

Houston ISD Board Meeting

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Discussion and Report Items

Agenda Item 1: Acceptance Of Board Monitoring Update: Presentation Of Goal 1 Progress Measure 1.2 And Goal 2 Progress Measure 2.2

1. On Figure 10, please explain why the percent variance for all students would be negative while all the others are positive.

The Administration has adjusted the data in figure 10. Please see the updated version available in Board Packet.

2. Which strategies, resources, and investments have made the most significant impact on the NES model with respect to student success in reading and math?

The NES model includes 1) high-quality grade level curriculum, 2) an instructional model that is designed to provide daily, differentiated supports for all students, and 3) a continuous focus on high-quality instruction coupled with job-embedded, ongoing coaching and support.

Students in NES campuses are provided with high quality instructional materials in math and reading everyday through the creation of HISD Curriculum. A core strength of the NES model is its deliberate curriculum design using a backward planning approach, ensuring that instruction is aligned with clear learning objectives and state standards. Every student receives on-grade-level instructional materials during the first 45 minutes of instruction, establishing a strong foundation in essential skills. This initial exposure ensures that all students engage with rigorous, standards-aligned content. Additionally, the 35 minutes of differentiated instruction after the DOL ensures students can achieve mastery for the objective.

3. GPM 1.2 - With respect to quality of instruction, are there any trends from IRT visits and Spot Observation Forms that have emerged that have changed and/or continued instructional practices?

District leaders constantly analyze IRT and spot data for instructional trends and use this information to improve coaching and professional learning. Over the past 5 weeks, based on observation data, the Superintendent and HISD Chief of Schools team has been focusing on reinforcing high impact instructional strategies. These include improving alignment to the objective, improving pacing to ensure that students have adequate time to focus on the day's learning objective, and increasing engagement through quick response cards, pair and share, multiple at-bats, and time spent reading. As a result, we have seen a steady increase in spot scores over this time; particularly in the "Engage & Deliver" section of the spot form, where most of this feedback is focused.

4. GPM 2.2 - Regarding the pilot for full advanced math pathways, are all middle schools involved, or just NES campuses?

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

In the pilot pathway, there are 10 campuses participating for the 2024-2025 school year with 9 of the 10 schools being NES campuses across all four divisions.

There is a second pathway aligned to HB2124 which requires students who score in the top 40% on the fifth grade STAAR math assessment to be automatically enrolled in accelerated math in sixth grade. Parents can opt their student out of the accelerated math program. Students at all schools meeting this threshold in 5th grade math will be placed on the accelerated math pathway.

5. Their MOY results are very impressive. How much of these can be attributed to familiarity with the assessment?

This year's 3rd graders had their first exposure to MAP as 2nd graders last year, so this familiarity may have contributed to some level of comfort with the test format. However, the MAP assessment is adaptive, meaning MAP adjusts the difficulty of questions in real time based on a student's responses. Additionally, HISD has seen positive results across multiple distinct assessments including MAP, STAAR and NAEP, so it is more likely growth can be attributed to high quality instruction in classrooms.

6. On page 6, I observed that there is not a large delta between Hispanic, Black, EB in PUA vs NES. For Eco Dis students, NES is performing better than PUA. What strategies are implemented to ensure these students are properly supported at PUA?

Across all campuses at HISD, the primary focus is high quality instruction for all students. Many PUA campus have more autonomy over instructional decisions, but all campuses receive a baseline set of supports that include, 1) training for EDs, Principals, Assistant principals and teachers focused on high quality instruction, 2) job-embedded coaching for teachers focused on improving high quality instruction, 3) access to quality, grade-level HISD curriculum that PUA campuses can optionally use, and 4) accountability under a standardized teacher and principal evaluation system.

7. GPM 2. 2 - Page 9. Where there are disparities in performance between student groups, how is the Administration providing differentiated support for each of the impacted groups?

