**[](http://www.houstonisd.org/HISDmedia)HISD, Barbara Bush Foundation   
team up to tackle literacy crisis**

*April 24, 2014 -* The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation on Thursday unveiled a plan of action to boost literacy rates across people of all ages, and is partnering with the Houston Independent School District and other organizations to make literacy a top priority.

“We will not end the cycle of poverty until we end the cycle of low literacy,” said Bush Foundation President Julie Baker Finck in unveiling “Houston’s Literacy Crisis: A Blueprint for Community Action.”

“The blueprint’s purpose is to increase awareness of Houston’s prevalent literacy crisis, elevate literacy as a top priority, and mobilize the community into action,” she said.

The announcement follows the presentation of HISD’s comprehensive literacy plan – Literacy By 3 – to the Board of Education at a workshop last week. The plan engages students, teachers, parents, and community members around the goal of having every student reading with proficiency by Grade 3.

Implementation will begin this summer with the designation and training of a “literacy leader” for each campus – a designated teacher, counselor, or assistant principal who will support and monitor classroom and volunteer literacy programs.

“We are honored to work together with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation to address our city’s literacy crisis,” said Superintendent Terry B. Grier. “Schools can’t do it alone. It will take time, resources, and a community-wide effort to solve the literacy crisis in our city. Like the foundation, we, too, passionately believe the cycle of poverty will not be broken until the cycle of low literacy is broken.”

As HISD and the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation move forward to address the literacy crisis, community partners will be crucial. Several organizations are already working in Houston’s schools, volunteering time and resources to help children not only learn to read, but love to read.

Mayor Annise Parker called on all Houstonians to join in the literacy campaign as a means of addressing deep and historic problems. “Low literacy is the root cause of almost all social ills, including crime rates, dropout rates, joblessness, homelessness, social injustice, and health issue inequities,” she said.

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee cited the link between illiteracy and delinquency and crime, while Harris County Judge Ed Emmett called literacy “a basic skill for individual growth, but…also a skill that benefits the entire community.”

As HISD’s Literacy By 3 – which includes an awareness campaign and volunteer component – is implemented starting this summer, community partners will work together with HISD staff to ensure efforts are aligned with the literacy plan and the district’s ongoing family and community engagement efforts.

“Family and Community Engagement is essential to build parents’ capacity to assist their children’s literacy needs at home,” said HISD’s Family and Community Engagement General Manager Alejandro Morua. “The district’s literacy initiative is a call to action to prepare HISD families to ensure all students are ready for college and career.”

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