

HISD PRESS RELEASE

HISD Board of Trustees approve healthy choices program to promote food literacy

Aug. 8, 2019 – At its first regular meeting of the 2019-2020 school year, the Houston Independent School District Board of Trustees approved a collaborative food literacy program operated by HISD’s Nutrition Services Department and the University of Houston.

The innovative program will employ work-study college students to educate prekindergarten through 12th-grade HISD students on making healthy food choices. Student workers will utilize campus gardens, farmers markets and lunchtime campaigns to teach HISD students. The program will be at no cost to the district.

The board also approved the first reading of a proposal to give employee groups the right to hold elections to select representatives who can be their voice at consultation meetings with administration when it comes to issues of wages, employment hours and work conditions.

Additionally, trustees agreed to ask the state if the district can withhold \$114 million in “recapture” funds due to Hurricane Harvey damage to four schools. Under the previous school finance law, HISD was required to return money to the state, known as recapture payments. The district has one remaining payment and will now request state permission to withhold \$114 million of it to help offset the cost of rebuilding schools that were damaged by Harvey. The campuses being completely rebuilt are Braeburn, Kolter, Mitchell and Scarborough elementary schools.

Also, the board voted unanimously to approve a contract that will provide more health clinic options for employees who have insurance with HISD. District employees will have access to 13 offsite clinics in addition to two onsite clinics located on HISD properties. Employees who earn more than \$25,000 annually will receive a new benefit allowing \$20 visits to offsite clinics. All insured employees, regardless of income, will continue to receive free visits to the onsite clinics, and those earning less than \$25,000 will continue to receive free visits to offsite clinics as well.

Trustees also approved a resolution calling for the November 5 school board election. Single member districts II, III, IV and VIII are on the ballot.

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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 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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