

SMART START

HISD 2023-2024 BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDELINES



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

As of September 11, 2023

HISD FAST FACTS

SIZE & DIVERSITY



LARGEST school district in Texas
EIGHTH largest in the United States

194,141 Students



62% Hispanic
22% African American
4.4% Asian
9.5% White
104 Languages Spoken



276 Schools

8..... Early Childhood Schools
163..... Elementary Schools
40..... Middle Schools
43..... High Schools
22 Combined/Other

PROGRAM OPTIONS

- 128 Magnet Programs
 - Montessori
 - Vanguard
 - International Baccalaureate Programs
 - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
 - Dual Language & Language Immersion
 - Fine Arts
 - Early Colleges
 - Career Academies
- Prekindergarten
- Bilingual Education
- Specialized Special Education Programs
- Gifted & Talented
- College & Career Prep with free college credit and industry training and certifications

AWARDS & HONORS



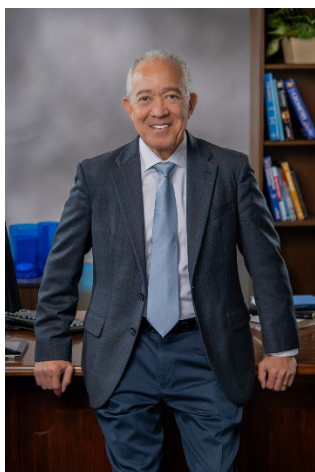
\$437 MILLION
in scholarships and financial aid offers in 2023



7 schools ranked No. 1 by *Children at Risk* best public schools listing



4 high schools recognized by U.S. News & World Report as among the top 100 schools in the country
43 schools offering prestigious international baccalaureate programming



Hello HISD Families,

I told you in June when I became the Superintendent of HISD that your students are the reason I took this job, and that it was my responsibility to make sure they have the skills and experiences they need to be successful in the Houston of 2035 and beyond. I take that very seriously and my team has been working around the clock to ensure that we start delivering on those promises on day one of the 2023-2024 school year. All HISD campuses are ready and waiting to provide excellent classroom instruction on day one. Principals and teachers are trained and ready to teach, and I know your students are ready to learn.

It has been a great pleasure to meet so many parents and students over the summer. I want to thank all the families that took time out of their summers to learn more about what's in store for HISD and to ask questions and provide feedback. We've previewed a lot of changes, and now you will get the chance to see them in action.

I hope you have the opportunity to spend time in your child's school this year. You will see schools children are constantly engaged by highly trained, caring adults who are focused on helping them master fundamental skills. You will see your student work independently and in pairs and small groups with classmates to tackle a new lesson. For our older students, I want every high school student to access college and career training that prepares them for jobs that not only pay them a real wage but prepare them for work in a world that we can only imagine. Imagine a middle school whose students are above the national average in reading, math, and science. Your student will travel. They will experience and get hands on experience in performing and visual arts. They will learn to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. And, I hope they will enjoy (almost) every minute of it.

For those families whose students attend the eighty-five New Education System or New Education System aligned schools, I cannot wait for you to see the new education experiences your students have access to. Many of you will be meeting new teachers and principals, and I know they are excited to welcome you in to see everything new on their campuses. Principals will be scheduling school meetings and back to school events. I hope you have the chance to see the changes for yourselves. Please review the additional information included for your campuses. It will help you understand school day schedule, teaching and learning in your child's classroom, and highlight other new opportunities available in these schools.

For all parents, we are making improvements to ensure HISD safeguard the health and wellbeing of every student every minute they are in our care. We have been working to audit improve the safety of our buildings, we've updated our COVID and student illness policies, and we have worked all summer to ensure students are transported to school safely and efficiently every day.

Thank you for your partnership and thank you for choosing HISD for your child. We look forward to the first day of school and wish you and your family continued success in the 2023-2024 school year.

Regards,
F. Mike Miles
Superintendent of Schools
Houston Independent School District

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WELCOME BACK!

