



# PRESS RELEASE

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HISD Media Relations Department

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## Ministers and Area Police Officers to Provide Added Security as the School Year Ends

### *Project Safe Start* Marks 21 Years of Success

May 27, 2011— On Tuesday, May 31, at 10 a.m., HISD Board President Paula Harris and HISD Police Chief Jimmy Dotson will be joined by police officers from HPD and several other school districts as well as the Ministers Against Crime to announce the details of this year's Project Safe Start program. The press conference will be held in the HISD Board Auditorium (4400 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street).

This year marks the 21st year of the successful Project Safe Start safety program that deploys police officers and ministers from *Ministers Against Crime* and the *Police and Clergy Team* (PACT) groups to targeted school campuses throughout Houston on the last few days of the school year. This joint effort provides an added measure of security for both students and staff.

Project Safe Start is recognized nationally for its success in keeping Houston's youth safe as they start their summer vacation. "I am so pleased to see the continuous support of our ministers and police agencies as we work hard to provide a safe environment for all the children in the district," said HISD Board President Paula Harris. "Successful programs tend to last and grow. Since this program began in HISD in 1991, we've been joined by the North Forest, Spring Branch and Fort Bend school districts. This year, Alief is participating for the first time."

The last few days of school before the summer break often present an opportunity for students to engage in activities to "settle up" their differences with other classmates. But since the implementation of Project Safe Start, to date, there have been no major incidents of violence reported on any Houston campuses during the last days of school.

"Sometimes all a kid needs is a little encouragement to do the right thing and not get involved in a bad situation," says Pastor Robert Jefferson. Jefferson has been involved with the program since its inception. This year, he and other ministers will volunteer their time at schools in all five school districts.

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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).

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