Figure 11 shows the results of a proficiency metric, not a growth metric, and NES campuses have historically trailed PUA campuses on achievement. There has also historically been a large performance gap between different student groups. The NES model is the primary strategy for closing this achievement disparity between schools and between student groups given the model is designed to provide daily differentiated instruction for all students. Additionally, in Figure 12 it is noteworthy that **all** student groups saw an increase in the percent of students projected to meet grade level this MOY compared to last year at MOY, with only one exception (Asian students at NES campuses which include a smaller n-count of 89 than PUA at 605). To continue to support PUA campuses in improving growth, HISD remains focused on training and

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

coaching on the quality of instruction which in the HISD definition ensures teachers can differentiate instruction based on the student's needs.

8. Please add in counts/student counts to the charts.

Total *n* Counts have been added to the March progress monitoring report by Student Group, Year, and NES Status.

9. What types of measures are outlined in PUA school action plans to ensure students are continuing to grow academically? What type of support does the Administration provide?

The action plan process is designed to allow flexibility for principals to focus on key actions most relevant to their campus while ensuring action plan metrics remain measurable, rigorous and aligned to the district's overall goals. To support flexibility in design, schools have autonomy to select what key areas of focus make the most sense for their campus and they may select up to six focus areas. For example, a principal with a large dual language program might select a metric focused on English Proficiency for Emergent Bilingual students while a school adding new Pre-K classrooms might set a Pre-K enrollment goal. There are also some exceptions outlined in Defined Autonomy where a campus is required to focus on a particular topic based on their data (e.g., minority achievement gap and/or those who do not maintain proficiency on the Special Education compliance rubric). Additionally, all high schools are required to add at least one CCMR progress metric from a predetermined menu of rigorous options (e.g., improving college credit, IBC rates, college acceptance, etc.).

To support campuses in designing a strong action plan, the central office also provides a guidance document with recommended metrics across different topics. This provides principals with examples of strong metrics to improve academic outcomes, while also maintaining principal choice and autonomy to determine their campus' greatest needs. In general, however, action plans should not measure the exact same outcomes that are already measured in the LEAD evaluation to avoid counting the same academic metric twice. Principals also receive training on how to write a strong action plan with exemplars they can reference. Finally, all division Executive Directors review principals action plans to provide feedback to ensure plans are specific to a campus's unique data, rigorous in design and high quality at the time of submission.

10. What is the difference between Economically Disadvantaged and Title I?
What is the definition of a Title I school?

Economically Disadvantaged refers to students from low-income families who either qualify for free/reduced lunch or have another economically disadvantaged circumstance. A Title I school is a school that receives federal funding to support students from low-income families, aimed at improving academic achievement and closing achievement gaps. A school with Title I designation has at least 40% of students identified as economically disadvantaged.

Items Pulled from the Consent Agenda

Agenda Item 3: Approval Of The Teacher Excellence System For School Year 2025-2026 Implementation

11. On p. 12 at Group A, can we please get a couple of examples of what the outcome results mean in practice?

Every teacher is assigned to a group and/or multiple groups depending on the courses they teach. Teachers in Group A teach 2nd-8th grade Math, Reading, and/or Science, and are assessed via NWEA MAP. The outcome metric for this group to assess progress at the middle of the year is “% of students who scored at least .60 annual growth in the first half of the year.” In practice, this means that we are measuring the percentage of students the teacher teaches who are growing academically faster than the average student (when compared nationally) during the first part of the school year. Typically, a student would achieve half (or 0.5) of annual expected growth halfway through the year, but at HISD, because we are working to close achievement gaps, we want to ensure the student achieves 60% of their annual expected growth halfway through the year.

12. On p. 13, at Group C, can we please get a couple of examples of what the outcome results mean in practice?

Teachers in Group C teach Algebra I, English I, and/or English II. The outcome metric for this group to assess progress at the middle of the year is “% of growth points earned by all students based on STAAR interim performance.” Growth points are measured using TEA’s “transition table” (see screenshot below from the TEA website).