We are excited to welcome you to the Houston Independent School District. All HISD school campuses will be offering in-person instruction for the 2023-2024 academic year. The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and all of our stakeholders continues to be a top priority and we'll continue to revisit and make any appropriate updates as needed. These guidelines are also available to view in the following formats:

- Spanish translation
- HTML – To view the plan in the browser and on mobile devices
- ePub – To read the plan as an e-book on an iPad or other e-book readers
- Electronic Braille – To view the plan as a BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays
- Audio – To listen to the plan as a MP3 version
- BeeLine Reader – To view the plan in an enhanced version for easier and fast on-screen reading

IMPORTANT DATES

August 14, 2023

Teachers Report to Work

August 28, 2023

First Day of School

December 22, 2023

Last Day of First Semester

January 9, 2024

First Day of Second Semester

June 5, 2024

Last Day for Students

June 6, 2024

Last Day for Teachers

[Click Here](#) for the
2023-2024 Academic Calendar



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOLS

MASKS

Masks are no longer required inside or outside of HISD schools, buildings, or buses.

For both students and staff that may need additional layers of protection or are currently sick, masks are highly encouraged.

SELF-MONITORING

Students, staff, and visitors are asked to monitor their health and stay home when sick.

VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are our first line of defense against any communicable diseases. The district partners with local agencies and medical providers to make immunization clinics available throughout the district.

Additional details and vaccination locations in the city of Houston can be found online or through your school nurse.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

As with any potentially contagious illness, those who are sick are encouraged to stay home. For recommended stay-home guidelines, please see page 10

COVID-19 TESTING

In accordance with State Bill 29, and the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Houston ISD no longer offers free COVID-19 testing. If testing is deemed necessary by the individual who is feeling ill, it is recommended that they see their provider or purchase a self-testing kit from a pharmacy.

HYGIENE

Students, staff, and visitors are encouraged to wash/sanitize their hands regularly. Sanitization stations will be maintained at all HISD schools, facilities, and buildings.

SANITIZATION & DISINFECTION

All district schools and buildings will continue to be cleaned, disinfected, and fogged nightly with hospital-grade disinfectants as a precautionary measure.

Hand sanitizer and other cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided in all schools, buildings, and buses.

SAFE IN-PERSON LEARNING & WORKING

MASKS

Masks within HISD schools, facilities, and school buses are not required. Students, staff, and any other HISD stakeholders that may need an additional layer of protection or are exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease are highly encouraged to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status, as they see fit.

SELF-MONITORING

Students, parents, employees, and visitors are required to self-monitor for illness and should not enter any district school, building or bus when sick or experiencing symptoms of a recognized communicable disease.

EMPLOYEES

- All HISD employees are required to self-monitor and are encouraged to stay home and follow the notification procedures set by their campus or department for any communicable disease. It is the employee's responsibility to complete the communicable disease self-reporting form available in myHISD Portal and notify the appropriate campus administrator and campus nurse, or department supervisor if they have a positive communicable disease diagnosis. Employees should notify their supervisor when sick or experiencing symptoms of a recognized communicable disease.

STUDENTS & VISITORS

- Parents and guardians are advised to monitor their children and check for symptoms of a communicable disease before sending their children to school. Children should stay home when sick or exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease.
- Visitors at all HISD Schools and Buildings: All scheduled visitors must self-monitor for symptoms and stay home when sick.

VACCINATIONS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics, full vaccination is the best defense against all communicable diseases.

Details regarding vaccination locations, assistance, and

more can be found at

<https://www.houstonhealth.org/services/clinical/immunizations>.

Additionally, the Houston Health Department is ready to support childhood disease vaccination clinics in HISD. Campuses are highly encouraged to host at least two vaccination clinics. For more information, coordinate with your campus nurse or contact the HISD Health & Medical Services Department at 713-556-7280 or via email at HealthMS@HoustonISD.org. Students may also be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccination and booster (if eligible and available).

Getting a childhood vaccination is free and does not require proof of residency, citizenship, or insurance.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE GUIDELINES

STUDENTS

Students exhibiting symptoms of a recognized communicable disease must be placed in as isolated an area as possible, away from others, until picked up by a parent/ guardian.

The school nurse will document confirmed communicable disease cases in HISD's electronic health record. If campuses do not have a school nurse, the principal will fulfill these duties.

If a student becomes infected with a communicable disease, they must notify their campus, stay home and isolate following CDC guidelines.

If a confirmed communicable disease case is detected in a classroom, parents/caregivers will be notified and provided with next steps related to isolate and any other measures that should be taken. If isolation are required, the student must stay home.

See the table on page 10 for more information.

STAFF

All HISD campus and non-campus staff must self-monitor and will be required to isolate if any of these conditions are met:

- Exhibiting symptoms of a recognized communicable disease

If staff are at work when meeting any of the above conditions, they must leave immediately. Otherwise, they are instructed to remain at home and notify their immediate supervisor. In the interest of all HISD stakeholders, staff meeting any of the conditions are strongly encouraged to seek medical attention and get tested and vaccinated for communicable diseases such as the flu, covid, etc.

