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Houston Independent School District

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District Overview

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is the largest public school system in Texas and the seventh largest in the United States. It serves the city of Houston, Texas, the fourth largest city in the United States with a population of more than 1.9 million and a land area of 594 square miles. The city and greater metropolitan area are ethnically and culturally diverse. The district encompasses 301 square miles within greater Houston, encompassing approximately 54 percent of the geographic area of the City of Houston, all or part of four other cities or villages, and certain unincorporated areas. HISD serves an enrollment of approximately 215,000 students in prekindergarten through twelfth grade programs. The district has an estimated average daily attendance of approximately 194,000 in 287 schools and academic programs, including 19 external charter schools.

HISD was established on March 23, 1923, by an act of the 38th Texas Legislature, repealing an earlier law that gave the City of Houston jurisdiction over the public schools, and creating the “Houston Independent School District, separate and apart from the municipal government of the City of Houston.” The law gave the district the power to levy and collect taxes, to issue and dispose of bonds, and to provide payment for them. Since its inception, the district has grown in size and stature over the past 87 years to become one of the premier urban school districts in the United States.

Effective July 1, 2016, HISD’s school reporting structure is organized by area, which enables school-support teams to identify and address instructional gaps throughout feeder patterns while connecting communities with needed resources and central-office services. The five areas are:

North Area Schools Office
South Area Schools Office
East Area Schools Office
West Area Schools Office
Districtwide Schools Office
For more detailed map information visit HISD’s website at http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/111709
For more detailed map information visit HISD's website at [http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/111709](http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/111709)
For more detailed map information visit HISD’s website at http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/11709
This Organization Chart reflects HISD’s Administration as of the Budget Adoption date.
HISD Purpose, Goals, and Values
Houston Independent School District

Purpose
The Houston Independent School District exists to strengthen the social and economic foundation of Houston by assuring its youth the highest-quality elementary and secondary education available anywhere.

Strategic Intent
To earn so much respect from the citizens of Houston that HISD becomes their prekindergarten through grade 12 educational system of choice.

Goals

Increase Student Achievement
HISD student performance will demonstrate gains as evidenced by scores on STAAR, SAT, and other state and national tests, thus narrowing the achievement gap, and graduating students who are college- and career-ready.

Improve Human Capital
The district seeks to create a performance culture that values employees who are results-oriented, talented, innovative thinkers; individuals who strive to increase student achievement and contribute to the reformation of public education.

Provide a Safe Environment
The district shall create a safe environment conducive to learning for all students and provide safety and security measures at district schools and facilities, and while attending district-related events.

Increase Management Effectiveness and Efficiency
The district shall have a decentralized organizational structure that will promote autonomy and innovation in schools. With a districtwide commitment to performance over compliance and a shared accountability system in place, the district shall employ best practices of administrative principles to make optimal use of district resources and taxpayer dollars.

Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools
The schools belong to the people; hence, the board, administration, and support staff are public servants who exist to support the schools and the relationship between teachers, students, and parents. Public confidence will increase as the district increases transparency, accountability at all levels, and meaningful engagement of the community.

Create a Positive District Culture
The district’s clearly articulated purpose will serve as the catalyst for creating a powerful sense of community and a shared direction among personnel, parents, students, and the public. Because the district realizes the value of investing in human capital, the district will work to attract and retain the best teachers and staff members, and create working conditions in which their talents can flourish.

Core Values

Safety Above All Else
Safety takes precedence over all else. A safe environment must be provided for every student and employee.

Student Learning Is the Main Thing
All decisions and actions, at any level, focus on and support “the main thing”: effective student learning.

Focus on Results and Excellence
Each employee focuses on results and excellence in individual and organizational efforts.

Parents Are Partners
Parents are valued partners in the educational process, serving as the child’s teacher in the home. All school and district activities will give proper consideration to the involvement of parents.

Common Decency
The district shall be responsive and accountable to the public and its employees. Community members and employees shall receive respectful and courteous treatment.

Human Capital
Through recruitment, retention, dismissal and professional-development programs, the district will work to make sure students are served by the top talent available, from teachers to superintendents.

Link to the District Improvement Plan:
Along with the development of the high level components of the strategic plan for the district, the district undertakes many specific initiatives to facilitate accomplishment of the stated goals.

The following represents a partial list of the various district-wide initiatives and programs as they correspond to the six goals of the district as well as an indication of the progress towards accomplishment of these goals. Some of these initiatives are already underway and some will begin in the 2016-2017 school year.

**Goal 1: Increase Student Achievement Strategies and Initiatives**

HISD student performance will demonstrate gains as evidenced by scores on STAAR, SAT, and other state and national tests, thus narrowing the achievement gap, and graduating students who are college- and career-ready.

**More HISD Students Than Ever Before Taking AP Exams, Earning College Credit**

HISD students are earning significantly more college credit through Advanced Placement (AP) exams now than they have in the past 7 years, according to 2015-2016 data released by the College Board.

For the 2015-2016 school year, 8,649 exams given to HISD high school students were scored high enough to qualify — a 3 or higher on a 5-point scale — for college credit through the program. That’s a 76 percent increase from 2009.

More students than ever before are taking Advanced Placement exams. Last year, HISD high school students took 26,449 exams — more than double the number taken in 2009. The jump equates to a 128 percent increase.

An additional 476 middle school students also took AP exams — Spanish and Chinese — during the past school year. Of those students, 87 percent scored high enough to earn college credit.

The district had an all-time high of 14,326 high school students taking 26,449 AP exams last year. That’s a 3 percent increase from the 2014-2015 school year.

The numbers are also up when looking at the number of exams qualifying for college credit during that same time frame. Almost 360 more exams scored high enough to qualify for college credit in the 2015-2016 school year than the 2014-2015 school year, a 4 percent increase.

The Advanced Placement program provides students with the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn college credit while still in high school. The program is a key component of the district’s efforts to continue strengthening academic rigor in classrooms across the district and make sure all students graduate college-and career-ready.

AP offers a total of 36 exams in 7 subjects, and HISD administered all 36 of the exams during the 2015-2016 school year. HISD covers the fees for all exams to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to earn.

**Class of 2016 Beats Previous Year’s Scholarship Offers by $50 million**

The numbers are in, and HISD’s Class of 2016 has received over $314 million in scholarship and grant offers. At $50 million more than the Class of 2016, College Readiness Assistant Superintendent Jharrett Bryantt called the figure “expanded access to high quality college advising and college affordability support in our high schools.” Last summer, thanks to a Houston Endowment grant of $3 million, college advisers and managers were hired and trained to assist district seniors with applying for college and scholarships and financial aid. Director of the new college advising initiative, Jeremy Tatum says, “This year’s successes have been phenomenal and entirely dependent upon the quality of the people working with the students. “The College Success Advisors and College Success Managers are largely responsible, thanks to their deliberate outreach and support. They continue to pour themselves into their work, even during the summer months when many folks in this field are on vacation. Their dedication, passion, and skills continue to amaze me!”

The EMERGE program, which prepares high potential HISD students from underserved communities to be successful at top tier universities, was recently expanded to serve all high schools and experienced grant and scholarship offer increases. The students in the EMERGE senior class of 2016 received over $50 million in grant and scholarship offers, compared to $36 million the previous year.
Additionally, several new sponsors from the Houston community have also come forward to help. CITGO Petroleum Corp. awarded $1,000 each to 20 HISD seniors pursuing degrees in STEM, selected from more than 300 applicants. Another new sponsor is the Laura Catuzzi Grandcolas Foundation, which established a 9/11 memorial scholarship in honor of Grandcolas who perished 15 years ago on United Flight 93. Rising juniors from 15 HISD schools submitted essays on the country’s response to 9/11 and how it has impacted the lives of citizens. Three winners were announced at a ceremony in September 2016, with the first-prize winner receiving $1,500, the second $1,000, and the third $500.

**HISD Boasts Half of Eight-County Region’s Top Elementary, Middle and High Schools**

Houston Independent School District campuses occupy half of the top 10 slots on the 2016 Children at Risk public school rankings of the region’s best public schools.

Additionally, HISD schools took the statewide Number 1 ranking in every category, with River Oaks; Number 1 among elementary schools, T.H. Rogers; Number 1 in the middle school category, and DeBakey High School for Health Professions Number 1 at the High school level.

The rankings were publicly released at a ceremony conducted at HISD’s Pilgrim Academy, which received special distinction as a Gold Ribbon school, recognizing the region’s highest-performing, high-poverty campuses.

“Houston drives the nation’s economy, and our high-performing public schools are the engine,” said HISD School Board President Manuel Rodríguez Jr. “These rankings solidify HISD’s status as the best urban school district in America.”

Released annually, the Children at Risk rankings are based on student academic achievement. The rankings account for achievement growth and college readiness as measured by performance on the SAT, Advanced Placement exams and International Baccalaureate exams.

**HISD’s Top 10-rated high schools**

DeBakey High School for Health Professions (1)

Carnegie Vanguard (2)

Eastwood Academy (3)

Challenge Early College (5)

HS for the Performing and Visual Arts (6)

**HISD’s Top 10-rated middle schools**

T.H. Rogers (1)

Lanier (3)

Pin Oak (8)

Project Chrysalis (9)

Wharton Dual Language (10)

**HISD’s Top 10-rated elementary schools**

River Oaks (1)

T.H. Rogers (3)

Horn (4)

West University (5)

Bush (9)

HISD schools also received half of the 10 Gold Ribbon recognitions from Children at Risk. HISD’s high-performing, high-poverty schools are: De Chaumes ES, Park Place ES, Lyons ES, Ed White ES, Pilgrim Academy, and Sharpstown HS.

**Twenty-eight HISD Schools Recognized by State for Top Performance in 2015-2016**

HISD schools were twice as likely as other Texas schools to earn the maximum number of distinction designations from the Texas Education Agency for their strong performance during the 2015-2016 school year, according to a report released this week.

Eleven percent of the district’s 255 eligible campuses earned every distinction designation for which they were eligible. Statewide, only 5.5 percent of eligible schools can make that claim. HISD’s awarded campuses include 15 elementary schools, six middle schools, and seven high schools.

Distinction designations are awarded to schools based on achievement in performance indicators relative to a group of 40 campuses of similar type, size, and student demographics. Schools are eligible for distinctions if they are rated as having “Met Standard” – the highest rating under the state accountability system. Up to seven distinctions can be earned for:

- Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/Reading;
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics;
- Academic Achievement in Science;
- Academic Achievement in Social Studies;
- Top 25 Percent: Student Progress;
- Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps; and
- Postsecondary Readiness.

Elementary schools taking home all six distinctions they are eligible for are: Bush Elementary School; Cage Elementary School; Condit Elementary School; Crockett Elementary School; De Chaumes Elementary School; De Zavala Elementary School; Herod Elementary School; Kolter Elementary School; Lovett Elementary School; Oak Forest Elementary School; Park Place Elementary School; River Oaks Elementary School; Roberts Elementary School; Sutton Elementary School; and White Elementary School.

Secondary schools taking home all seven distinctions include: Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan; Burbank Middle School; Lanier Middle School; Project
Chrysalis Middle School; Stevenson Middle School; T.H. Rogers School; Carnegie Vanguard High School; Challenge Early College High School; DeBakey High School for Health Professions; East Early College High School; Energized for STEM Academy West High School; High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; and Westside High School.

The 28 schools were among 151 HISD schools to earn at least 1 distinction designation from TEA. Depending on campus grade levels and type, the number of potential distinction designations can vary.

More Students Participating in SAT Testing

• The number of students tested in 2016 was 8,935, an increase of 2,714 students compared to 2011, the year before the SAT School Day initiative was launched.
• In 2015, 89 percent of HISD seniors took the SAT compared to 62 percent of seniors in Texas and 45 percent of seniors in the country. HISD supports and implements a school day SAT for all juniors at no cost to students or families.