In practice, this metric measures how well students are growing based on their prior year performance. Let’s walk through an example. Let’s say a teacher teaches Algebra I, which means that their students typically took the 8th grade Math STAAR the prior year. In 8th grade, if a student was on the low end of “did not meet” on STAAR, and on their Algebra 1 mid-year interim STAAR, they were also on the low end of “did not meet,” they would earn 0 points for the teacher’s middle of year evaluation. This essentially means that last year, the student was severely behind in their 8th grade content, and this year, they are still severely behind in their 9th grade content. They are not showing sufficient growth, so they are awarded 0 growth points. Now, let’s assume instead that the same student was on the high end of “did not meet” in their Algebra 1 mid-year interim STAAR. As per the table below, this student would earn one point for the teacher’s middle of year evaluation. This is because the student has shown academic growth compared to last year; last year they were severely behind grade level, and this year, even though they are not quite at grade level yet, they are almost there because they are in the “high” “does not meet” category. TEA releases specific score cut points for each of the rows and columns listed in the table below. A teacher’s maximum growth points is equivalent to the number of students they teach, so the metric measures the percent of total points (e.g., the number of kids who are showing growth compared to last year) they earned compared to what was possible.

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

Using the nomenclature from the CAF, districts can translate performance indicators to the transition table to determine whether the student grew by 0, ½, or 1 point:

Prior Year	Annual Growth					
	Current Year					
	Low Did Not Meet Grade Level	High Did Not Meet Grade Level	Low Approaches Grade Level	High Approaches Grade Level	Meets Grade Level	Masters Grade Level
Low Did Not Meet Grade Level	0	1	1	1	1	1
High Did Not Meet Grade Level	0	1/2	1	1	1	1
Low Approaches Grade Level	0	0	1/2	1	1	1
High Approaches Grade Level	0	0	0	1/2	1	1
Meets Grade Level	0	0	0	0	1	1
Masters Grade Level	0	0	0	0	0	1

13. Will Division Chiefs and EDs support the preparation of the Campus Action Plans outlined in p. 20-21?

Division Chiefs and EDs support all campuses by providing guidance and feedback throughout the development process of the Action Plans. In addition, teachers will have an opportunity to engage in feedback with the campus principal to support the development of the campus action plan.

14. Regarding the inflation prevention numbers outlined at bottom of p. 21 – Please clarify what the scores of 85-100 or 70-85 show us. Is it in reference to the percent accomplished? If it is, how can we limit if the school achieves the degree of accomplishment?

It is in reference to the percentage accomplished. This procedure is in place to ensure that Division Chiefs and EDs support principals in setting metrics at the appropriate level of rigor, meaning that metrics should be ambitious and therefore we would not expect more than 80% of schools to score 70/100. If in fact 80% of schools score 70/100 if all metrics are rigorous, we would revisit this stipulation, but we have not found that to be needed at our current state.

15. Is the Target distribution district wide?

Three sets of target distributions are run per teacher when building the final evaluation score, and the distributions are not always district wide. First, a targeted distribution is run for student academic outcomes. This target distribution is not district wide; it differs depending on teacher "group." This is because teachers teach different subjects and are held accountable to different assessments, and we cannot assume that the rigor of assessment is the same. This means that all teachers who teach PreK and are assessed with CIRCLE have scores run on one target distribution, all teachers who teach electives and assessed with SLOs have scores run on another target distribution, etc. Second, a target distribution is run for quality of instruction; this is district-wide given that the spot form is designed to equitably assess quality of instruction no matter the subject or grade level. Last, two final target distributions are run to determine the

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

final scores (not district-wide): (1) all teachers assigned to Groups A – E and (2) all teachers assigned to group F or teachers with multi-groups in which one of the groups is also Group F. This is to check the system and ensure that elective teachers do not receive an unfair advantage over tested teachers, and vice versa.

16. With respect to spot observations and IRT visits, how will changes to forms and expectations be communicated to staff, especially teachers? And at what cadence will these updates occur?