See the table on page 10 for more information.

Employees must stay home when sick and can utilize their leave bank in accordance with Board Policy DEC (LOCAL). In addition, Family Medical Leave is available to all employees who qualify.

HISD COVID-19 TESTING

For staff desiring COVID-19 testing, Next Level Urgent Care provides COVID-19 testing for HISD staff enrolled in the HISD medical plan for a \$20 visit fee. Free COVID-19 testing services are available at the two HISD Health & Wellness Centers located at the Hattie Mae White ESC and Attucks MS.

HYGIENE

Individuals are strongly encouraged to routinely wash or sanitize their hands throughout the day, prior to eating, and after each visit to the restroom. Individuals are also encouraged to practice proper respiratory etiquette by covering coughs and sneezes with the inside of their elbow, a tissue, or mask.

Sanitization stations will be maintained at all HISD schools and buildings.

SANITIZATION & DISINFECTION

All district schools and buildings will continue to be cleaned, disinfected, and fogged nightly with hospital-grade disinfectant as a precautionary measure. High-touch surfaces will continue to be sanitized regularly at all campuses and existing plexiglass will remain in place. Schools and offices also will continue to be provided with hand soap, paper towels, tissues, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant. Schools can purchase additional cleaning supplies as needed.

Air ventilation systems will continue to be inspected regularly, with repairs prioritized and filters replaced using the highest-grade allowable.

SCHOOL BUS SERVICE

Transportation Services is resuming normal operations and bus service at full capacity. Students and bus operators are highly encouraged to wear masks when needing additional layers of protection or are sick. Assigned seating is no longer required.

Students should sanitize their hands and scan their bus badge upon boarding. Buses will be cleaned and sanitized regularly with hospital-grade disinfectant as a precautionary measure. Each bus will be equipped with hand sanitizer, disinfectant, towels, and first aid supplies.

All students are required to self-monitor and should stay home if experiencing symptoms of a recognized communicable disease.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/Transportation.

For a list of communicable diseases and their required quarantine times, please see:
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/idps-home/school-communicable-disease-chart>

CASE TYPE	CONFIRMED	EXPOSURE/SUSPECTED
Who does this apply to?	Individual with a positive COVID-19 test result.	Individual with one or more COVID-19 symptom.
Isolation Time	<p>Isolate 5 days from onset of symptoms or date test was taken if no symptoms.</p> <p>One should continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.</p>	<p>It is recommended to isolate 5 days from onset of symptoms or to test for COVID-19.</p> <p>Continue to wear a mask around others.</p>
Requirements to Return to Work/School	Completion of isolation plus fever free for at least the past 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and improvement in symptoms.	Completion of isolation time or qualifications for early return: fever free for at least the past 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and improvement in symptoms.
Guidance for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals	<p>If you test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, you must isolate for 5 days, regardless of vaccination/boosted status.</p> <p>If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house, but should continue to wear a mask around others.</p> <p><i>If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.</i></p>	<p>If you are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, it is recommended that you isolate for 5 days or get tested, regardless of vaccination/boosted status.</p> <p>If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving, you can leave your house. It is recommended that you continue to wear a mask around others.</p> <p><i>If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.</i></p>



STUDENT MEALS

Nutrition Services is resuming normal operations and offerings, including breakfast in the classroom and lunch in the cafeteria, as well as snack and dinner service at select campuses. All student health, medical and special dietary needs, as well as allergy concerns, will be accommodated.

All schools will continue to operate under the Universal Free Breakfast program. Houston ISD will continue its policy to operate the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program for the School Year 2023 - 2024. Schools qualifying to operate CEP serve breakfast and lunch to all children at no charge and eliminate the collection of meal applications for free, reduced-price, and paid student meals. This approach reduces burdens for both families and school administrators and helps ensure that students receive nutritious meals.

The following schools listed will transition to completing the **Free and Reduced - Price Meals Household Application** for School Year 2023 - 2024. The application process will identify each student as Free, Reduced, or Paid for all meals/snacks consumed. Student eligibility status is kept confidential. The application and instructions will be available online to complete.

- Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (Kinder HSPVA)
- Horn Elementary
- Travis Elementary
- Oak Forest Elementary
- River Oaks Elementary
- West University Elementary
- Roberts Elementary

Competitive food sales — food sold by schools, parent groups, booster clubs, and outside vendors — continue to be prohibited.