2015-2016 HISD Distinction Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campuses Eligible</th>
<th>#Awarded Distinction Designation</th>
<th>% Awarded Distinction Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement in Reading/ELA</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement in Mathematics</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement in Science</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement in Social Studies</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 25% Student Progress</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 25%: Closing Performance Gaps</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary Readiness</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 400 campuses across the state earned all distinction designations applicable to their individual school.

Fifty-two HISD students named National Merit semifinalists

Fifty-two seniors from six Houston Independent School District high schools qualified as semifinalists in 2016, in the 62nd annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

The HISD students are among 16,000 from across the country to earn the semifinalist designation, allowing them the opportunity to continue in the academic competition and vie for nearly $33 million in scholarships that will be awarded next year.


The National Merit Scholarship Program provides college scholarships to academically talented U.S. high school students who score well on the Preliminary SAT. Scholarships are provided to students from each state who have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills and potential for college success.

Roughly 1.4 million high school juniors from across the country took the 2015 PSAT, which serves as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Less than 1 percent — or 16,000 students — were named semifinalists. About 16,000 students are expected to advance to the finalist level. Finalists will be announced next year in February, and all National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from the group of finalists.

HISD’s 2016-2017 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists are:

**Bellaire High School**
Edward D. Cen
Dongha Choi
Anusha De
Jonathan C. Dorsey
Sidharth Eric
Curran R. Han
Laurie Y. He
Anna E. Jorgensen
Venu Kantamani
Aneil Marathi
Oren Pazgal
Hannah Reeves
Michelle Tang
Clarise E. Trinh
Timothy Y. Wei
Aaron Wong
Jonathan D. Zhang
Yijie Zhang

**Booker T. Washington High School**
Adam J. Capfer
Carnegie Vanguard High School
Stephanie Chang
Ishaan Chatterjee
Elizabeth R. Goodfriend
Amrith Lotlikar
Robert D. Rice
Grace E. Vollmers
Olivia R. Williams
Michael Yang
Overall, HISD earned a “met standard” district rating in 2016-2017 school year, a 6-point increase over the last three years. The percentage of HISD students performing at the advanced level on STAAR in grades 3-8 is the highest it has been since 2000, now the highest it has ever been under Texas accountability system. More than half (31 out of 58) of the HISD schools that were considered “improvement required” last year have now met the state standard. Those schools are Alcott, Bastian, Berry, Burrus, Codwell, Elmore, Foster, Garcia, Hartsfield, Helms, N.Q. Henderson, Jefferson, Martinez, Milne, Montgomery, Peterson, Ross, Stevens, Thompson, Tinley and Wainwright elementary schools; Deady, Fondren, Fondville, McReynolds, Sugar Grove and Thomas middle schools; Kandy Stripe Academy; and Scarborough and Yates high schools.

The significant improvement comes in spite of tougher passing standards on this year’s STAAR exams. The percent of HISD students passing at the advanced level on STAAR in grades 3-8 is the highest it has been over the last three years. The percentage of students who passed high school-level end of course exams in three of five subjects (English, English II, and history) increased this year, while the passing rates remained steady in algebra and biology.

**HISD Schools Win National Blue Ribbon Award**

U.S. Department of Education recognizes Lovett and Oak Forest elementary schools. Lovett and Oak Forest Elementary schools in the Houston Independent School District received a 2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award from the U.S. Department of Education. The schools are among just 329 schools nationwide and 26 public schools in Texas to receive the honor.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Award honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students either achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap, especially among disadvantaged and minority students. The award affirms the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging content.

This is the first-ever National Blue Ribbon Schools Award for Lovett Elementary, a fine arts magnet school. The school offers a rigorous academic curriculum in combination with specialty programs in music (band, orchestra, classroom music and chorus), visual arts and physical education.

Oak Forest Elementary, which previously won a National Blue Ribbon Schools Award in 2010, offers a Vanguard magnet program that aims to provide students with a nurturing, but challenging learning environment. The school also offers a rigorous curriculum that stresses problem solving, originality, creativity, and the uniqueness of individuals.

Both schools will be honored by the U.S. Department of Education.

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**More HISD Schools Meet State Standard**

The number of HISD schools meeting state standards is now the highest it has ever been under Texas’ tougher new accountability system.

According to preliminary ratings released, 85 percent of HISD schools (235 out of 275) earned a "met standard" rating for the 2015-2016 school year, a 6-point increase from the previous year. At the same time, 18 fewer schools received an “improvement required” rating. Overall, HISD earned a “met standard” district rating.

“We are proud of our students, teachers, principals and everyone else in HISD who contributed to this strong progress,” said HISD Board of Education President Manuel Rodríguez Jr. “We must continue improving until every child in Houston attends a high-quality school.”

This is the fourth year in which Texas has rated schools using the current accountability system, which considers four factors for the student body as a whole, and for racial and ethnic minority groups. Those factors include:

- Performance on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)
- Student progress from year to year
- Closing performance gaps
- Racial and ethnic minority group achievement gap

**DeBakey High School for Health Professions**

Ashley P. Dao
Jelani Deajon-Jackson
Sashank Gogula
Jeong Han
Alex L. Jin
Nagendra K. Katta
Maryam B. Khan
Zoe O. Lovelace
Pragya Mishra
Vishnu G. Narayana
Shruti Natara
Olivia Elmers

**High School for the Performing & Visual Arts**

Asad M. Khan
Augustin D. Liebster
Jacob R. Miller
Phillip Z. Shen
Bethany G. Vaughan

**Lamar High School**

Edward J. Swart

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Sarah K. Yun

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Both schools will be honored by the U.S. Department of Education.
Education at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. “National Blue Ribbon Schools are proof that we can prepare every child for college and meaningful careers,” said U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. in a video message to honorees. “Your schools are on the cutting edge, pioneering innovative educational practices—professional learning communities, project-based learning, social and emotional learning, positive behavior systems—making you shining examples for your communities, your state and the nation.”

**33 HISD Schools Earn Spot on 2015 Texas Honor Roll**

Thirty-three schools from across HISD have been named to the 2015 Texas Honor Roll by the Educational Results Partnership, a nonprofit organization that showcases schools with high academic achievement.

The Honor Roll includes 713 state public schools that display academic excellence, continue to improve over time, and show reduction in achievement gaps among ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students.

Schools can earn a spot on the Honor Roll in one of two categories — Star Schools or Scholar Schools. The designations are based on student performance on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test.

Twenty-two HISD schools were designated as Star Schools because they are considered high-performing and have at least 33 percent of students categorized as economically disadvantaged. Eleven HISD schools were recognized as Scholar Schools because they are considered high performing and have fewer than 33 percent of students categorized as economically disadvantaged.

“These rankings are evidence we have effective and talented teachers in our classrooms,” Interim Superintendent Ken Huewitt said. “I congratulate the 33 schools who have earned a spot on the list. Together with our Board of Education, HISD plans to continue our efforts to ensure all our students receive a high-quality education.”

Five HISD Star Schools also received a special STEM Schools designation because they scored among the top 10 percent of all Star Schools in the areas of math and science.

HISD schools included on the 2015 Texas Honor Roll are:

**Star Schools**

- **Elementary:** DeChaumes, Lovett, Lyons, Mandarin Chinese Language Immersion Magnet, Oak Forest, Park Place, Red, Sinclair, Windsor Village
- **Middle:** Project Chrysalis, West Briar

**High:** Challenge Early College, DeBakey High School for Health Professions, East Early College, Eastwood Academy, High School for Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice, Houston Academy for International Studies, Lamar, Mount Carmel Academy, North Houston Early College, Sharpstown International

**Multi-grade:** Briarmeadow Charter

**Scholar Schools**

- **Elementary:** Bush, Horn, River Oaks, Roberts, Twain, West University
- **Middle:** Lanier, Pin Oak
- **High:** Carnegie Vanguard, High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
- **Multi-grade:** T.H. Rogers

**STEM Schools**

- **Elementary:** Oak Forest
- **Middle:** Project Chrysalis
- **High:** DeBakey High School for Health Professions, Eastwood Academy, North Houston Early College, Sharpstown International

**Linked Learning Concept**

The Linked Learning concept of career pathways are currently offered at 23 high schools, with strategically infused activities through the elementary and middle school levels. The Linked Learning approach aims to make classes more relevant and personalized for students while at the same time providing them with valuable training in high-demand, high-wage fields. This training, which strengthens students’ college readiness while potentially resulting in industry certifications, is critical in producing a college and career ready graduate. The Linked Learning approach looks different at every K-12 level.

At the elementary level, students learn about work, developing a strong foundation in the four core areas while achieving an awareness of college and career possibilities. They take field trips, are involved in college awareness activities, and hear presentations regarding specific careers.

At the middle school level, students learn about interests. Education goes beyond awareness to exploration, through research of possible high schools and pathways. Students get a sense of their own personal interests and how they align with future careers.

By high school, students learn through work by placing an emphasis on instruction that is personalized to their specific chosen pathway. Thanks to robust business partnerships, students have opportunities to work in the field related to their pathway—a method called work-based learning.

There are 23 high schools, 34 middle schools, and 58
elementary schools supported by Linked Learning. All HISD Linked Learning campuses are funded by the $30 million Race to the Top grant.

**Texas Awards 16 HISD Schools with High-Performing and/or High-Progress Status**

The Texas Education Agency has granted high-performance and/or high-progress status to 16 HISD Title I campuses for the 2015-2016 school year. Title I schools are those in which at least 40 percent of students come from low-income families.

Thirteen HISD schools were included on the agency’s list of Title I High-Performing Schools and 13 schools were named as Title I High-Progress schools. Ten HISD schools made both lists.

A high-performing reward school is identified as a Title I school with distinctions based on reading and math performance, as well as the highest graduation rates at the high school level. For 2015-2016, the TEA has identified 160 Texas campuses as high-performing.

A high-progress reward school is identified as a Title I school in the top 25 percent in annual improvement and/or a school in the top 25 percent of those demonstrating ability to close performance gaps (based on state accountability system safeguards in the 2014-2015 school year). For 2015-2016, TEA has identified 140 Texas campuses as high-progress.

**High-Performing Schools**

- DeBakey High School for Health Professions
- Project Chrysalis Middle School
- Lyons Elementary School
- DeChaumes Elementary School
- Field Elementary School
- Lovett Elementary School
- Oak Forest Elementary School
- Eastwood Academy
- Challenge Early College High School
- Briarmeadow Charter
- East Early College High School
- Mandarin Immersion Magnet School
- Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan

**High-Progress Schools**

- DeBakey High School for Health Professions
- Project Chrysalis Middle School
- Lyons Elementary School
- DeChaumes Elementary School
- Lovett Elementary School
- Oak Forest Elementary School
- Eastwood Academy
- North Early College High School
- Challenge Early College High School
- Houston Academy for International Studies
- Mandarin Immersion Magnet School
- Young Women’s College Prep Academy

The Texas Education Agency has granted high-performance and/or high-progress status to 16 HISD Title I campuses for the 2015-2016 school year. Ten HISD schools made both lists.

**Goal 2: Improve Human Capital**

**Strategies and Initiatives**

The district seeks to create a performance culture that values employees who are results-oriented, talented, innovative thinkers; individuals who strive to increase student achievement and contribute to the reformation of public education.

**HISD Retains Highly Effective Teachers**

Based on data from the 2013–2014 school year, the retention of highly effective teachers was at 90 percent, resulting in significant annual academic growth in students. In the fall of 2014, HISD’s Career Pathways pilot program entered its third year, providing opportunities for top teachers to share their knowledge and skills with other colleagues and increase their impact on student achievement.

