**HISD PowerUp initiative receives national curriculum award**

*July 14, 2016* — The Houston Independent School District’s PowerUp initiative to digitally transform teaching and learning was honored with a national curriculum award from the Council of Great City Schools at the Academic, Information Technology and Research Conference in Palm Beach, Fla.

The district was presented with the Making Strides Together Curriculum Award for Excellence in Urban Education. The award recognizes district teams that have been able to break their organizational silos to work toward a common goal to improve student achievement. As part of PowerUp, a cross-functional team worked to facilitate planning, implementing, and assessing the initiative, which included the distribution of laptops to all high school students at HISD.

PowerUp, which launched in 2013, began with intensive training for all teachers on how to effectively incorporate technology in their daily lessons. A three-year phase in project, PowerUp was fully deployed by the end of the 2015-16 school year, putting a laptop computer in every high school student’s hands and virtually eliminating the need for traditional text books.

“Our next steps are to continue to work together and utilize more open-source, teacher-generated lessons designed to support projects and engaging student learning in the classroom,” said HISD Assistant Superintendent of Student Assessment Leng Fritsche, who accepted the award along with a $4,000 check that HISD will use to further the district’s efforts to digitally transform teaching and learning.

Council of the Great City Schools Academic Achievement Director Ricki Price-Baugh said HISD has set a high goal and recognizes that no single department has the ability to successfully roll out such an ambitious plan.

“Your garnering the support of district leadership, representatives from curriculum, professional development, instructional and educational technology, school leadership, school support, and communications models the kind of cross-functional teaming that enables districts to develop the systems, structures, and supports to move from the inception of a transformational initiative to its implementation so that students are better prepared for college and careers,” said Price-Baugh.