it has ever been under the current accountability system. **At 86.6 percent, HISD’s completion rate is now 3.4 points higher than last year, and the middle school dropout rate declined 0.1 percentage points to 0.5 percent.**

“HISD principals and teachers helped students throughout the district make great strides last school year, and we celebrate that today. But we will not be satisfied until all children attending all Houston schools are achieving at the highest levels. It is unacceptable for Houston to have any unacceptable schools,” said HISD Superintendent Dr. Terry Grier. “As Houston schools rise to meet our ambitious, but attainable, goal of preparing every child for college and a meaningful career, it’s more critical than ever that we follow through on our promise to give every child a great teacher and a school led by a quality principal.”

Significant Changes Made to Method for Rating Texas Schools

The state of Texas made several changes to the way schools were rated for 2011, which resulted in lower ratings for many schools throughout the state. The most significant of those changes is the elimination of the Texas Projection Measure, a statistical formula that sought to project future student performance and was used in 2010 to boost the ratings of 632 Texas school districts and 3,869 campuses. Other significant changes that made this year's ratings system more rigorous:

- A 5-point increase in the minimum percentage of students passing the math and science exams for a school to be rated "academically acceptable."
- Requiring campuses to have at least 25 percent of all students, and 25 percent of all economically disadvantaged students, reach the TAKS "commended" level in order to be rated "exemplary," or at least 15 percent for a "recognized" rating.
- At least 60 percent of English Language Learners must be proficient on the TAKS reading or the reading component of the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) for a school to be rated "exemplary" or "recognized."
- For the first time, the scores of special education students who took the TAKS-Modified and TAKS-Alternate were factored into accountability ratings.

HISD Boasts 59 Exemplary Schools

HISD's 59 "exemplary" schools are:

Elementary Schools

- Briscoe
- Browning
- Burrus
- Bush
- Cage
- Codwell
- Condit
- Cook
- Cornelius
- Crockett
- De Zavala
- R.P. Harris
- Hartsfield
- J.P. Henderson
- Highland Heights
- Hines-Caldwell
- Hobby
- Horn
- Houston Gardens
- Kennedy
- Kolter
- Lovett
- Lyons
- Mading
- Oak Forest
- Oates
- Osborne
- Park Place
- Port Houston
- River Oaks
- Roberts
- Ross

- Rusk
- Saint George Place
- Scott
- Seguin
- Southmayd
- Stevenson

- Sutton
- Twain
- Valley West
- West University
- White
- Windsor Village

Middle Schools

- Briar Meadow
- Energized for E-STEM Central
- Energized for Excellence

- Kaleidoscope
- Pin Oak
- Project Chrysalis

High Schools

- Carnegie Vanguard
- Challenge
- DeBakey
- East Early College
- Eastwood Academy

- High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
- Houston Academy for International Studies
- North Houston Early College
- South Early College

HISD 2011 Ratings Compare Favorably to 2010 When Using the Same Criteria

With the new standards in place, 59 percent of HISD schools performed well enough to earn ratings of “exemplary” or “recognized.” This is the same percentage of HISD schools that would have received the top ratings in 2010 if the new standards had been in place then.

The following table shows the number of HISD schools earning each rating in 2011, compared to the number of schools that would have earned those ratings in 2010 using the exact same standards that are in place now.

Rating	2010*	2011
Exemplary	46	59
Recognized	118	106
Academically Acceptable	77	79
Academically Unacceptable	23	21
AEA: Academically Acceptable	13	13
AEA: Academically Unacceptable	3	4
Total	280	282

*2010 performance results with application of the 2011 accountability rules

Ratings Drop Across Texas

Because of the changes to the accountability system, the number of Texas schools rated “exemplary” or “recognized” dropped from 69 percent in 2010 to 48 percent in 2011. Meanwhile, the number of Texas schools rated “academically unacceptable” increased from 1 percent in 2010 to 7 percent in 2011. That trend of declining ratings despite improved overall academic achievement was also evident in HISD, where the number of “exemplary” and “recognized” schools declined from 74 percent in 2010 to 59 percent in 2011. The number of “academically unacceptable” schools in HISD was 2.5 percent in 2010 and now stands at 9 percent.

Ratings earned in 2011 will remain in place until 2013, when Texas will complete the transition into a new accountability system that replaces the TAKS exams with the tougher State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exams. Texas students will take the STAAR exams during the 2011-2012 school year, but their scores will not be used for school accountability ratings until the second year.

Unlike the TAKS, STAAR will seek to measure whether students at each grade level are on track to graduate prepared for college and the workplace. Correctly answering questions on STAAR will require more critical thinking and the writing test will require more essays in first-person and expository styles. High school students will take end-of-course exams that test their mastery of the specific subjects they took that school year. Additionally, students will have a limited amount of time (four hours) to take each STAAR exam, rather than the unlimited time they received to take the TAKS.

HISD principals and teachers have spent much of the summer in professional development seminars and training aimed at preparing them to help students meet the new standards.

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 website at www.houstonisd.org.