**Taking the Lead in School Leadership**

Developing exceptional educators who effect change is the goal of HISD’s dynamic Office of School Leadership. Leaders at more than 100 schools are nurtured through consistent professional development, campus-based coaching, and regular practice labs — all geared toward student achievement. These transformational efforts have four critical areas of focus:

- Data-driven instruction that defines the roadmap for rigor and adapts teaching to each student’s needs.
- Professional one-on-one teacher coaching and feedback to increase effectiveness.
- Instructional planning that guarantees well-structured lessons with meaningful content.
- Creation of a strong culture among both educators and students in which learning thrives and habits for success are developed.

**Professional Educators Compensation and Support Committee**

In 2010, HISD launched the Effective Teachers Initiative to provide targeted support for teachers to better meet the needs of their students and ultimately to improve student achievement.

This year, the district is continuing to prioritize instructional practices to ensure effective teaching and excellent school leadership by convening an advisory group that will strengthen the way teachers are supported and to reward practices that promote student achievement.

The new advisory group, or Professional Educators Compensation and Support (PECAS) committee, is made up of more than 120 teachers, principals, and central office staff and held its first meeting
in September 2015. Members of the group were nominated by HISD Board of Education members, school support officers, curriculum managers, teacher and principal associations, and central office staff. The invited teachers and principals represent 84 unique schools and a wide range of grade levels and subject areas. Participants include more than 80 are teachers, 30 are principals, and 14 are central office staff. Teachers make up the largest percentage of PECAS members.

The PECAS committee will work to understand where things stand now, think critically about where the district needs to go, and discuss challenges and explore next steps. In order to break down the complex assignment, the group will be divided into three sub-committees that will examine the issues of base pay, the Teacher Appraisal and Development System (TADS), and bonuses/incentives. They will consider questions such as:

What improvements can be made to make sure that TADS is being used to improve instructional practice?
What resources and supports do teachers and school leaders need?
Which of the potential options for teacher compensation include the best model for including effectiveness and experience in base pay?
Which priorities should be rewarded through bonuses and incentives?

Sub-committees will meet to consider improvements to our current systems for appraisal, development, and compensation and to provide feedback on the district’s future plans.

**Teacher Development Specialists/Instructional Coaches Have Positive Impact on Teachers and Students**

Early in the Effective Teachers Initiative, HISD prioritized the design and implementation of a Teacher Appraisal and Development System (TADS) that gives teachers, principals, and district officials the information they need to improve instructional practice and make staffing decisions that ensure that every student in the district is learning from an effective teacher. The appraisal system was implemented in 2011–2012. Each teacher is paired with an appraiser who coaches them to become more effective teachers through observations, walk-throughs, curriculum planning, professional development, and assigning student outcome measures to assure overall effective teaching.

Effective teaching is determined by three appraisal components – Instructional Practice (IP), Professional Expectations (PE), and Student Performance (SP). Teachers are rated on a scale of 1 to 4 along each of these components. These ratings are then calculated together to determine an overall Summative Rating on the same four-point scale: Ineffective, Needs Improvement, Effective, and Highly Effective. The goal is to describe the distribution of teacher summative ratings and the ratings of each criteria that are used to construct a teacher’s overall appraisal rating. This then examines how these ratings are distributed across key campus and teacher level variables. These variables include the school’s academic level, Index 1 scores, improvement required ratings, teacher’s years of experience, and whether or not a rated teacher is a core-subject or critical shortage instructor.

An additional key ingredient is job-embedded instructional coaching provided by Elementary Teacher Development Specialists (TDS) and Secondary Instructional Coaches (IC). Elementary & Secondary Curriculum and Development TDS and IC support prioritized campuses in the following ways:

- Model Effective Instruction
- Provide Customized Professional Development
- Facilitate PLC Meetings
- Observe and Provide Feedback
- Data Analysis
- Instructional Planning

TDS/IC’s are organized into literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, instructional technology, dual language and STEM content teams.

**Goal 3: Provide a Safe Environment**

**Strategies and Initiatives**

The district shall create a safe environment conducive to learning for all students and provide safety and security measures at district schools and facilities, and while attending district-related events.

**HISD Board of Education Approves School Bus Safety Measure**

The Houston Independent School District Board of Education approved an updated Code of Student Conduct that requires students riding buses equipped with 3-point seat belts to wear them. The update also includes language encouraging students with access to lap belts to wear them.

The code update is aligns with last year’s commitment to only buy new buses equipped with 3-point seat belts, which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has recommended. Doing so adds about $8,000 to the cost of a new school bus. This fall, HISD will replace 60 older buses with new ones equipped with 3-point seat belts. These new buses will be assigned to the longest routes carrying elementary school children.

Today, HISD’s 1,100-bus fleet includes about 430 with
lap belts and 90 with 3-point seat belts.

**HISD Department of Transportation Honored for Use of ‘Green’ School Buses**
The Houston Independent School District Department of Transportation has been honored with the inaugural Leadership with Propane Autogas Award by the Propane Education and Research Council.

HISD is the only school district in Texas, and one of three in the country, to be recognized by the council for creating a cleaner environment for student bus riders by using propane school buses. The award recipients were announced in Reno, Nev. at the Green Bus Summit.

“I’m incredibly proud of our transportation department for receiving this prestigious award,” said HISD Board President Manuel Rodriguez. “It is important that we do our part to protect Houston’s air quality while also being good stewards of tax dollars.”

The district was offered more than $2 million by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Railroad Commission of Texas in 2011 to fund 70 percent of the cost of green buses. That same year, HISD unveiled 25 propane buses and over the past six years has added more than 100 alternatively fueled buses to its fleet. There are plans to increase the number of green buses to 250 in the next few years.

“I’m honored that we were one of three districts in the nation to receive this award,” said HISD General Manager of Transportation Nathan Graf. “It speaks highly of our mechanics and our team that we took steps to green our fleet.”

Propane buses emit fewer emissions and toxins into the air, deliver better fuel economy, reduce engine noise, and require less maintenance. The use of green buses also helps lower the district’s operating costs while providing cleaner air for Houston students.

**Goal 4: Increase Management Effectiveness and Efficiency**

**Strategies and Initiatives**
The district shall have a decentralized organizational structure that will promote autonomy and innovation in schools. With a districtwide commitment to performance over compliance and a shared accountability system in place, the district shall employ best practices of administrative principles to make optimal use of district resources and taxpayer dollars.

**HISD on Track to Save More Than $8 million with Energy Efficiency Efforts**
The Houston Independent School District’s efforts to reduce energy consumption are paying dividends with a projected $8 million in savings for the current fiscal year. The district’s Energy and Sustainability Department credits behavioral changes, capital repairs and preventative maintenance for the reduction in costs.

“We’re excited to recognize that the district’s commitment to environmental stewardship has made a positive impact on our energy cost and consumption,” said Brian Busby, General Manager of HISD Facilities Services. “The less money we spend on our utility bills means the more money we can put back into our schools.”

About 75 percent of the energy savings resulted from changes at the campus level, including standardizing HVAC and lighting schedules. The district worked with CenterPoint Energy’s SCORE program to help educate school administrators and facility managers on the benefits of energy efficiency.

Energy programs with community partners have also contributed to the reductions. Under CenterPoint’s Sustainable Schools program, Willdan Energy Solutions supplied tools for HISD teachers and students to perform energy audits. The district is also working with the National Wildlife Federation’s Eco-Schools program to raise awareness of environmental stewardship.

Another 25 percent of the savings is attributed to capital repairs and preventative maintenance on all campus chillers. The district added a Quality Assurance Analyst to the Energy and Sustainability Department to identify energy savings opportunities.

With some of the savings, the HISD Facilities Department plans to implement LED lighting upgrades and other capital improvements to further improve energy efficiency. This will further reduce district energy consumption creating more savings to the district. Funding will also be used for future projects, including utility monitoring so that students and staff can view real-time utility consumption at their campus.

**Goal 5: Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools**

**Strategies and Initiatives**

The schools belong to the people; hence, the board, administration, and support staff are public servants who exist to support the schools and the relationship between teachers, students, and parents. Public confidence will increase as the district increases transparency, accountability at all levels, and meaningful engagement of the community.

**2016 Grads Within Reach walk recovers more than 50 students**

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and a team of volunteers from Booker T. Washington High School walked the neighborhood on Saturday, September 10, 2016, knocking on doors and talking to dropouts about returning to school. They were part of a team...
of volunteers from HISD high schools participated in the district’s annual Grads Within Reach walk and convinced students across the city to come back to school and continue their education.

Almost 500 volunteers fanned out across Houston, visiting the last-known residences of students who had not shown up for class this year and leaving information on how to re-enroll if one came to the door. They made contact with 469 students and/or parents and left door hangers on 609 doors.

Fifty-six students agreed to re-enroll and finish high school. The Northside High School team recovered 12 students, the Advanced Virtual Academy/Middle College High School reached 10, and Sterling High School reached eight. A total of 23 HISD high schools had teams going door-to-door on Saturday morning.

“We were thrilled to have Mayor Turner participate,” said HISD Director of Dropout Prevention Bea Marquez.

Students who want more information on how to return to school may call 713-556-7017 or visit this page. They can also email GWR@HoustonISD.org.

21st Century Learning Comes Into Focus as New Schools Open Their Doors

As new bond schools are opening across the district, teachers and students are discovering first-hand how new spaces and teaching techniques can enhance learning.

Rather than simply memorizing facts and figures, students in 21st century classrooms embrace a more holistic approach to learning that fosters in them the ability to collaborate, think critically, and problem solve. Students must not only be able to master content, but also evaluate and process what they learn and apply it effectively in the real world.

In 21st century schools and classrooms, this plays out in both traditional and non-traditional ways. Students may work individually, in clusters, or in a customary classroom set-up — or in any combination of the three. They may even work in small groups outside the classroom, using technology for project-based learning.

“These are 21st century environments, so as you walk down the hallways and the common areas, you’ll see one teacher will have desks five rows across and five deep, and another will have clusters,” HISD’s General Manager of Construction Design Dan Bankhead said of the district’s newly-opened schools. “It varies by teacher, but they’ve adapted to whichever way they need to use the facility.”

For HISD bond schools, flexibility is one of the hallmarks of 21st century school design because it allows teachers and administrators to easily adapt spaces to best suit their needs. Other common characteristics include open and colorful learning spaces, natural lighting, and huddle-spaces in larger hallways or breakout rooms to facilitate project-based group learning.

Ensuring all classrooms and schools have access to state-of-the-art technology also is key. As part of the 2012 Bond, HISD devoted $100 million for technology upgrades throughout the district. Complimenting that effect is the districtwide PowerUp initiative, which aims to transform teaching and learning by providing personalized learning environments for all students and enabling teachers to use technology to more effectively facilitate instruction, manage curriculum, collaborate with peers, and engage with students. As part of the initiative, all high school students receive a laptop for use at school and home. Most middle school classrooms also have access to laptop class sets.

HISD’s $1.89 billion bond program, approved by Houston voters in 2012, is renovating or rebuilding 40 schools, including 29 high schools. Once complete, HISD will have one of the most modern portfolios of urban high schools in the country.

The bond program also includes $44.7 million to replace regional fieldhouses and improve athletics facilities, $35 million to renovate middle school restrooms, and $17.3 million for safety and security improvements.

Six New HISD Schools Open to Students for the First Time

The first day of school is always exciting, but the energy was palpable at six new HISD schools opening their doors to students for the first time.

The new schools — Mark White and Condit Elementary schools, North Houston and South Early College High schools, Mandarin Immersion Magnet School, and Fonwood Early Childhood Center — were rebuilt as modern learning environments with flexible classrooms, increased access to technology, bursts of color, and lots of natural light.

Also formally opening to students was the modern, new classroom wing at Worthing High School and several renovated spaces at Waltrip High School.

