

Houston is a city founded on bold, big ideas – where the journey to greatness begins with the belief that anything is possible.

Our future depends on the 203,354 students in HISD who begin each day with the promise of a complete education.

Join us in fulfilling this promise.

# BECOMING GREAT ALL OVER

Houston Independent School District



A Message From  
**Mike Lunceford**  
2012 Board of Education President

I am pleased to say that HISD made great strides in 2012. Our students continued to make significant academic progress and are thriving with a more challenging and rigorous curriculum. Graduation rates are up, and drop-out rates are down. In 2012, our graduates earned more than \$180 million in college scholarships – an all-time high for the district.

Houstonians showed tremendous support for our schools by approving [HISD's 2012 bond proposal](#), which will enable us to replace and repair 40 schools across the district, as well as provide substantial technology upgrades. I am proud that in 2012 [the board unanimously approved a suite of new ethics policies](#), which enabled us to renew our commitment to the highest ethical standards. As we begin to implement these new bond projects, HISD trustees remain committed to increasing transparency and to strengthening a culture of trust within the district.

Thank you for your continued support of HISD. We are grateful for your dedication to public education and to the children of our district.



A Message From  
**Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

The Houston Independent School District made great progress in 2012 along the road to Becoming Great All Over. Across our city's schools, we are seeing real evidence that more and more of Houston's children are achieving at levels that are necessary for them to succeed in college and to contribute to Houston's future economy.

Even as we demand more from our students, we are seeing thousands more earn their high school diplomas than we did just a few short years ago. More HISD graduates than ever are posting SAT exam scores that show they are ready to handle college work. Houston students have never earned as many college credits by passing tough Advanced Placement exams than they did in 2012. For the first time in a decade, HISD was among the [four national finalists for the ultimate honor in public education: The Broad Prize for Urban Education](#). In November, Houston voters approved a [school rebuilding plan that will benefit generations of this city's children](#).

We still have much work to do before we can claim victory in our pursuit of greatness in every Houston classroom. But thanks to you, we can proudly say today that HISD is Becoming Great All Over.



# 2012 Marked by Great Academic Progress, Passage of Historic Bond

The Houston Independent School District made history in 2012 with unprecedented academic gains and students taking – and passing – college entrance exams in record numbers. Leaders in education took notice, and HISD was named one of four national finalists for the most prestigious honor any school district can receive: the 2012 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Before the year ended, Houston voters approved the most ambitious school rebuilding project in Texas history. The \$1.89 billion bond will repair and replace 40 schools across the district, while upgrading safety and technology districtwide. Planning on the new and renovated campuses has already begun, and construction will start in 2014. When complete, HISD will boast the most modern portfolio of urban high school campuses in America.

Other highlights from 2012:

- › The number of college credits earned by HISD students on **Advanced Placement exams is up an amazing 45 percent** since 2009. That means HISD graduates are showing up on college campuses prepared to do the work. It also means lower tuition bills for families.
- › HISD's **dropout rate has steadily decreased**, while the graduation rate continues a strong, consistent upward trend. Today, HISD schools have roughly the same number of students as they did five years ago. While enrollment has remained unchanged, we now see 2,000 more students meet the state's tougher graduation requirements each year.
- › **More HISD seniors than ever are taking the SAT college entrance exam**, and record numbers are scoring high enough to be considered ready for college.
- › For the first time ever, HISD was **recognized by the child advocacy group Children at Risk** with the No. 1 elementary, middle, and high school – competing with 26 school districts plus charter schools. Out of the region's top 30 elementary, middle, and high schools, half were HISD schools.

To learn more about how HISD is Becoming Great All Over, visit [www.houstonisd.org/stateoftheschools](http://www.houstonisd.org/stateoftheschools).