Changes to forms and expectations for spot and IRT are not taken lightly; significant summer planning work is done to ensure changes throughout the year are minimal. This year, HISD has made two wording changes that addressed common feedback from principals. This shows our commitment to continuous improvement and is reflective of the time it takes for a system to norm on a measurement instrument. The spot and IRT forms for the school year 2025-2026 will be finalized this summer, and we hope to make minimal or no changes throughout the year.

If a change is needed as determined via feedback and/or data, it will be approved by the Superintendent and communicated directly to teachers and leaders through a video explaining the rationale for the change and how the changes impact them. We have started this video process for spot changes this past year and have received positive feedback.

17. Please explain the main differences between the current state-approved T-TESS Evaluation System and HISD's recommended TES evaluation and its impact on incentives.

There are a few main differences between the current Texas T-TESS and HISD's recommended TES evaluation:

1. **Components of the evaluation:** Current T-TESS evaluates teachers based on Quality of Instruction and Student Achievement only. The new Teacher Excellence System (TES) uses data from Quality of Instruction, Student Achievement, Campus Action Plans (which are campus-specific plans for improvement) and Planning & Professionalism indicators. Data shows that the inclusion of multiple valid measures strengthens the overall system. The addition of these new components allows for a more holistic picture of a teacher's effectiveness.
2. **Addition of the Distinguished Teacher designation:** TES creates a structure to identify teachers who contribute to their school community beyond the walls of their classroom. This includes the items not typically recognized in an evaluation system, such as serving as a peer mentor or leader on campus, leading an extracurricular student organization, or pursuing professional learning opportunities. The top 20% of teachers who apply will obtain the "Distinguished" designation after completing the Designated Teacher Review (DTR) process.
3. **Addition of the TES Evaluator Certification program:** TES allows HISD to build its own evaluator certification program that meets HISD's unique needs, versus current state, where all evaluators are T-TESS certified through the state's training. All evaluators at

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

HISD will have to prove that they are calibrated in HISD-specific tools, such as the spot observation form, and are prepared to coach and develop their staff.

4. **Rigorous metrics for all teachers:** HISD's T-TESS system allows teachers of subjects without national, state, or local exams to write their own student academic outcome metrics. Through TES, the Administration has created a menu of metrics for these teachers so that educators are held to a more common standard across the district, helping to increase rigor, equity, and efficacy of the evaluation.
5. **Built by the HISD educator community:** HISD's adoption of T-TESS in fall of 2023 was designed and implemented by central office, while TES was built with significant teacher and leader input.
6. **Continuous refinement:** There are many smaller refinements to the current T-TESS system represented in TES, such as clarifying the maximum number of spot observations per month.

Regarding incentives, the evaluation system is separate from the compensation system. Compensation details for school year 2025-2026 will be announced in the coming months as part of the Budget process.

18. Please also describe the main difference of impact to PUA vs NES as it relates to incentives, both to base salary and one-time incentives.

The compensation plan is separate from the evaluation system. Compensation details for the school year 2025-2026 will be announced in the coming months.


19. Please provide clarity on how TES would consider student outcomes in emerging bilingual and dual language classrooms. For example, my understanding is that dual language students may develop more slowly in one or both languages, and their outcomes data may be lower as a result but improve as they build knowledge in both languages. My concern would be that a teacher's score in TES would be negatively impacted for student outcomes in these situations.

Our research does indicate that language development rates may vary for emerging bilingual students. As a result, additional points are rewarded in TES to teachers of students who show growth on NWEA MAP Reading in both English AND Spanish. We continue to model our outcomes data to determine if additional business rules need to be added or refined to ensure equity between teachers.

20. Does the spot form have any specialized or unique rubrics/implementation guidelines for application to unique programs of study/coursework as before with the T-TESS spot form? If so, why aren't those appended? Please provide those unique rubrics/implementation guidelines if they are to be used to augment the spot form.

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

Yes, the spot form has specialty guidance to use as companion guides in particular classrooms. For example, when leaders complete a spot observation for a PreK classroom, there is a specialty spot guidance to explain further what “engagement” or “delivered in a way to maximize instruction” specifically looks like in a PreK class. This guidance can be found here:  [All spot specialty guidance -- 29 July 2024.pdf](#) and has been added to the TES Guidebook as an Appendix.