All schools — with the exception of Fonwood Early Childhood Center — were funded by the district’s voter-approved 2012 Bond Program. The $1.89 billion program calls for the renovation or rebuilding of 40 schools across the district, including 29 high schools. Construction is currently underway at 22 campuses — more activity than at any other time in district history. Once complete, the district will have one of the most modern portfolios of urban high schools in the country.

Goal 6: Create a Positive District Culture
Strategies and Initiatives

The district’s clearly articulated purpose will serve as the catalyst for creating a powerful sense of community and a shared direction among personnel, parents, students, and the public. Because the district realizes the value of investing in human capital, the district will work to attract and retain the best teachers and staff members, and create working conditions in which their talents can flourish.

HISD Promotes a Positive Culture by Celebrating Excellence and Soliciting Employee Feedback

During the 2016 school year, HISD continued several practices intended to promote a positive district culture. The superintendent continued to host central office meetings to discuss topics relevant to central office staff. Meanwhile, the district continued to celebrate excellent performance by highlight employees through Employee of the Month recognition ceremonies held at monthly Board of Education meetings. The district also continued to award Team HISD hats to staff who exhibit the values of HISD and make significant contributions to district accomplishments and culture.

Superintendent Carranza began leading the district with a “Listen and Learn” tour of the community, hosting more than two dozen town hall meetings and a virtual meeting as a way to introduce himself to the community, solicit input from stakeholders about the district’s future, and learn about key issues in the district. The new superintendent also solicited input from employees across the district about the next year’s academic calendar, exhibiting a commitment to stakeholder engagement.

Special Education Conference Focuses on Creating Positive Culture for Students

During a keynote speech at HISD’s Special Education Conference, Kelly Brown told the story of a woman named Araminta Ross. As a child, she had been beaten, causing life-long pain and dizziness, and she had no formal education.

Brown, an assistant professor at Prairie View A&M University, went on to explain that Ross didn’t let her circumstances define or limit her. She eventually changed her name to Harriet Tubman and went on to be an extraordinary figure in American history.

“The message I want to share is the kids we have can accomplish anything,” Brown said. “We need to help them to be the best people they can be with our guidance. At the end of the day, they deserve our best.”

Organizers of the third annual Special Education Conference at Pin Oak Middle School said they had two main goals for educators who attended the event: to walk away with a new understanding of instructional design for their students and a network of teachers from whom they can learn.

“(This conference) stems from the fact (the Office of Special Education Services) has so much professional development that we want to share,” said Joan Anderson, senior manager for Special Education Programs. “It’s difficult to pull teachers from the classroom for development. This year’s theme is broad in that the power is in the design. We have to be thoughtful how we design our instruction and engage our learners.”

Brown’s message, Anderson said, was the perfect fit for those in attendance, especially when addressing unintentional biases they may have regarding students.

Conversations around our own biases and how to determine them in and out of the classroom is the culture we hope to adopt. In addition to sharing professional development, teachers and others in the attendance were left with the charge to do something different.

Future Priorities/Challenges

The Houston Independent School District will continue to build on its past successes by increasing the graduation rate, improving human capital, expanding the emphasis on performance management, and strengthening communications.

Despite a budget deficit resulting from Chapter 41 Recapture and the need to make cuts to the district’s operating budget in 2017, HISD aimed to preserve campus-level budget allocations and specific programs to address student needs and achievement.

- HISD maintains a decentralized school structure and allocates funds directly to campuses using a weighted student formula. When faced with a $95 million budget deficit, the district aimed to minimize reductions to the PUA, the direct budget allocation campuses receive, by looking first to central office services that could be eliminated, including vacant positions and centrally-administered programs and contracts.

- While the district cut its operating budget, HISD prioritized appropriations to support social and emotional learning needs of students. In 2016, the HISD Board of Education modified the district’s student discipline policy, and the district increased appropriations for a new Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) initiative to support the behavioral needs of students.

- Student achievement data indicates reading growth continues to be an opportunity for improvement, and the district has responded by prioritizing the maintenance and expansion of the HISD Literacy by 3 initiative. HISD program evaluations suggest that this program has had a positive impact on student reading achievement in the district’s early elementary grades, and thus the district has
expanded this reading initiative to include middle school students.

- HISD continues to invest in the district’s PowerUp initiative to transform teaching and learning through technology. The initiative to provide high school students with laptops remained a priority in 2016-2017.

As the district continues to prioritize student achievement, HISD foresees budgetary challenges in future years, resulting from the existing Texas school finance system and efforts to equitably fund schools.

- Under the existing Texas school finance system, HISD’s Recapture payments will continue to increase as the district’s property values grow. Without changes to the Texas school finance system or an increase to the district’s maintenance and operations tax rate, our revenue forecast projects little or no growth in future years, limiting the district’s ability to invest in programs, initiatives, or operational needs. Since HISD is subject to Chapter 41 Recapture, a tax rate increase would further increase the district’s estimated Recapture payments, and the district would not keep all revenues generated. Thus, resource limitations will remain a continued challenge.

- Efforts to ensure all students receive the resources they need to succeed through the equitable distribution of resources remains an ongoing conversation within HISD and among the Board of Education and stakeholders. In 2016-2017, HISD changed our methodology for distributing Title I funds to a progressive allocation to campuses, directing more resources to campuses in proportion to their concentration of economically disadvantaged students. This change is intended to direct more resources to school campuses with greater concentrations of low SES students because these schools require more resources to ensure stronger outcomes.

- To fund this change in Title I allocations, the district funded full-day PreK fully out of the General Fund. The state of Texas currently funds half-day PreK for eligible students, and the district was previously providing supplemental funding to support full-day PreK with Title I funds. By moving the cost to the General Fund, the district was able to continue ensuring students receive a full-day of early childhood education, while freeing-up Title I funds to direct to schools with the greatest concentrations of poverty. HISD will continue to consider changes to the way funds are allocated to campuses to ensure all students receive the resources they need to be successful.
HISD schools serve a diverse student population in both traditional and alternative classroom settings. The district is dedicated to giving every student the best possible education through an intensive core curriculum and specialized, challenging, instructional and career programs. HISD provides a full range of programs and services for its students, including elementary and secondary courses for general, vocational, and college-preparatory levels, as well as magnet programs and gifted and talented programs. A wide variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities supplement the academic programs.

**HISD Schools Makeup**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Schools</strong></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Elementary Programs**

HISD has an enrollment in its 158 elementary schools of more than 106,700 students in grades Pre-K-5. Some elementary schools include grade 6 and some also have grades EE-8. The elementary instructional program includes a foundation curriculum of reading, writing, spelling, oral language, listening, mathematics, science, and social studies. The enrichment curriculum offers health, physical education, and fine arts. Some elementary schools offer opportunities to learn languages other than English. In addition to classroom experiences, students have co-curricular opportunities in the greater Houston community, through district sponsored activities at museums, science, and arts organizations. The district emphasizes that each child must have a consistent, challenging curriculum that surpasses state requirements. Advanced Academics, Bilingual Education, English Language Learners, and Special Education programs are available to meet specific needs.

**Middle School Programs**

HISD’s 37 middle schools typically instruct more than 33,200 students in grades 6-8. The middle school foundation and enrichment courses develop concepts and skills introduced in elementary school. Career and Technology Education courses are available to expose students to a variety of career possibilities.

**High School Programs**

HISD’s 36 high schools instruct more than 46,100 students in grades 9-12. High schools offer students advanced education in English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. All students also must take courses in health and physical education and at least one year of foreign language. A wide variety of elective courses include additional foreign language study and fine-arts electives such as choral music, band, orchestra, art, dance, and theater. Career and Technology Education offers courses to prepare students for careers in high demand. Magnet high schools provide specialized programs for students who want to focus on a particular area of interest.

**Alternative Education Programs**

The alternative schools and programs of HISD strive to be catalysts of change and meet the needs of students who benefit from a non-traditional educational environment. These schools are not merely providers of services; they also utilize a myriad of strategic interventions and innovative enrichments tailored to meet the unique educational, intellectual, and developmental needs of their students.

Alternative schools and programs include schools of referral, choice and external charter schools. The schools and programs address specific academic needs and meet individualized instructional, social and/or behavioral needs of those students who require nontraditional services to optimize their potential for success. The student population includes pregnant and parenting students, anti-social individuals, high achieving, scholastically able students, recovered dropouts, and highly at-risk students. The schools and programs have no geographic attendance zones or feeder patterns and include schools of choice, schools of referral, and community-based partnerships. Alternative education in HISD enjoys a high level of interest among patrons and community members who share an affiliation with the district in the operation of these schools.

**Early Childhood Programs**

The Early Childhood team in the Elementary Curriculum and Development Office manages the district’s Early Childhood Program consisting of over 700 prekindergarten teachers serving over 14,000 students in 164 campuses. The early childhood team facilitates
and supports the best education available anywhere to Houston’s youngest learners. This includes oversight of funding and budgets for the program, coordination with related early learning agencies, delivery of specialized training for teachers, and the development of quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment programs.

The early childhood team produces Curriculum documents based on the state Pre-K Guidelines to support quality learning experiences for the district’s three and four-year olds. The curriculum focuses on developing literacy and numeracy skills to ensure that students are prepared to succeed in kindergarten. In addition, the team gives oversight to the screening and progress monitoring measures used to efficiently evaluate and monitor student learning and kindergarten readiness skills.

HISD began offering full-day pre-kindergarten programs to all eligible children in 2005. To be eligible for enrollment in a district prekindergarten program, a child must satisfy age, residency, and other key requirements. HISD also offers prekindergarten on a tuition basis to students who do not meet the eligibility requirements to attend free prekindergarten. Parents may enroll their four-year-old child (child must be four years of age on or before September 1 of a given school year) in a full-day prekindergarten program at participating neighborhood schools on a space-available basis.

**Fine Arts Programs**

The elementary and secondary fine arts team in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department promotes a full range of quality fine arts programs in the district. The backbone of fine arts instruction in Texas, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), help educators structure instruction around what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level in the arts. Based on the TEKS, the team provides a standards-based curriculum with delivery strategies that provide the basic framework in which performance and product evidence the true learning skills and deep understanding of knowledge of each student. Ultimately, a fine arts education encourages students to become lifelong learners who are motivated by internal drives to know, do, and accomplish.

The district’s fine arts programs include visual art, dance, choral music, instrumental music, and theatre. Research shows that the fine arts support learning in math, science, social studies, and language arts; as well as decreases dropout rates and increases attendance. Additionally, they promote leadership skills, motivate investigation, foster collaborative team work, heighten self-discipline and self-reliance, cultivate a positive self-concept, and nurture cultural and social awareness. One of the greatest assets of the fine arts is expansion of critical and analytical thinking. The arts intrinsically cultivate creativity, imagination, and innovation as well as symbiotically incorporate the other content areas into authentic learning experiences. Ultimately, the gift of the fine arts is in the development of the whole child – a humanitarian that sees the world through the lens of creativity.

**Health/Physical Education Programs**

The elementary and secondary health/physical education teams in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department support teachers and instructional leaders to ensure that students make responsible and informed decisions on matters important to their personal health and well-being, and develop fitness for life. The teams develop curriculum for district teachers and support them in satisfying various state and federal mandates.

Health education focuses on the development of health and safety principles and follows the Texas Department of State Health Services Coordinated School Health (CSH) initiative that strives to maintain a unified approach to health education for all districts. Health Education is required K-12 and addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social elements of wellness. Age-appropriate instruction for all grade levels encompassing the following strategies to reduce unintentional and intentional injuries, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, and behaviors resulting in HIV/STD/teen pregnancy among youth. Instruction also informs students of proper nutritional habits and benefits of regular physical activity and rest.

Instructional activities stress life skills such as communication, conflict resolution, refusal, decision-making, goal-setting, interpersonal relationships and stress management. Ultimately, health instruction promotes informed decision making skills that impact the health and well-being among youth.

