

HISD PRESS RELEASE

‘Year of Flexibility’ begins as HISD students start virtually on first day of 2020-2021 school year

Media Partners: video for use on-air and online is available [here](#)

September 8, 2020 -- Hundreds of thousands of students, educators, parents, and staff in the Houston Independent School District began the first day of the 2020-2021 school year virtually with a charge to ‘Reconnect Safely, Return Strong.’

HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan spent the day making in-person and virtual visits to campuses and online classrooms to speak with students, parents, and teachers.

The in-person stops included a ‘Sanctuary of Learning’ site for students in need of a safe place to learn during the day, HISD Digital Learning Centers for students in need of technological resources, and the homes of families whose students received digital and Special Education supports from the district to ensure they succeed through online learning.

“During the pandemic we have quickly adapted to changing conditions and circumstances and must continue to do so in this new school year,” Lathan said. “Despite some remaining uncertainties and challenges, I remain optimistic that with continued determination, resilience, and flexibility, 2020-21 can be our best year yet.”

On this first day of school, the interim superintendent also joined the HISD Nutrition Services team to help serve curbside meals at Westbury High School. HISD is offering daily pick up of curbside meals at 86 schools strategically located throughout the district, at no cost to families.

Lathan also made a surprise visit to the home of a student who had perfect attendance during Camp Spark, HISD’s academic online enrichment program. Houston Texans mascot Toro was present as the student received a Texans Custom Camp Spark Ball, gift cards, gift baskets and other prizes.

The district’s website and hosting vendor experienced a disruption in service that prevented students from accessing lessons through HISD’s website temporarily before its websites were back online. In addition, slow log ins and access issues occurred due to another third-party vendor. The district continues to work with its vendors to resolve all issues.

Online instruction will continue for all HISD students until Monday, October 19 when optional in-person instruction is scheduled to resume on a phased-in basis, pending COVID-19 conditions.

More information about HISD's reopening plan, including safety protocols and the district's instructional continuity plan are available at HoustonISD.org/Reopening.

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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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