Updated as of 03/17/2025

21. When will the DTR rubric be final so that it may be presented for approval?

The finalized DTR rubric can be found on page 27 of the TES Guidebook, linked [here](#). All components of TES are included in the guidebook as part of the Board's review and approval process.

Updated as of 03/17/2025

Consent Agenda

Agenda Item 4: Approval Of The 2024-2025 District Improvement Plan • District Improvement Plan, 2024-2025

22. Why are we approving the 2024/2025 DIP in March 2025? Is that when it is due?

Board policy does not require a specific deadline for the approval of the DIP; it is just required to be “developed, reviewed and revised annually.” In SY25-26, HISD is planning to start the review process earlier with a goal of bringing the DIP to the board in the fall instead of the spring.

23. Why do we approve the DIP for 24-25 near the end of 25?

Please see the answer above.

24. Have we gone through all the required input and other processes to develop the District Improvement Plan which is presented?

The DIP incorporates insights from the annual District Action Plan, departmental strategic initiatives, program evaluations, and student academic data. It was subsequently shared with key stakeholders for feedback and revisions.

25. The DIP at p. 18 (key action 7) says we are buying modular buildings for Pre-K. Is that still expected/occurring?

This action plan is developed early in SY24-25 to set a goal for the year. HISD was able to meet the Pre-K expansion goals without the purchase of modular buildings for SY24-25 by expanding at campuses that had available building capacity. As we continue to focus on Pre-K in the coming years, modular building expansion is one expansion strategy HISD considers at

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

campuses where data indicates there is demand for Pre-K, yet there is no additional building capacity but available land.

26. Why is the At-Risk Students section focused on 2022-2023 at DIP p. 31?

The financial report used for that section is not available until December of the following year, causing the information to lag by a year relative to when the DIP was completed.

27. With respect to Key Action 14: What mental health services are going to be provided to all HISD students and staff, beyond Hazel Health and suicide prevention information and interventions?

Beyond Hazel Health and suicide prevention resources, HISD provides a comprehensive range of mental health services for students and staff, focusing on early intervention, direct support, and long-term well-being.

1. **Student Mental Health Services:**

- a. **School Counselors Individual Responsive Services:** HISD school counselors are available to support students with personal, social, and emotional concerns, including mental health issues and substance abuse. Students can request short-term individual counseling sessions, and parents can consult counselors for additional resources and referrals. Schools have access to licensed professional counselors (LPCs), licensed specialists in school psychology (LSSPs), and /or social workers who provide specialized support.
- b. **Crisis Response and Behavior Support Services:** For students exhibiting early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk, the district has structured intervention procedures through our Crisis Response and Behavioral Supports staff. This specialized staff, in coordination with our Central Office Counseling staff supports, responds to mental health crisis intervention needs for students, including trauma care and grief supports after any incidents. This team also works to ensure parents are notified of concerns, provides guidance, and connects students with appropriate counseling and support services. For students returning to school after hospitalization or residential treatment for mental health or substance abuse, HISD has established procedures to assist with their transition and reintegration back to school.
- c. **Sunrise Centers:** In addition to having Hazel Health availability, Sunrise Centers provide mental health counseling services through partners at each center. Last year, more than 300 students received 1,900 hours of support.
- d. **Tier-1 Mental Health & Well-Being Guidance Programming:** Lastly, HISD also implements district-wide Tier 1 mental health and well-being programming and guidance curriculum through our school counseling efforts, such as:
 - i. **Emotional and Social Skill Development** – Teaching students how to manage emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