Physical education focuses on the development of fitness for life. The design of a quality program helps students develop knowledge of fitness and psycho-motor skills through a variety of physical activities. The district curriculum emphasizes maximum participation in body awareness, conditioning, movement, games, sports, dance, tumbling, and gymnastic activities. Instruction also informs students of proper nutritional habits and the benefits of regular physical activity and rest.

The physical education curriculum addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social dimension of fitness. Age-appropriate instruction provides an opportunity to learn and practice fitness concepts while actively participating in a program that promotes physical awareness, social development and positive attitudes toward active lifestyles. Instructional activities stress life management skills such as cooperation, fair-play, teamwork, citizenship, sportsmanship, and
leadership. The integration of health education concepts and physical fitness practices assists students in the development of wellness lifestyles. Even though health and physical education are two separate and distinct instructional programs, they emphasize the achievement of one’s personal best though physical fitness and health literacy.

Mathematics Programs
The elementary and secondary mathematics teams in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department support teachers and instructional leaders to ensure that aligned, rigorous, and engaging mathematics instruction occurs intentionally and systemically throughout HISD. The mathematics teams envision a collaborative community that provides an equitable, nurturing environment that inspires and challenges confident lifelong learners. They bring together students, parents, teachers, and education, business, university, and community leaders to provide a challenging educational environment that expects all students to develop, make sense of, and enjoy mathematics for the rest of their lives.

The teams work to improve student achievement in mathematics by collaborating with teachers to produce curriculum and assessment documents aligned to state and national curriculum, assessment, and college- and career-readiness standards, by promoting a nurturing environment in which all students can learn challenging mathematics, and by providing professional development that drives effective teaching leading to meaningful learning.

Science Programs
Elementary and secondary science teams in the Curriculum and Development Departments support aligned, rigorous, engaging student-centered instruction; provides job-embedded professional development; as well as implement classroom and district-wide assessments. The teams envision a collaborative learning community that provides an equitable, nurturing environment to inspire and challenge students in real-world science learning. They bring together students, parents, teachers, educational partners, businesses, universities, and community leaders to work systemically to provide a challenging educational environment that expects all students to develop, make sense of, and enjoy science to be equipped to compete in a global society.

Current initiatives include: HISD/Baylor College of Medicine PK-3 Science Institute, Grade 4 Houston Museum of Natural Science Field Experience, the LASER i3 Scale Up Initiative, the HISD/Rice High School Science Institute, Literacy in the Middle, and the Houston SECME Program.

Social Studies Programs
The elementary and secondary social studies teams in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department promote the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon the eight strands such as: history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, science, technology, society and social studies skills. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. In summary, the goals of social studies education are to create citizens for the 21st century, form a factual and conceptual knowledge base, develop intellectual skills, and promote basic democratic values.

The Social Studies teams develop the district’s curriculum documents and support teacher training for effective social studies instruction. An understanding of social studies is important to prepare students to be active, productive, and participatory citizens. Citizenship is the core goal of social studies education in every grade. Citizenship education, centered in the disciplines of social studies, helps create caring and concerned citizens. The role of good citizens in the home, the classroom and school, and the community encourages students to be good decision-makers. Exploration of the nature of our democracy, the documents that support democracy and the concept of rights and responsibilities form the basis for Social Studies education and the creation of knowledgeable and informed citizens. Basic democratic principles such as limits to freedom, rule of law, the will of the majority and protection of the rights of the minority, and the responsibilities of citizenship create part of the knowledge base for social studies education.

Special Education Programs
The mission of the Special Education Department is to support students with disabilities in gaining college and career readiness skills and independent living skills through active engagement in grade level curriculum. The Special Education Department provides leadership and support to district and campus leaders to ensure adequate and appropriate resources, services, and programs for students with disabilities.

Program Initiatives
Goal 1: For students ages 3–21, the percent of initial evaluations completed within 90 days of receipt of parental consent will increase from 88 percent to 95 percent.
Goal 2: For students younger than age 3, the percent who are evaluated, found eligible, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays will increase from 92 percent to 97 percent.

Goal 3: The percent of students identified to have dyslexia will increase from 0.4 percent to 0.8 percent.

Goal 4: The overrepresentation of African American students in special education will decrease from 9.2 percent to 7.5 percent.

Goal 5: The percent of students with disabilities ages 3–5 placed in instructional settings of 40 or 41 will increase from 5.1 percent to 10.5 percent; ages 6–11 from 32.3 percent to 35.0 percent; and ages 12–21 from 51.9 percent to 60.0 percent.

Goal 6: The percent of students with disabilities participating in the STAAR-M reading assessment will decrease from 3.5 percent to 3.0 percent and in the STAAR-M math assessment from 3.0 percent to 2.5 percent.

Goal 7: A baseline percentage of high school students with disabilities participating in employment opportunities was established during 2012-2013.

Goal 8: The percentage of secondary school students with disabilities who are also identified as English Language Learners (ELL) from 31 percent to 28 percent.

Goal 9: The overrepresentation of students with disabilities placed in Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will decrease from 22.6 percent to 17.9 percent.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs
The Career and Technical Education (CTE) department was designed to provide students with the academic and technical skills they need to compete in the global workforce and/or to continue their education at the post-secondary level after graduation.

Students are offered a variety of courses through a comprehensive study of one of the 16 career concentrations identified and approved by the Texas Education Agency (listed below).

Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
Architecture and Construction
Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications
Business, Management and Administration
Education and Training
Finance
Government and Public Administration
Health Science
Hospitality and Tourism
Human Services
Information Technology
Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
Manufacturing
Marketing, Sales, and Service
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

Career concentrations are designed to follow a coherent sequence of courses in a graduation plan, and CTE employees collaborate with teachers and other departments to design, implement, and assess core and career-program offerings.

Basic and advanced academic classes are integrated with technical skills courses to allow students to identify possible career options and to give them the transferable skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

External Funding
The External Funding Department supports schools in the Houston Independent School District by:

• providing opportunities for all children to acquire the knowledge and skills specified in challenging state content and performance standards;
• supplementing academic, health, and social services;
• promoting school wide reform;
• increasing staff development opportunities;
• distributing resources to regions and campuses where needs are the greatest;
• affording parents meaningful opportunities to participate in their children’s education; and
• aligning the schools’ instructional efforts with those of the state and school district.

Magnet Programs
Magnet programs offer students educational choices from among a number of specialized programs at grade levels K-12. Magnet programs offer an integrated and enriched curriculum designed around a specialized theme that meets students’ interests, talents, and needs and has relevance in today’s society. Teachers receive specialized training in the field of study based on the school’s thematic focus. Additionally, these schools seek to recruit and draw an ethnically diverse student body from throughout the city. Finally, strong community and business partnerships support the relevance of the theme with a real-world view.

Structures:
Schoolwide Magnets—Provide a specialized program that is added on to the school’s regular curriculum. Every student in the school receives instruction in the specialty area taught by teachers qualified in that area. Students attending a fine arts Magnet school, for example, are exposed to in-depth experiences in the fine arts, which may include lessons in instrumental and choral music, dance, art, drama, and gymnastics.

Dedicated Magnets—Provide a unique curriculum and single educational focus for all students attending
Every classroom is equipped with Montessori materials to support the development of advanced-level linguistic skills. Fine Arts programs provide specialized instruction in a variety of areas, including strings, band, piano, art, dance, creative writing, and gymnastics. Excellence in the arts is a natural, integrated extension of the academic program. Offerings in each individual school may vary.

College Prep provides students with an opportunity to get a head start on their college aspirations. Many teens are able to graduate with a high-school diploma and an associate’s degree simultaneously, effectively saving them thousands of dollars in college tuition.

Career Academies provide courses in sixteen different career concentrations to prepare students for jobs in the workforce. Some programs prepare students for vocational certifications, while others offer dual credit courses to give them a head start in college.

Advanced Academics Programs
The Advanced Academics Department has the primary responsibility of overseeing, supporting, and monitoring (in collaboration with other departments, district leadership and school-based staff) the programs for gifted and talented (G/T) students districtwide. The Advanced Academics Department supports and assist schools and teachers as they provide services designed for students who demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communications as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that are advanced in comparison to products by students of similar age, experience, or environment and that reflect individuality and creativity.

The term “Vanguard” refers to the program to which G/T students are assigned. Generally, G/T is used when referring to a student who is identified as gifted and talented through pre-established identification procedures and criteria.

HISD Vanguard Standards have been established in accordance with the components of the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students and the state goal for gifted students and are designed to ensure equity in access for all students and to maintain consistency and integrity in program implementation.

The Advanced Placement Program
The Advanced Placement Program (AP) directly supports HISD’s Strategic Direction for Core Initiative 3: Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports. The AP Program provides high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn college credit. AP exams are offered in 22 subject areas, and exams are administered over a two-week period each year in May. The AP grade scale ranges from 1 to 5, and a score of 3 or higher qualifies a student to earn advanced placement, college credit, or both.

HISD’s Advanced Placement program continues to focus on providing professional development based on what teachers have indicated they need. By working directly with organizations such as College Board, training offered for Pre-AP and AP teachers provides direct instruction on strategies that assist students.
In addition, HISD has begun hosting AP Professional Learning Communities for HISD AP teachers to participate in throughout the year. Led by highly effective HISD AP teachers, this program provides participants the opportunity to share best practices and ideas for the AP classroom. The district’s efforts to provide teachers with specific professional development are also aligned to HISD’s AP results.

The growth in HISD’s AP numbers for both participation and performance are an indication of the dedication of HISD AP teachers, administrators and students who have come to understand the importance of this program.

The AVID Program
Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a secondary program to prepare students for the rigors of a four-year college or university. HISD works to ensure the success of AVID students through a six-year plan which promotes collaborative learning and inquiry with specific focus on reading and writing. In small groups, AVID students ask, explore, and answer questions.

AVID students are taught levels of questioning and are given opportunities to apply questioning techniques. AVID students regularly participate in inside/outside circle discussions, panel discussions, Philosophical Chairs, and Socratic Seminars. AVID incorporates strategies that can help students become more effective readers. The strategies include graphic organizers, jigsawing text, reciprocal teaching, think-alouds, reader response, and SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite/write, Review). W

Writing is also an essential part of AVID. AVID students are taught the writing process and strategies to enhance their writing skills. The strategies include Cornell Note-taking, double entry journaling, compare and contrast charts, Know Want Learn (KWL), learning logs, quick writes, and Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST).

The Six Year Plan, developed in collaboration with Federal and State Compliance, P-16, Student Engagement and the secondary lead counselors, is aligned to the college bound culture program and is now the official form for mapping student graduation plans (middle to high school). AVID supports HISD students’ successful completion of high school and entrance into college.

The AVID program was developed to increase the number of secondary students participating in rigorous academic courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP courses. The program targets at-risk students who (1) are economically disadvantaged, (2) are underrepresented in four-year colleges, (3) possess the potential to become first generation college students, and (4) are currently enrolled in regular (non-gifted and talented, non-special education) classes.

In all 6th-grade subjects, 7th-grade math, 8th-grade science, 10th-grade math and science, and all 11th-grade subjects, AVID students out-perform their non-AVID counterparts. This performance difference was especially pronounced on the STAAR End of Course exams.

Currently, a total of 54 HISD campuses offer the AVID program - 19 of our campuses have committed to the AVID/Rice University two-year grant. The goals of the grant includes increasing student participation/enrollment in AVID by 20 percent, and a 10 percent increase in the number of students participating in AP school-wide by the end of the two year grant.

The AVID program is effective in increasing the performance of the students involved both as measured by the state accountability assessments (STAAR and EOC) and by participation in the AP program. The largest benefit of the AVID program is in the support it provides for student academics. It allows students who would normally be passed over to learn the skills that are necessary to transition into more rigorous academic programs. The support provided to students in the AVID program is most beneficial when it is maintained over the course of several years as the students are able to learn, implement, and see the results of their better study skills and improved focus. Ultimately, these skills can be transferred to college and help these students continue their success as the academics get more challenging.

