

*­­***HISD Board of Education to consider proposed 2018-2019 budget**

*Proposed budget includes $19.2 million for special education, dyslexia programs, Achieve 180 and a planned performance audit*

*June 12, 2018* – The Houston Independent School District Board of Education will meet Thursday to consider adopting the proposed 2018-2019 budget.

The proposed budget includes $16.7 million in increases for special education, dyslexia programs and Achieve 180, the program introduced this school year to support underserved and underperforming schools, which will continue in place next school year. The proposal also includes $2.5 million for a forthcoming performance audit.

Both are part of the district’s overall $2 billion proposed budget~~,~~ which is set to be presented to trustees during their budget meeting at 4 p.m. Thursday at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center. State law requires the budget be approved by June 30.

The district’s projected deficit, which was reduced to $83 million from $115 million after the district received better-than-expected interest earnings, purchasing rebates, payments from the Available School Fund and federal funding totaling $31.8 million. To cover the deficit, campuses were required to cut $34 million from their budgets and the central office to cut $49 million from administrative and support services.

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“We kept cuts away from the campuses as much as possible,” HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “However, during these difficult times, every campus and department has had to make accommodations. Still, we remain committed and dedicated to the students of HISD.”

No HISD police officers have been impacted by the district’s budget.

The development of the proposed budget comes as HISD continues to face looming budget shortfalls in the coming years as a result of inadequate state funding and increasing recapture payments. HISD has been designated by the state as a property-wealthy school district under the state’s school finance system, despite the fact that almost 80 percent of students are considered low-income.

Recapture requires districts that exceed a certain per-student property wealth level to send local tax dollars to the state. The 2018-19 proposed budget has a $272.5 million recapture payment budgeted. The payment marks the second consecutive year HISD is sending more money to the state than it receives in aid.

Trustees will also consider an agenda item to establish a districtwide student holiday and day of community service in honor of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, two major historical icons and symbols of empowerment for the Latino community.

In 2014, President Barack Obama declared March 31 as César Chávez Day, but Congress has not made it a permanent federal holiday. Nonetheless, César Chávez Day has been celebrated in Texas as a state holiday since 2000, and in August of the same year, HISD opened César Chávez High School in southeast Houston.

Adoption of this agenda item would render March 31 or the Monday that precedes it an observed district holiday similar to Martin Luther King Jr. Day, when HISD schools do not hold classes in remembrance of the civil rights leader. The holiday would be celebrated for the first time during the 2019-2020 school year.