

**HISD Board of Education to consider partner for Improvement Required campuses**

*Board also to consider change to grade-level configuration at Woodson PK-8,
hear an update on 2018-2019 budget*

*April 24, 2018 –* The Houston Independent School District Board of Education will hold a workshop on Tuesday, April 24 to consider a contract with Energized for STEM Academy to operate 10 Improvement Required (IR) campuses.

Trustees are expected to consider the approval of a contract with the governing board of Energized for STEM Academy to enter into a five-year partnership with HISD under Senate Bill 1882, or SB 1882.

House Bill 1842, or HB 1842, mandates schools in Improvement Required status for five or more years on Aug. 15 be closed, or a Board of Managers be appointed to govern the entire school district. Under SB 1882, schools facing those sanctions can enter into partnerships with outside organizations and receive eligibility for a two-year pause on accountability from the Texas Education Agency.

Under the proposal, Energized for STEM Academy would operate the 10 schools that have been in Improvement Required status with the state for four years or more: Blackshear, Dogan, Highland Heights, Mading, and Wesley Elementary Schools, Henry Middle School, Woodson PK-8, and Kashmere, Wheatley, and Worthing High Schools.

Energized for STEM Academy would take over the governance, academics, and hiring at all 10 schools. HISD would still fund employees at the schools, and Energized for STEM Academy, Inc. would oversee the schools’ operating budgets. The schools that would enter into the partnerships could possibly receive $1,800 per student in state funding for their programs.

Additionally:

* Staff, including principals, teachers, cafeteria workers, custodians, and clerical workers, would be district employees and have all the benefits and rights they currently have, including the process to file any grievances, if needed.
* Transportation would be provided for the students who currently use HISD buses.
* Free breakfast and lunch would be provided for all students.
* High school students would still have individual laptops.
* Special Education and English as a Second Language services would continue.
* Services would continue to be provided for students who speak a language other than English.
* Athletics and extracurricular activities would continue with no changes.
* Police officers would be assigned to the high schools as they are currently.
* Enrollment would be open to all students in the school attendance area regardless of ethnicity.
* Support would continue to be provided for struggling students.

“We believe this partnership will help our students to reach the level of achievement that we know is possible,” Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “Data shows Energized for STEM Academy has successfully led students to high levels of academic achievement as well as prepared them for college and careers since first partnering with HISD 10 years ago.”

Energized for STEM Academy opened its first campus in 2008 and was HISD’s first middle and high school with STEM curricula recognized by the TEA as a STEM-designated program. That designation has been reaffirmed annually. The organization currently operates four schools within HISD: Energized for STEM Central and West High Schools and Energized for STEM Central and West Middle Schools. All four campuses either met or exceeded state standards in 2017, based on four performance indices used to calculate state accountability ratings: student achievement; student progress; closing performance gaps; and postsecondary readiness. All four were awarded the TEA Distinction Designation of Top 25 percent in Student Progress, and three campuses earned additional Distinction Designations in reading, math, social studies, science, closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness. Energized for STEM Academy has landed on several “best of” lists, including those of the U.S. News and World Report, the Washington Post, and the Texas Honor Roll.

In 2013, Energized for STEM Academy established the inaugural US Marine Corps Junior ROTC program in HISD. The Marine Corps JROTC program has earned more than 200 local, regional and national awards that includes the prestigious Naval Honor School for US Marine Corps Region 5, and the coveted Marine Corps Reserve Association’s **Outstanding Unit Award** (MCRA) in 2017.

If approved, the partnership would officially begin the day after approval, and the partner would develop a timeline for operational transition. The deadline for the district to submit plans to the TEA is April 30.

In other business, the Board of Education also will:

* Consider changing the grade-level configuration for Woodson PK-8 to an elementary campus that serves students in prekindergarten through fifth grade, with sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students rezoned to Thomas Middle School. Under the proposal, Thomas Middle School would receive funding through our Achieve 180 initiative to continue offering professional development, support for teachers, and the wraparound services the students have been receiving at Woodson.
* Hear an update from the HISD Finance Department on the 2018-2019 budget and plans to address the district’s projected $115 million deficit.
* Hear an update from the Office of School Support on the status of recommended changes to the magnet program.

**The Board workshop will take place at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 24 in the Manuel Rodríguez Jr. Board Auditorium of the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 W. 18th St.**

The board meeting will be broadcast live online at [www.hisdtv.org](http://www.hisdtv.org) and on the HISD Channel, which can be found on Comcast Channel 18 or U-verse Channel 99.