The EMERGE Program
EMERGE prepares HISD students to get into and graduate from the nation’s top colleges and plays an integral role in the district’s broader efforts to prepare all of its students for post-secondary success. The program has multiple components that directly and indirectly benefit thousands of students and their families across the district. These include school-based programming, summer enrichment activities, college visits, student and family workshops, district-wide events, PSAT and SAT preparation, college partnerships, scholarship opportunities, mentors, college fairs, trainings for counselors, teachers and more.

EMERGE was started in the district in 2010 by a group of HISD teachers who wanted their students to experience life-changing higher education opportunities. The program is also supported by EMERGE Fellowship, a 501c3 organization that delivers training, programming and additional resources to the district. Most of the students in the program come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and are first in their families to go to college. EMERGE has also helped the district increase its SAT scores, AP performance levels, and overall college readiness/access levels.
The International Baccalaureate Programme
The International Baccalaureate (IB) Degree Programme in 11th and 12th Grades is an internationally based pre-university level curriculum developed by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). This comprehensive curriculum allows graduates to fulfill requirements of international educational systems and to receive the IB diploma. Through IB examinations, students may receive college placement hours.

Strong emphasis is placed on the ideals of international understanding and responsible citizenship through creativity, action, and service. The IB program specifies learning in a broad base of disciplines – languages, mathematics, sciences, humanities, arts, physical education, and technology – to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills necessary for the future. IB students develop a genuine understanding of ideas and the ability to utilize them in new contexts.

The IB Diploma Programme is offered at Bellaire, Lamar and Reagan High Schools. The IB Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) is offered at Lanier, Fondren, Grady, and Hogg Middle Schools. Five HISD elementary schools are also authorized as IB (Harvard, Northline, River Oaks, Roberts, and Twain). With the inception of the IB Primary Years Program (PYP), HISD became one of only 8 districts in North America to have an IB feeder pattern across grade levels. PYP is a school-wide program that benefits all students regardless of Gifted and Talented identification.

Reading/Language Arts
The elementary and secondary English language arts/reading teams in the Curriculum and Development Office promote quality student-centered literacy instruction from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 to build students’ skills in creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. In learning effective reading, writing, and thinking practices, HISD students are fully prepared for the demands of the 21st century.

The English language arts/reading teams support student achievement in literacy by designing a challenging district curriculum that incorporates research-based best practices to support rigorous instructional practice upon the eight strands such as: history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, science, technology, society and social studies skills. To reinforce standards-based instruction and assessment focused and explicit professional development is provided to meet the needs of teachers and students across the district.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)
The elementary and secondary languages other than English team in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department works to support teachers in enabling students to communicate effectively in another language and to develop life-long appreciation for various languages and cultures.

Two or more credits in the same language are recommended as a sequence of study for each student rather than a sampling of languages. This is especially important for the student planning for college and needing to meet admission/program language requirements.

Levels of instruction range from level I (novice) to as high as levels V, VI, and even VII (advanced progress). American Sign Language is one of the LOTE options. “Exploratory languages” is a non-sequential course that can be offered in elementary, middle, or high school.

Spanish-speaking students enrolled in Spanish IA who demonstrates a strong proficiency in the language may be screened and considered for placement in Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses. Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses are intended to inspire Spanish speakers to maintain and expand their knowledge of Spanish, and to continue the study of the language beyond the high school level.

Students develop the communication skills by using knowledge of the language, including grammar, and culture, communication and learning strategies, technology, and content from other subject areas to socialize, to acquire and provide information, to express feelings and opinions, and to get others to adopt a course of action. While knowledge of other cultures, connections to other disciplines, comparisons between languages and cultures, and community interaction all contribute to and enhance the communicative language learning experience, communication skills are the primary focus of language acquisition.

Literacy Programs
As part of the Curriculum and Development Department, the elementary and secondary literacy teams direct all aspects of literacy instruction. Literacy By 3 and Literacy in the Middle, are two parallel approaches that are transforming literacy instruction to increase student learning through a systematic and balanced approach to teaching reading and writing. Students receive standard-based whole group instruction, targeted small group instruction based on assessment, and individual conferencing to insure student needs are met. Students practice independent reading using “just right” books, hear models of fluent reading, engage in thoughtful discussions, and respond to texts through writing.

The elementary and secondary literacy teams collaborate to plan, oversee, and evaluate professional development focused on building teacher capacity to deliver differentiated instruction to meet the needs of every student.

The literacy team directs and supports the work of Library Services. Library Services provides technical
and professional support to school libraries, librarians, teachers, students, and communities. Library Services provides integrated support to enable schools to enhance the quality of instruction, leadership, curriculum, and instructional delivery to improve student achievement and information literacy. 

**Student Assessment**

The Student Assessment Department’s major components include Test Security Procedures, District-Funded Test Programs, State-Funded Programs, and Special Test Programs. 

- District-Funded Test Programs are defined as programs where the assessments to be used and the administration procedures are defined by the HISD Board of Education or by departments within HISD. This includes programs that are initiated to meet state or federal requirements, but where those entities do not specify the assessments or administration procedures.
- State-Funded Programs are those programs in which the testing procedures and the assessments used are specified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).
- Special Test Programs are those in which the Student Assessment Department manages or acts as a resource to programs that do not strictly have district or state mandates. These programs affect a limited population, and they may be mandated by a school, management district, department, grant requirements, or federal law.

**Educational Technology**

In a rapidly changing world, we must equip our students with the necessary skills to negotiate life effectively. In the 1900’s students who could read, write, and calculate were considered educated. Today’s students must be able to access digital information, think critically to evaluate messages in a variety of media forms, and use technology tools to communicate on a global level. Employers and colleges are increasingly expecting employees and students to arrive with these skills. With many jobs being relocated to other countries, our students will be competing for jobs on a global level. To meet the needs of the 21st century learner, the Elementary & Secondary Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Educational Technology teams support the success of all elementary & secondary HISD campuses by providing curriculum tools, integration activities, and technology resources to enhance teaching and learning. This is accomplished by providing curriculum documents that support teaching of the Technology Applications TEKS, by infusing resources into the core curriculum documents, and by managing district-wide technology initiatives to maximize student academic success. 

**Technology Program**

The Information Technology Department’s mission is to provide quality customer-centric services to the stakeholders of the Houston Independent School District in order to foster the primary goal of the Board of Education to advance student achievement and facilitate decision making with accurate and timely information.

The department is also responsible for providing service and support to schools, departments and field offices in the acquisition and use of technology to enhance student performance, ensure timely and accurate information to users and provide quality support services. 

A major goal of the Information Technology Department’s plan is to ensure that technology strategies and operations support the overall learning process. 

**School Support Services**

The mission of the School Support Services Department is to increase the child’s capacity to benefit from education by providing high quality counseling, psychological, social work, evaluation and prevention services that support achievement.

The School Support Services Department consists of: After School Programs, Health & Medical Services, JROTC, Library Services, P-16 College & Career Readiness, Student Engagement, Counseling & Guidance, Psychological Services, Parent Engagement, UIL Academics, Virtual School/Digital Curriculum, Dropout Prevention, Student Discipline. 

Provide support districtwide through the divisions of School Support Services.

Support 5 district strategic direction goals.

Serve as liaisons between business/community stakeholders and the district.
Statement of Texas Law

Sections 44.002 through 44.006 of the Texas Education Code establish the legal basis for budget development in school districts. The following six items summarize the legal requirements from the code:

- The Superintendent is the budget officer for the district and prepares or causes the budget to be prepared.

  **Note:** TEA recommends that an interactive approach between the Board of Trustees and the superintendent be taken to establish the budget process and define related roles and responsibilities.

- The district budget must be prepared by a date set by the state board of education, currently August 20 (June 19 if the district uses a July 1 fiscal year start date).

- The fiscal year of a school district begins on July 1 or September 1 of each year, as determined by the Board of Trustees of the district.

- The president of the Board of Education must call a public meeting of the Board of Trustees, giving 10 days public notice in a newspaper, for the adoption of the district budget. Any taxpayer of the district may be present and participate in the meeting.

- Concurrently with the publication of notice of the budget above, a school district must post a summary of the proposed budget on the school district’s Internet website or in the district’s central administrative office, if the school district has no Internet website. The budget summary must include a comparison to the previous year’s actual spending and information relating to per-student and aggregate spending on instruction, instructional support, central administration, district operations, debt service, and any other category designated by the commissioner. (Section 44.0041, TEC).

  The summary of the budget should be presented in the following function areas:

  (A) Instruction – functions 11, 12, 13, 95
  (B) Instructional Support – functions 21, 23, 31, 32, 33, 36
  (C) Central Administration – function 41
  (D) District Operations – functions 34, 35, 51, 52, 53
  (E) Debt Service – function 71
  (F) Other – functions 61, 81, 91, 92, 93, 97, 99

  The “per student” will be based on student enrollment.

- No funds may be expended in any manner other than as provided for in the adopted budget. The board does have the authority to amend the budget or adopt a supplementary emergency budget to cover unforeseen expenditures.

- The budget must be prepared in accordance with GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles) and state guidelines.

- The budget must be legally adopted before the adoption of the tax rate. However, if a school district has a July 1 fiscal year start date, then a school district must not adopt a tax rate until after the district receives the certified appraisal roll for the district required by Section 26.01, Tax Code. Additionally, a school district must publish a revised notice and hold another public meeting before the district may adopt a tax rate that exceeds the following: (1) The rate proposed in the notice prepared using the estimate; or (2) The district’s rollback rate determined under Section 26.08, Tax Code, using the certified appraisal roll.

**TEA Legal Requirements**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed additional requirements for school district budget preparation as follows:

- The budget must be adopted by the Board of Education, inclusive of amendments, no later than August 31 (June 30 if the district uses a July 1 fiscal year start date).

- Minutes from district board meetings will be used by TEA to record adoption of and amendments to the budget.

- Budgets for the General Fund, the Food Service Fund (whether accounted for in the General Fund, a Special Revenue Fund or Enterprise Fund) and the Debt Service Fund must be included in the official district budget (legal or fiscal year basis). These
baskets must be prepared and approved at least at the
fund and function levels to comply with the state’s
legal level of control mandates.

• The officially adopted district budget, as amended,
must be filed with TEA through PEIMS (Public
Education Information Management System) by the
date prescribed in the annual system guidelines.
Revenues, other sources, other uses, and fund
balances must be reported by fund, object (at the
fourth level), fiscal year, and amount. Expenditures
must be reported by fund, function, object (at the
second level), organization, fiscal year, program
intent and amount.

• A school district must amend the official budget
before exceeding a functional expenditure category,
and is approved for spending by a two-thirds vote of
appropriation unless it is considered an emergency
fund balance reserve of
a reserve for operations to set aside a minimum
balances represent tentative plans for future use of
for budgeting in future periods
represents that portion of fund balance that is available
unassigned fund balance
is composed of designated
Fund Balance Levels
The assigned fund balance is that portion of fund
balance that is not available for appropriation or that
has been legally segregated for specific purposes. The
unassigned fund balance is composed of designated
and undesignated portions. The undesignated portion
represents that portion of fund balance that is available
for budgeting in future periods. Designated fund
balances represent tentative plans for future use of
financial resources. The Board of Education designated
a reserve for operations to set aside a minimum
fund balance reserve of five percent of general fund
operations. This reserve is not available for use or
appropriation unless it is considered an emergency
and is approved for spending by a two-thirds vote of
the Board of Education.

Carryover of Surpluses/Deficits
Schools and departments are expected to operate
within the budget established during the budgeting
process. Deficits are charged against the budget for
the ensuing year except for special circumstances. The
Board of Education established a carryover policy in
2003, enabling schools to carryover up to 75 percent
of their non-spent funds.

