

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## Million-dollar grant provides no-cost pathway for aspiring educators through local institutions

*May 16, 2023* – Houston Independent School District is creating a new, no-cost pathway for aspiring educators to obtain their Texas teaching license with a \$1,000,000 grant available to Texas public institutions of higher education. Through this new Grow Your Own (GYO) grant program, participants who currently hold an associate degree (or equivalent 60 credits) will be able to earn their bachelor’s degree and Texas teaching license at no cost while being paid as full-time teaching assistants in HISD. This initiative is supported by a strong partnership with the National Center for Grown Your Own and the Houston Endowment.

Amid a growing, national teacher shortage, HISD has been focused on engaging sustainable recruitment and retention solutions that would eliminate barriers to encourage prospective teachers into the profession. **Grant applications are now being accepted, and institutions aiming to provide no-cost pathways for students in their Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) are strongly encouraged to apply by the early application deadline of May 26, 2023.** The final application deadline is June 16, 2023. Educator Preparation Programs must meet TEA standards as high-quality institutions that recruit and prepare qualified educators to meet the needs of all students in Texas classrooms. A list of approved EPPs can be found [here](#).

“We are excited to partner with local institutions to eliminate financial barriers and begin to address teacher vacancies in critical shortage areas like Special Education, Math and Science, and Bilingual Education,” Kaylan Connally, Executive Officer of Talent Strategy said. “If we can build a strong pipeline of aspiring teachers who can be hired as apprentices and become high quality teachers in our classrooms, the sky is the limit for our students.”

Prior to the global pandemic, the number of students pursuing undergraduate degrees in education had been on a steady decline and continues to trend downward. To address this trend, HISD’s Grow Your Own grant is heavily weighted in favor of institutions with a higher number of students served through the program and gives preference to programs that equip

teachers to teach high-vacancy subject areas. For more information on submission guidelines, steps to apply, and terms for the EPP applicant, [click here](#).

The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the eighth-largest in the United States, with 276 schools and nearly 190,000 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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