## 2012 Board of Education

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**Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.**

*Superintendent of Schools*



## Strategic Direction Core Initiatives

1. Effective Teacher in Every Classroom
2. Effective Principal in Every School
3. Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports
4. Data-Driven Accountability
5. Culture of Trust Through Action



*The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation visited HISD classrooms in May 2012.*

## HISD among top urban districts

HISD won \$150,000 in college scholarships for high school seniors as a finalist for the 2012 Broad Prize for Urban Education. The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation applauded HISD's efforts to close the achievement gap and engage parents and teachers in reform efforts: "The progress you have made ... is what nearly every other large urban school system nationwide is trying to do."

## A vote of confidence: The 2012 bond

In November, voters approved the most ambitious school rebuilding project in Texas history by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

### Highlights:

- › Forty HISD campuses, including 29 high schools, will be built or renovated.
- › New classrooms will be designed to encourage team learning, and wireless access will be expanded across the district.
- › The 2012 Houston schools bond includes \$17.3 million for districtwide safety and security improvements



*A student at Walnut Bend Elementary School receives instruction from teacher Ernest Bainbridge. Photo by Dave Einsel*

## Challenging students to achieve academic greatness

The path to greatness begins with an unwavering belief that any dream can be realized for any child – no matter how many hurdles stand in the way.

Starting in elementary school, students are challenged and inspired to achieve academic greatness. In 2012, students at Walnut Bend Elementary [made history as they advanced in the Odyssey of the Mind problem-solving competition](#), finishing third and fourth place in the world finals. Across HISD, remarkable strides were made as the graduation rate reached a record high and the dropout rate hit an all-time low.

In 2012, HISD renewed its focus on Advanced Placement programs – requiring all schools to dramatically increase students' access to these tougher tests. As a result, the number of college credits earned by HISD students has increased 45 percent since 2009. [U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan applauded HISD's efforts](#): "We have to move to entire systems of excellence, not just pockets of excellence. ... That's what our country needs."



## A reason to reflect

“The new appraisal and development system allows a common language between teachers and appraisers when it comes to instructional practices and professional expectations. Although I have been a principal for quite some time, HISD’s Effective Teacher and Principal Initiatives have caused me to reflect on my leadership style and instructional focus.”

### Delesa O’Dell-Thomas

Delesa O’Dell-Thomas is principal of the Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy, where she encourages students to become leaders and pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) careers that were once dominated by males.



West University Elementary School teacher Sally Parish differentiates instruction in her fourth-grade classroom. Photo by Rony Canales

## Effective teaching – nothing matters more

Greatness comes from within, and it also comes from inspirational teachers.

That’s why HISD launched the Effective Teachers Initiative (ETI), a multi-year program devoted to ensuring an effective teacher is in every classroom. Teachers are the most powerful school-based factor in a student’s academic success or failure, and great teachers increase their students’ chances of attending college and earning higher salaries – and can change the trajectories of their students’ lives.

HISD also partners with local universities to provide pathways for HISD employees to pursue principal certification and advanced degrees. In 2012, 66 HISD leaders and future leaders attended classes and benefited from these partnerships.

The district is striving to ensure that each of its 203,354 students has great teachers and principals who prepare them to succeed in college and in the workplace.

# Celebrating effective teachers

Teachers of the Year for 2012 **Brian Gaston** (Hogg Middle School) and **Ashley Monteil** (Lyons Elementary School) believe a rigorous and consistent education is key to achieving greatness.



Asked about what motivates her, Monteil credited her parents. "They had a profound effect on my belief that the possibilities in life are infinite when you are equipped with a good education," she said. "For an educator, there is no greater accomplishment than giving hope and inspiration to a classroom of students who may not have anyone in their lives believing in them and encouraging them to set their own expectations high."



Gaston also cited his parents, saying their influence enabled him to be an effective teacher. "My parents were my biggest influence throughout my educational journey," he said. "When I was a student, they instilled into

me the value of knowledge, relationships, high expectations, and the will to grow myself intellectually. These are all vital elements that make up an effective teacher."