Self-Insurance Reserve Fund and Insurance
Claims
A reserve for self-insurance shall be maintained for
the exclusive purpose of paying non-budgeted self-
insured losses, and/or insured losses until insurance
recovery is made, or for uninsured/underinsured losses.
If the District elects a program of larger deductibles or
self-insured retention, the estimated premium savings
shall be deposited to the self-insurance reserve. The
Risk Management Department, with the cooperation
of the individual department or school, shall attempt
recovery from negligent third parties for damage to
District property. The Risk Management Department
shall coordinate claims with the various insurance
companies.

Weighted Pupil Allocation Formula
The new allocations are based on weighted grade
level enrollment and average daily attendance.
Additional weights are also included for students in
special populations. The final number of refined units
is multiplied by a fixed per pupil allocation, which is
currently set at $3,522 for high schools, $3,558 for
middle schools and $3,522 per pupil for elementary
schools.

Debt Management
Debt management policies are adopted by the Board
of Education and seek to provide the most favorable
climate for district debt projects while upholding
the highest rating possible for debt instruments.
Management policies include the following points.

• All debt service obligations will be met on time

• Long-term financing will be restricted to capital
projects and purchases of equipment

• Long-term bonds will not be issued to finance current
operations

• The district will cooperate and communicate with
bond rating agencies and work towards obtaining
the most favorable rating possible. Currently, HISD
is rated:

Moody’s
Enhanced (with Texas PSF guarantee) Aaa
Underlying (stand alone) Aaa

Standard & Poor’s
Enhanced (with Texas PSF guarantee) AAA
Underlying (stand alone) AA+

• Outstanding obligations will be frequently reviewed
to ensure the most favorable funding structure for the
district

• All necessary information and material regarding
HISD’s financial status will be provided to the appropriate parties.

**Investments**
Investments are stated at fair market value, which is the amount at which the investment can be exchanged in a current transaction between willing parties. The objectives of cash management and investment policy are to:

- Assure the safety of district funds
- Maintain sufficient liquidity to provide adequate and timely working funds
- Match the maturity of investment instruments to daily cash flow requirements
- Attain a market average rate of return consistent with the first two objectives
- Diversify by maturity, instrument, and financial institution where permitted by law
- Actively pursue portfolio management techniques
- Avoid speculative investments

**Property Tax Exemptions**
HISD chooses to offer the optional homestead exemption of 20 percent as permitted by the State, to ease the tax burden on homeowners. In 2015, the Texas Legislature raised the mandated homestead exemption from $15,000 to $25,000.

**Decentralized, Weighted-Pupil Allocations**
Student enrollment, attendance, and participation in special programs are the basis for campus allocations for the 2016-2017 school year. The School Allocation Handbook outlines the allocation methodology for all schools based on weighted pupil ratios. The weights currently adopted are those used by the Texas Education Agency for allocation of state funds to school districts. The basic premise of the allocation methodology is to give campuses greater flexibility and control over resources while ensuring that district funds flow to the campuses according to the needs of the students attending them. The actual campus allocations are shown in the School Pages Section of this document.

State law, as well as HISD Board of Education policy, requires that the district’s annual budget be adopted prior to the expenditure of funds. During the fiscal year, the Board must amend the budget for any increases to functional appropriations or estimated revenue amounts. All supplemental appropriations must be within the available revenues and fund equity (resources). Principals and central office administrators have access to an online report that lists the detail transactions and remaining available funds by line item or detail account center.

In developing, evaluating, and improving the district’s accounting and budgeting system, consideration is given to the adequacy of the internal control structure. Internal controls are designed to provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition and that transactions are executed in accordance with management’s authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that the cost of a control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived, and the evaluation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management.

As a recipient of federal, state, and local grants, the district is also responsible for an adequate internal control structure as related to federal financial assistance programs as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations. These internal controls are regularly tested for effectiveness by auditors and management.

The district utilizes a line-item budget of proposed expenditures and the means of financing them (in combination with other approaches). The emphasis of the budget process is to identify the activities requiring resources and to rank those activities according to the needs of the entire district. Budgetary control is maintained at the function level by organizational unit through the encumbrance of estimated purchase amounts and other expenditures prior to the execution of contracts, approval of personnel transactions, or release of purchase orders to vendors. Those obligations that would result in an overrun of appropriated funds are not released until additional appropriations are made available. Open encumbrances are reported as a reservation of fund balance on June 30, the end of the fiscal year.
The Budget Development Model
The Budget Process is conceptually divided into a seven-step process: planning, preparation and submission, review and coordination, adoption, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The process is congruent with the overall mission of the organization and is aimed at fulfilling the district’s stated goals and objectives. The budget process exists in the context of a struggle to balance the needs of students and the community with the limited resources available from local, state, and federal sources. The final adopted budget is a reflection of the best decisions and choices of literally hundreds of people in the schools, the administrative offices, and the community and is often a painstaking balance of policy decisions and choices among competing priorities.

Planning
The planning stage of the budget process begins with the adoption of the prior year’s budget. At this point, team members communicate ideas and thoughts regarding the previous year’s process and plan to make the necessary improvements and adjustments to the process for the next budget cycle. Also, early into the year, the budget calendar of milestones for important activities and decisions is developed and disseminated to budget participants. Concurrently, senior members of the organization are meeting to discuss strategic planning issues—goals and initiatives for the coming year as well as challenges and opportunities facing the district. Finally, fundamental projections and assumptions crucial to the budgeting process such as pupil enrollment projections, changes in the tax base, and changes in funding levels received are being conducted and examined exhaustively.

The district currently uses a mix of budgetary approaches: line item, program budgeting and weighted per pupil to provide campuses a standard allocation based on projected enrollments or historical expenditures and uses a competitive ranking process for new or non-allocated programs. With this mixed approach, the Superintendent’s cabinet is also charged with developing and prioritizing non-allocated budgetary requests for submission for review.

Preparation and Submission
Budget preparation is conducted at the campus level primarily by the principal and members of the Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC). The development
of campus-level budgets follows the budget preparation guidelines issued by the Superintendent. While the revenue side of the district budget is prepared by district administrators, campus-level budgets become the basis for the expenditure side of the district budget as that information filters up through the various levels of review, including campus staff members and the SDMC. Additional expenditures for costs such as debt service and interest are added when the district wide preliminary budget is compiled.

The budgeting of campus allocations, exclusive of legal mandates, is at the discretion of each campus under the district’s site-based decision-making model. As such, campus budgeting begins with the identification of a school’s goals and objectives by the school’s resource planning group or equivalent (e.g., the School Improvement Team) as a first step in the campus budget development process. These goals and objectives should be driven by the educational needs of the campus (i.e., instruction and curriculum). In addition, the school’s goals and objectives should be developed in accordance with district-wide and long-term educational goals.

Once consensus is reached on these goals and objectives, current operations should be evaluated as to their effectiveness in achieving them. New programs may needed to be developed for the current year’s operations to attain goals and objectives that are not addressed by a school’s current programs. Programs should then be prioritized as to their effectiveness in attaining the developed goals and objectives. Finally, available resources should be allocated to each program or operation within the guidelines provided in the district’s handbook, Understanding the Budget Coding Process.

Budget submission is now accomplished electronically for both schools and departments. Budget units receive budget development packages that allow them to develop their budgets electronically and submit them through the intranet. An overall summary request is generated along with detailed line-by-line budget items. Also, descriptions of the mission and goals of the unit as well as detailed justification for the funds requests are included. During the submission process, there is a frequent review and consultation process with Budgeting and Financial Planning staff members regarding coding problems and other technical issues.

The preparation of capital budgets and other budgets occurs simultaneously with the development of the General Fund budget. The district updates its existing long-range plans for capital equipment, maintenance and improvements of facilities, and compliance activities and develops the budget accordingly. Capital Projects Fund budgets are developed by Construction Services with assistance from the Controller’s Office and the Budgeting & Financial Planning Department. Capital projects related to the Bond Program are developed and coordinated by the Bond Office with assistance from the Controller’s Office and the Budgeting & Financial Planning Department.

Identification of potential capital projects and capital needs of the district is a responsibility of direct reports to the Superintendent, department administrators, principals, and other staff as appropriate. Recommendations are annually forwarded to a committee consisting of the Superintendent and selected direct reports. This committee is charged with the responsibility of prioritizing the various project proposals according to district capital needs. The Capital Projects Committee also addresses certain recurring capital needs, such as school bus purchases and asbestos removal.

Capital projects budgets are developed on a multi-year basis and are updated annually. The capital budgeting process is coordinated with the development of the General Fund budget since it can have a significant impact on district daily operations. Administrators are charged with utilizing the least costly financing method for all capital projects. Capital budgets are monitored at least quarterly to ensure timely, efficient allocation of resources according to district policies and to prevent cost overruns. All capital construction and improvement projects are managed in accordance with state and federal requirements for school facilities as well as any local building codes and regulations.

Debt Service Funds are budgeted by the Controller’s Office and Budgeting and Financial Planning. Special Revenue Funds are budgeted by the participants in the programs and grants (usually schools) some central office departments and Budgeting. Food Service Funds budgets are created by the ARAMARK/HISD Food Services partnership and reviewed by the Controller’s Office.

Budget Review and Coordination

The Superintendent’s cabinet reviews budget increase requests and recommends overall prioritization of programs and activities.

• Review all central-office initiatives, activities, and general programs for possible elimination, combination with another department, decentralization, or restructuring, using the Program Review Advisory Team (PRAT) tool for evaluation
• Review and rank all new central-office recommendations for increased funding and elimination
• Rank all central-office requests for increases in the Capital Acquisition Program
• Submit ranked recommendations for increases and reductions to the Chief Financial Officer and the Superintendent of Schools
PRAT
The Program Review Advisory Team (PRAT) tool was designed to facilitate evaluation of district program effectiveness, to ultimately guide decisions about the continuation, expansion, or elimination of district programs, according to their impact on student outcomes. When justifying programs through the PRAT tool, program owners must report:

- Why the program is needed
- The academic need being met by the program
- The program’s alignment to district goals
- Impact of the program on student outcomes
- Populations of students served
- Program costs.

Program effectiveness was evaluated by the district’s Cabinet, according to the following seven criteria below:

Program Review Criteria
1. The program maintains a clear measurement for outcomes
2. The program supports teaching and learning
3. The program’s cost-to-service ratio is defensible
4. The program is operated on time and within budget
5. The program is necessary for the successful functioning of the district
6. The program’s service cannot be provided otherwise
7. The loss of the program would significantly impact a stakeholder group.

During the 2017 Budget Development Process, the PRAT tool was submitted for each district program. Cabinet leaders then reviewed each program according to the effectiveness criteria above. Programs that were determined to have minimal student impact were eliminated. The program review process accounted for roughly $7.6 million of the $95 million cuts the district made to address the FY2017 budget deficit due to Recapture, discussed in the Informational Section of this document, including the elimination of programs including:

- College visit programs involving relatively few students
- Tutoring services for the district’s dual credit program
- A field science program experiencing low utilization
- Several academic contracts that did not meet PRAT review criteria for student results.

Simultaneously, the district prioritized the expansion of social and emotional learning, through increased investments in a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program, deemed to be a significant student need, district and Board of Education priority in 2017.

Cabinet also reviews all department budget requests. Input from the various participants is used to determine the appropriateness of the submitted budgets (see 2016-2017 Budget Development Calendar).

Criteria for reviewing budget proposals, especially increase requests, include the degree of alignment with district-wide goals and objectives, priority status compared with other proposals, use of district resources for efficiency and effectiveness, the unit’s track record for operational performance, and the likelihood of success for particular initiatives and programs.

Final review and coordination of the annual budget is conducted in multiple public Board of Education workshops.