HISD VISITORS

Schools and buildings are allowed to have visitors, including after-school program staff, as well as parent and community members who have been approved through

the Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) program and have appointments. Parents registering their children for school also are allowed.

Masks are highly encouraged for visitors who may need additional layers of protection or who are currently sick. Visitors experiencing symptoms of a recognized communicable disease must stay home and will not be allowed on HISD premises.

For more information on VIPS and to register as a volunteer: HoustonISD.org/VIPS.

STUDENT UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE

Students should adhere to the dress code standards set by their campus.

If your family needs assistance with clothing, submit a Student Assistance Form to HISD's Wraparound Services Department via HoustonISD.org/SAF.

ATTENDANCE & GRADES

Attendance and grade policies will be exercised during the 2023-2024 School Year. If a student becomes ill with any communicable disease, the student must follow the district's communicable disease guidelines.

There are no plans for grade exemptions. All students must meet the corresponding criteria to earn a passing grade on assignments and classwork. All grades will count toward a student passing a course/grade. For more information about grades, contact your campus directly.

ATHLETICS, UIL, & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Competitions and practices, as well as extracurricular activities and performances, will take place following campus guidelines.

All indoor and outdoor competitions, practices, and extracurricular activities/performances occurring at HISD facilities will allow spectators.

Masks are optional and highly encouraged for attendees needing additional layers of protection or are sick.

FIELD TRIPS

Non-athletic field trips, including enrichment and curricular trips, are permitted with no restrictions or limitations.

IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

In-person gatherings, meetings, and events are allowed with no restrictions or limitations.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT TRAVEL & CONFERENCES

Out-of-district travel and conferences are allowed with no limitations.

CLOSURE PLANS

Should any conditions warrant the closure of a campus, classroom, or portion of a classroom, that determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

While done in consultation with local agencies, the HISD Superintendent of Schools will make the final decision on any closures.

STUDENT & FAMILY SUPPORT

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Our social and emotional programming is based on the understanding that supportive relationships help make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful. We help students develop skills to manage their emotions, form positive relationships, feel empathy for others, and make responsible decisions.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/SEL.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

HISD Wraparound Services program is available in every campus. The Wraparound service specialist supports students and families by connecting them with community-based resources to address issues that impact learning, such as mental and physical health and food and housing insecurity.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/Wraparound.

CRISIS RESPONSE & PREVENTION

Our crisis intervention team strives to increase student success by addressing emotional and behavioral barriers to learning. Among our tools are intervention services, behavioral consultations, and trauma support for students, parents, and employees.

Made up of licensed specialists in school psychology, licensed professional counselors, and professional school counselors, the crisis intervention team also trains school staff on suicide prevention, self-injury, trauma response, and mental health awareness.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/CrisisResponse.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

The recent pandemic has underscored the importance of health, fitness, and physical activity. In addition to being fun for children, regular physical activity has many health benefits, including strengthening bones, decreasing blood pressure, reducing stress and anxiety, increasing self-esteem, and helping with weight management. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

children ages 3 to 5 should be active throughout the day. Children and adolescents ages 6 to 17 years should be physically active at least 60 minutes each day.

For more information, visit CDC.gov/PhysicalActivity/Basics/Children.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

In HISD, we aim to ensure every student graduates ready to enter their chosen college or career.

At the middle school level, Project Explore provides college and career readiness planning support. At the high school level, every HISD school offers personalized college advising through our Ignite program for grades 9-11, our Launch program for seniors, and our Orbit program that helps graduates with their postsecondary transition.

The district also offers 16 different Career and Technical Education pathways, allowing students to graduate with industry-recognized certifications in high-growth, high-demand career fields.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/CollegeReadiness or HoustonISD.org/CareerReadiness.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

HISD continues to focus on improving the services provided to students who qualify for special education services. The district is focused on increasing the number of special education teachers, improving its ability to identify students with special needs, and providing additional technology and services to improve student outcomes.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/SpecialEd.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Office is tasked with supporting students who have academic deficits and their schools by helping tier students for the Response to Intervention process. The office assists in planning and guiding intervention class scheduling and student placement in intervention programs. It also provides guidance to review progress monitoring and adjustments to interventions.



In addition, campuses receive training to identify students for Intervention Assistance Teams to assist with the identification process. The office provides professional development to campuses and supports the accelerated learning requirement for House Bill 4545 to support campuses meeting the requirements for those students who do not pass STAAR and EOC assessments.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/Interventions.