- ii. **Trauma-Informed Care & Grief Support** – Providing resources and counseling for students experiencing trauma or loss
 - iii. **Substance Abuse Prevention & Intervention** – Educating students and providing support for those struggling with substance use
 - iv. **Suicide Prevention, Intervention & Postvention** – Offering crisis response, intervention, and support for school communities after a suicide
 - v. **Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)** – Promoting a safe, supportive school climate through structured interventions.
2. **Employee Mental Health Services:**
- a. **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** HISD recognizes the importance of staff mental health and offers a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through ComPsych. This program provides:
 - i. **Confidential Counseling** – Employees and their household members receive up to eight free confidential counseling sessions per issue, per year, available 24/7
 - ii. **Work-Life Support** – Services include child and elder care referrals, legal consultations (e.g., estate planning, family law), and financial guidance (e.g., retirement planning, budgeting, debt management)
 - iii. **Wellness Seminars & Resources** – Regular workshops on stress management, resilience, and overall well-being.
 - b. **Digital Mental Health Resources:** Additionally, HISD provides access to **GuidanceConnect**, an online platform allowing employees to schedule therapy sessions via in-person, phone, video, or chat. Employees also have access to **Koa Care 360**, a free, self-guided wellness app offering evidence-based tools, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), mindfulness exercises, and stress management techniques.

HISD continues to strengthen partnerships with healthcare providers and community organizations to expand mental health resources. The district is working to increase telehealth options and ensure that students and staff have flexible, accessible support when they need it. Through these initiatives, HISD remains committed to fostering a culture of care, ensuring that students and staff have the tools and resources to support their mental and emotional well-being.

28. For the DIP, there are key actions identified, along with spaces for reviews. Are we completing that for October and February, and if so, can that completed work please be provided to the Board?

The Administration is in process of compiling this information and will share this information with the Board.

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

29. Per the District Action Plan, please provide data and results for Oct and Jan reviews that were associated with key action plans? Are strategies on track for achieving intended outcomes?

Please see the Administration's response to question 17.

Agenda Item 5: Authority To Negotiate And Execute Agreements And/ Or Interlocal Memorandums Of Understanding With The Houston Community College System For Adult Basic Education At Sunrise Centers And Houston Independent School District Campuses

30. Who is currently providing Adult Basic Education (ABE) services to clients and what is the number being served? How will this partnership drive students' outcomes for HISD?

There are several vendors that provide ABE/ESL/GED courses for parents and families in The District. Through the Sunrise Center we are using ALAR and BakerRipley and they are serving 142 people, with another 50 people on the waitlist. This partnership extends our ability to support more families at no cost.

Improving the English proficiency for parents and caregivers allows our families to have more access to support their students learning and improve their economic opportunities which will have a direct impact on student well-being. Parents that seek these classes also signal the importance of learning to their children.

31. What is the cost to HISD For This Agreement?

There is no cost to HISD.

Agenda Item 10: Approval And Adoption Of Proposed Revisions To Lone Star Governance Monitoring Calendar

32. Do we have confirmation from our board coach and TEA that the calendar option 1 is acceptable and will not adversely impact our ability to meet applicable metrics in LSG?

Yes, the Administration has confirmed with TEA that calendar option 1 is acceptable and will not adversely impact our ability to meet applicable metrics in LSG.

Agenda Item 14: Approval Of Proposed Revisions To Board Policy DBD (LOCAL), Employment Requirements And Restrictions: Conflict Of Interest- Second Reading

Houston ISD Board Meeting

Q+A Document

33. I wasn't aware of the conflict-of-interest committee. When was this committee last active, such as the last meeting, or when was the last time this committee was appointed? Please advise on the process to enforce or monitor actions listed in this policy.

There has not been a Conflict-of-Interest Committee since before the current Administration.

34. Please provide an explanation for the modification of DBD (Local). What checks and balances will be in place to address conflicts of interest? What is the position of our auditor as it relates to risk to the district?

This update is necessary to match language with actual practice, which entails HR sending required COI forms to mandatory employee roles semi-annually, and then Ethics & Compliance reviewing identified conflicts. Ethics and compliance elevates any issues and the Administration will take the appropriate action to resolve the conflict pursuant to HISD Board Policy. Where an audit is necessary to assess risk, those issues will be referred to the Audit committee for handling.