Budget Adoption
The compiled budgets for the district are submitted to the Superintendent for review before they are formally presented to the school board in early June as a recommended budget. The school board analyzes the documentation and conducts public hearings and workshops to get input from the community on district spending plans. After final revision and amendment, the board formally adopts the budget in June. Budgets are approved on a fund-by-fund basis. The district can make amendments to the budget at any time during the year; however, amendments changing functional expenditure categories or revenue object accounts (as defined in the Texas Education Agency’s Financial Accountability System Resource Guide) must be approved by the Board of Education.

Budget Implementation
Implementation of the budget involves the procedural and technical processes that must occur for the proper expenditure and recording of the various funds in the budget.

Personnel Controls and Approvals
The management of positions in HISD is an integral part of the budgeting process since approximately 72 percent of the general fund budget is comprised of salary and benefit costs. Schools have some flexibility with respect to opening, closing, and/or changing positions within a balanced budget. New central office positions are normally requested as part of the recommended budget for the new year. New administrator positions must be requested by the department head or project/program director and be approved by the Central Budget Committee, Superintendent and the Board of Education. New school positions must be approved by the principal or director.
**Encumbrance Control**
Encumbrance accounting, the system under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for the expenditure of funds are recognized in the accounting system in order to reserve the portion of the applicable appropriation, is employed in the Governmental Fund types. Encumbrances that have not been liquidated are reported as reservations of fund balance since they do not constitute expenditures or liabilities. District policy requires that such amounts be re-appropriated in the following fiscal year.

**Auditing**
Tests are conducted to determine the adequacy of the internal control structure of the district and the effectiveness and efficiency of expenditures as well as for compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Examples of the types of audits performed include Internal Control Reviews, Expenditure and Revenue Audits, Account Balance Audits, Contract Audits, Systems Documentation, and Compliance Reviews.

**Procurement**
Procurement procedures and guidelines are developed and monitored to ensure purchasing and contracting compliance with all applicable statutory and legal requirements, Board of Education policy, good purchasing practice, and adherence to ethical standards. Also, the district seeks to improve participation by historically under utilized businesses. Specific policies and procedures related to procurement can be found in the Finance Procedures Manual, section 1300.

**Budget Account Transfers**
Transfer of campus discretionary funds requires principal approval for schools, and direct report or department head approval for central office budgets. The district restricts transfers between funds (or business areas) and within Special Revenue funds based on each particular grant’s requirements. Transfers can be made between functions within the same fund (business area), and transfers can be made between objects within the same fund or business area. For more detailed information, consult the Finance Procedures Manual, section 500 located on the District’s Website.

**Budget Amendments**
Budget amendments are handled in basically the same fashion as a budget transfer request. Approval is required by the principal for schools and by the appropriate direct report or department head for central office amendments.

**Reporting System**
HISD implemented the SAP (Systems Applications and Products) finance and accounting operation and control system in 1998, to further the automation of financial transactions, reduce transaction processing time and costs, and provide more timely, accurate information regarding those transactions. The information provided by the SAP system is designed to assist administrators in monitoring the financial condition of the district and evaluating the fiscal performance of the various budget units. Examples of information provided by SAP, include reports detailing the original annual budget allocations for schools and departments, the available budgets of all units, dynamic comparison of allocations to actual expenditures, purchase orders processed, but not yet received, records of fixed assets and inventories and budget transfers.

A Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is prepared to report the detailed results of district operations, and it includes statements and reports such as balance sheets for all funds, statements of revenue and expenditures, detailed explanation of different funds by function and major object, as well as miscellaneous statistical data in accordance with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

**Budget Monitoring**
As budgeted funds are expended, periodic monitoring of the budget is conducted in accordance with responsible accounting as well as applicable laws and regulations. Each level of the district’s organization is responsible for monitoring those budget items for which it is responsible. As the budget is prepared, spending plans are developed for use in budget monitoring. For example, as a principal and other resource planning group members develop a campus budget, the timing of planned expenditures is noted and documented. Thus, a principal and other district administrators have a tool to monitor expenditures during the fiscal year. The district accounting system normally generates expenditure and encumbrance information on a monthly basis. To review budget performance, this information is compared with campus spending plans by principals. Principals may in fact monitor budgetary performance on a transaction-by-transaction basis through access to the district’s computerized accounting system, SAP. The HISD budget must also be submitted to TEA via the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) transmission process. TEA monitors for compliance at the district level only. This monitoring is a legal requirement to ensure mandatory expenditure levels in certain areas.

Similarly, district administrators monitor the entire district budget. The Chief Financial Officer and other district administrators use similar expenditure and encumbrance reports to monitor the budget compliance of programs and funds. Performance monitoring of the budget is also conducted regularly. This includes such items as comparing the planned
effectiveness of educational programs with actual student achievement results, reviewing a particular department’s effectiveness at using allocated resources to achieve specified results, and reviewing a school or department budget against standard ratios to monitor unusual expenditure patterns. This information is then periodically conveyed to the Board of Education, keeping the board apprised of issues that might affect the district’s performance.

Evaluation

The last step in the budget process is evaluation, where performance data gathered in the monitoring phase are assembled and evaluated to determine individual units as well as overall-district performance for the fiscal year. This is usually accomplished in the summer as the budget for the next fiscal year is being developed. As the strategic management and planning methodology becomes more ingrained into HISD’s culture, the performance data gathered will become more detailed and better aimed at the programs and processes that are most significant to the overall operational performance and will allow a better view of organizational performance over time. The results of the evaluation phase in the budgeting cycle, output directly into the planning phase for the next budget year.

The three main areas of evaluation include schools and programs, stakeholder satisfaction, and budgetary performance. Schools and programs are evaluated for student achievement using such tools and measures as STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) tests, the Stanford 10 norm-referenced exams, attendance rates, drop-out and graduation rates, SAT and ACT test results, etc. Stakeholder satisfaction is measured through questionnaires, survey instruments, and indirect measures such as voter approval rates of bond elections, etc. Budgetary performance evaluation includes measures such as budget-to-actual or budget-to-projected actual comparisons of revenue, expenditures, cash flow, fund balance, and staffing levels.

Periodic evaluation or performance reports are issued to inform both district officials and the public of campus and district performance. The annual budget document will continue to serve as a primary vehicle for delivering evaluation results of the previous fiscal year and illustrating the underlying reasons for new budget allocations.

2016-2017 Budget Process

Central Budget Committee for the 2016-2017 Budget

The Superintendent’s cabinet will review and rank all central office budget recommendations, including requests for increased funding. The Cabinet’s responsibilities include the following:

• Review all central-office initiatives, activities, and general programs for possible elimination, combination with another department, decentralization, or restructuring
• Review and rank all new central-office recommendations for increased funding
• Rank all central-office requests for increases in the Capital Acquisition Program
• Submit ranked recommendations for increases to the Chief Financial Officer and the Superintendent of Schools

School-Based Budget Development Process

For 2016-2017, principals will be responsible for taking into consideration recommendations from their school’s PTA/PTO, employee representatives, their school community, business partners, and the school’s Shared Decision-Making Committee.

The district has formulated a school-budgeting process that includes a weighted per-pupil allocation formula based on state student weights.

• Grade Level Allocation
• Adjustments—Provides an adjustment for enrollment increases or decreases in the next school year, based on the school projections.
• Special Population—G/T, CATE, At-Risk, Multilingual, Homeless, and Refugee students receive additional weight in the resource allocation.
• Enrollment adjusted for 100 percent ADA (Average Daily Attendance)
Overview of Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM)

The basic premise of Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) is that the most effective decisions are made by those who actually implement the decisions. The belief is that people involved at the campus level have a greater opportunity to identify problems, and develop problem-resolution and change strategy, than people located off-campus. Site-Based Decision-Making concepts also recognize that people at the campus level are more likely to internalize change and to support its implementation if they are involved in decision-making, than if they were not.

The objective of site-based decision-making is to improve student performance and to enhance accountability. Each campus should have the freedom to set its own educational objectives, consistently aligned with the district’s goals.

Site-Based Decision-Making Initiative

Site-based decision-making implementation has been mandated for all Texas school districts since 1992. Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 11, Subchapter F, District-level and Site-Based Decision Making, discusses SBDM in broad terms, listing the responsibilities of the local school board; required components of district and campus improvement plans; public meetings; membership categories; needs assessments; responsibilities of committee members; and other important instructional considerations.

The expected outcome of site-based decision-making is improved student performance as a result of:

- Effective campus and school district planning for the purpose of improved student performance
- Improved community involvement in the school improvement process
- Clearly established accountability parameters for student performance
- Increased staff productivity and satisfaction
- Improved communication and information flow
- Consensus-based, decision-making
- Pervasive and long-range commitment to implementation
- Increased flexibility at campus level, in the allocation and use of both human and fiscal resources
- Coordination of “regular” and special program or service components

The implementation process for site-based decision-making occurs at two levels—district and campus. To implement the process at the district level, administration should consider the following critical success factors:

- Support of both the School Board and the Superintendent as Site-Based Decision-Making requires a fundamental change in decision-making;
- Extensive and continuous training prior to and during implementation within the school district. Training should include, but not be limited to, developing skills on consensus building, brainstorming, problem solving, managing change and interpersonal communication skills such as conflict resolution, value clarification, and negotiation;
- Budget shifts will be performed by objective instead of the historical method of formulas. Therefore, a large part of the responsibility for budgeting will be transferred to the campus level.
- An extensive amount of time will be spent changing role definitions, training school district staff, educating the community, establishing objectives, developing and implementing programs and monitoring program success;
- Extensive and accurate information must be provided to the campuses so that they may establish objectives.
and develop and implement programs to meet those objectives;

- Systematic communication is necessary as Site-Based Decision-Making is an inclusive process that involves school staff, parents and community members;
- Site-Based Decision-Making strives to decentralize decisions to the campus level and solicits the input of the following stakeholders in the decision-making process:
  - Board members to evaluate the performance of the school district’s Site-Based Decision-Making plan
  - Chief School Officers and other administrators to develop and implement Site-Based Decision-Making across the school district;
  - Central Office staff to provide support services to both the board members and schools in Site-Based Decision-Making initiatives;
  - Principals to develop their respective school’s Site-Based Decision-Making policies and procedures as well as its campus improvement plan; and
  - Teachers, parents, students and community representatives to provide input for their respective school’s Site-Based Decision-Making policies and procedures and campus improvement plan.

**February 2016**

Campus administrators were instructed to:

- Inform their Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC) about their respective school’s budget development; and
- Utilize information received from their SDMC on how resources are to be allocated to build the campus budget.

School allocations were released along with written instructions on how to turn in SDMC meeting minutes with signatures and/or rosters.

**March 2016**

All schools held planning meetings with their Shared Decision-Making Committees and provided the necessary documentation to the Office of School Administration.

**Overview of District Advisory Committee (DAC)**

The District Advisory Committee solicits input that focuses on district-wide issues concerning planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization, from parents, staff, and the community.

Under state statute, the planning and decision-making process is presented as an integrated process (TEC 11.251). Planning is one of six specific decision-making areas in which the district and the District Advisory Committee are involved with in accordance with HISD procedures. The other five areas include budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. It is expected that the District Advisory Committee will address the six decision-making areas as interrelated factors that contribute in a coordinated manner toward accomplishing school improvement efforts.

The Superintendent has designated the General Manager of Budgeting and Financial Planning to be the liaison to the District Advisory Committee. Monthly update meetings are held and input from the District Advisory Committee is sought.

The General Manager of Budgeting and Financial Planning is also charged with providing the community stakeholders information pertaining to budget development. Also, stakeholders are advised on how they can participate and are encouraged to participate in the process. Various media are used to provide information to the stakeholders, such as, e-mail, presentations, and workshops. The community stakeholders range from the Greater Houston Partnership, MALDEF, Chamber of Commerce, Houston Chronicle Editorial Board, and various other organizations.
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