MULTILINGUAL PROGRAMS

Multilingual Programs provides research-based instructional practices designed to address the cognitive, linguistic, and affective needs of students in bilingual education and English as a Second Language programs. Families of English learners can visit our parent resource page for information and resources to help them support their children at home.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/Multilingual.

GIFTED & TALENTED

In light of the learning gaps caused by the pandemic, HISD wants to ensure it is developing customized

instruction that meets the needs of every student. To support students who qualify for gifted and talented services, HISD's Gifted and Talented department will continue providing tailored instructional plans for students and research-based professional development for staff to ensure appropriate acceleration is available for students when needed.

For more information, visit HoustonISD.org/GT.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Houston Independent School District values parents as partners in preparing our students to succeed in college, career, and beyond. The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Department is dedicated to building intentional school-family-and community partnerships to advance student achievement. FACE aims to engage and empower families by promoting a welcoming environment, honoring families, and linking activities to learning.

FACE goals include:

- Facilitate the development of parent partnerships at the district and campus level so that all parents have access to inform and influence decision-making.

- Build a “best in class” customer service model that efficiently and effectively responds to all parents’ needs.
- Rebuild parent communications and engagement infrastructure to provide parents with clear, easy pathways to reach campuses and district staff and gather information.
- Create a parent advocate mindset district-wide, so every parent question or concern is managed from origination to resolution efficiently and create accountability systems for parent responsiveness.

PARENT CENTER

The HISD Parent Center serves as the first point of contact for families, community members, and district stakeholders to make school and district departments more accessible to families and community members. The parent center aims to foster two-way communication between schools and homes by answering questions and assisting in resolving issues and concerns in a timely, effective, and professional manner to promote students’ academic and social success. Please call our HISD Parent Center at 713-556-FACE (3223) to start a conversation with us.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Digital resources and learning materials are still available to all students and staff through Canvas. These resources include teacher created Canvas Lessons, Eureka Math, Carnegie Math, myON, MackinVIA and more.

Based on if the campus is a New Education System (NES), New Education System – Aligned (NES-A), or Non-NES campus, the digital resource and how they are utilized will vary between each type of campus based on guidance from the Divisional and Unit Office, Curriculum and Instruction department, and the autonomy of principals overseeing these campuses.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Digital resources — like myON personalized reading — embedded into the curriculum during the previous school year are now available as learning tools that can be used both at school and at home.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

As part of the expansion of the PowerUp 1-1 initiative, all middle school students will receive a Chromebook for use at school and at home. In addition, students enrolled in the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools, an educational initiative sponsored by the Verizon Foundation, will have their Chromebooks equipped with a Verizon 5G data plan that will give them access to the internet outside the classroom.

HIGH SCHOOLS

All high schools are continuing to participate in the district’s PowerUp 1-1 initiative, which provides all students with a laptop that can be used both at school and at home.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

As a district of choice, we believe all students deserve quality teachers, schools, and academic programs that foster their growth and success. We believe our students can accomplish anything with the right tools and support.

Join us as we work to ensure every student has the knowledge, skills, and support needed to turn their dreams into reality. The Student Enrollment Department can give you helpful information about each step in the enrollment process, so your student can begin to dream big.

WANT TO ENROLL IN YOUR ZONED SCHOOL?

Just go to HoustonISD.org/SchoolFinder to find your school. Then, easily enroll online at HoustonISD.org/Enroll or visit your zoned school for help.

Interested in a magnet or specialty program? Contact our School Choice office:

- **Pre-K Enrollment**
HoustonISD.org/PreK
- **General Enrollment**
HoustonISD.org/Enroll
enroll@houstonisd.org
713-556-4826
- **School Choice**
HoustonISD.org/SchoolChoice
schoolchoice@houstonisd.org
713-556-6734

DISTRICT OFFERINGS

- Free prekindergarten for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds
- Specialized academic programs:
 - International Baccalaureate
 - College & Career Prep
 - Dual Language & Language Immersion
 - Science, Technology, Math & Engineering
 - Fine Arts
 - Montessori
 - Specialized Special Education Programs
 - Gifted & Talented
- Student mentoring and support programs
- Family assistance and community resources
- Free breakfast, lunch, and dinner for most students





If you have questions or need additional information,
please contact your campus directly.

For general information, please email
Parents@HoustonISD.org or call 713-556-7121.