



# IN THE NEWS

## New Customer Service Initiative to Transform HISD

HISD's Business Operations department is rolling out a new customer service initiative that will transform the way the district connects with its customers.

The Business Operations department includes about 7,000 employees in the areas of transportation, police, Nutrition Services, construction and facilities services, and business assistance. The goal is to get all employees to work together to contribute to the business operation department's new service philosophy:

**"We improve lives and build trust by providing exceptional service that creates a safe and caring environment."**

That service philosophy was developed by the senior leadership on the business operations team, in conjunction with input from employees who work daily with HISD customers.

"We wanted our service philosophy to really answer the question of why we do things here at HISD," said HISD Chief Operating Office Leo Bobadilla. "We already know the importance of the work we do here, and this statement helps explain the profound impact of our employees, especially on students and staff."

To help implement the new service philosophy, trainings are being held for both managers and employees.

One training for managers was already held on April 14-15, and another is scheduled for May. Over the summer, eight groups of employees also will be meeting to develop strategies to implement the service philosophy, track its effectiveness, and raise awareness about it among all employees.

"It's one thing to develop a mission statement and another to implement it," Bobadilla said. To help employees understand how they can help promote the service philosophy, the business operations team has identified four key behaviors: Safe, Courteous, Responsive and Efficient.

"If everyone works in a way that is safe, courteous, responsive and efficient, we'll go a long way to making sure our service philosophy is part of our work culture here at HISD," Bobadilla said.

HISD Nutrition Services employee Polly Mendoza has already embraced service excellence in her approach to managing the cafeteria at Reagan High School.

"The most important thing of the day is trying to get everything ready for [the] children when they come to the line," says Mendoza in a video showcasing great customer service. "If a child comes to my line and tells me, 'My hamburger was hard,' if I can ... give them another one to satisfy my customer, I'm going to do it."

Across the business operations department, other employees are also working hard every day to ensure staff and students have what they need to teach and learn.

"They hold me personally responsible for maintaining [the] schools, and I take it to heart," HISD's Maintenance Team Leader James Perkins says in the video. "It all boils back down to giving that teacher and principal a nice, clean, safe place to educate at the end of the day."

For HISD bus driver Vivian Ivory, nothing is more important than keeping her students safe, so they can get to school and learn. She enjoys connecting with her students by learning their names and asking them about their day.

"These children are my life, and they are mine. I want to know who they are so that I can protect them at all costs," Ivory says in the video. "When I start my bus in the morning, I think about safety. I put safety first."

Bobadilla said it's important to remember that service excellence is about trying to maximize the positive impact employees can have on their customers.

"By embracing this approach, we will be ready to transform our Business Operations team into a model for the rest of the district."



# IN THE NEWS

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## HISD's Business Operations Developing New Customer Service Initiative

HISD's Business Operations Department is hard at work behind the scenes on its new customer service initiative, which is geared to maximize the positive impact district employees can have on their customers.

Over the past several months, the department has hosted Service Excellence training workshops for both managers and employees. During the sessions, employees learn key elements that affect the customer service experience and tools to improve the experience through the eyes of students, parents, teachers, administrators and the greater HISD community of businesses and neighborhoods.

HISD Business Operations Senior Business Analyst Priscilla Martinez said the sessions are beneficial because all the workshop activities relate back to real life, work situations.

"A lot of the positive feedback has been about the interaction," Martinez said. "Employees come up to us at the end of trainings telling us how much they enjoyed this workshop because it's different. We have group activities which are relevant and fun."

Business Operations includes about 7,000 employees in the areas of transportation, police, nutrition services, construction and facility services, and business assistance. The purpose of Service Excellence is to create a culture of service excellence by having all HISD employees work together to uphold the department's service philosophy:

**"We improve lives and build trust by providing exceptional service that creates a safe and caring environment."**

To help employees understand how they can help promote the service philosophy, the team has identified four key standards, which include behaving in a safe, courteous, responsive and efficient manner. The goal is to have all staff trained by the end of the 2014-2015 school year. Martinez credits a cadre of dedicated employee-trainers for helping to spread the message.

"The training is mandatory but because it is so important that we reach all 7,000 employees. So that by the end of the trainings we are all speaking the common language of Service Excellence," Martinez said. "Service Excellence is a culture change, and it will take time for everyone to adopt, but in the end we're looking to create a culture of service excellence."