Teachers of the year Brian Gaston (Hogg Middle School) and Ashley Monteil (Lyons Elementary School) set high expectations for their students. Photos by Dave Einsel



## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2011-2012, educators received more than \$17.6 million in awards for effective teaching practices.



## Looking to the future

“The hands-on experiences and field trips I’ve experienced at Long Academy have solidified my ambition to go into the healthcare field. It’s a launching pad for me, showing me that if you work hard, the opportunities are endless.”

### Estanislado Sandoval

Estanislado Sandoval is a ninth-grader at Long Academy.



Students at Mount Carmel Academy are preparing for college and careers in high-demand industries. Photo by Rony Canales

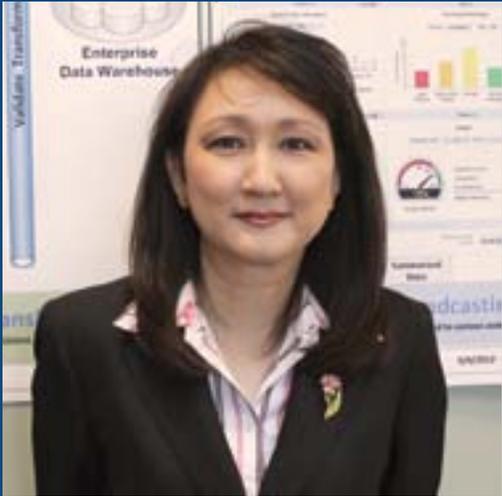
## A world of options

- Students enrolled in [HISD’s petroleum academies](#) can become oil and gas explorers.
- Students at Booker T. Washington High School are [working with scientists from NASA and MIT to explore](#) ways to create a sustainable living area for humans on Mars.
- [The maritime academies at Austin and Yates high schools](#) give students hands-on training in the maritime industry.

## Developing skills for college and today’s careers

What begins as a spark of interest can lead to a meaningful career, which is why HISD is developing a strong portfolio of career and technical education offerings. Every student is given the opportunity to learn real-world skills and explore their options, taking an individualized approach that plays to their strengths.

In 2012, [students from Mount Carmel Academy, one of HISD’s charter high schools, met with the U.S. Secretary of Labor to discuss](#) potential careers in health care, engineering, and technology. Students across the district are preparing for greatness. At six HISD high schools – Furr, Kashmere, Long, Scarborough, Sterling, and Booker T. Washington – [students can graduate with an associate’s degree and valuable industry credentials](#) that lead to rewarding careers in high-growth technical fields.



## Innovation puts data front and center

“After getting input from a focus group of principals, we designed the Principal’s Dashboard. Now, with a few clicks, a principal can access testing data and trends, absences, and specialized reports. We are one of the few school districts able to pull together this type of information, and it’s just one example of how we’re innovating to improve education for all of our children.”

### Dr. Leng Fritsche

Dr. Leng Fritsche is assistant superintendent of Information, Assessment & Analytics and a former math professor. Her department was established a year ago with the goal of supporting principals and teachers with timely access to useful data.



Carnegie Vanguard High School science teacher Jamie Scott (left) facilitates new learning experiences for students on the school’s Green Roof. Photo by Dave Einsele

## 2012 HISD Bond: Building 21st century schools

When you picture the classroom of the future, what do you see? HISD is tapping into the innovative spirit Houston is known for with collaborative, hands-on learning spaces in newly built campuses. At [Carnegie Vanguard High School](#), one of six campuses that opened at the start of the 2012-2013 school year, students learn about their world in an open-air classroom called the Green Roof.

As a result of the 2012 bond, 40 HISD campuses, including 29 of the city’s high schools, will be built or renovated to ensure that HISD students will have the resources necessary for a successful learning environment. New classrooms will be designed to encourage team learning, and wireless access will be expanded across the district. Additionally, the bond funds will include districtwide athletic, safety, and security improvements.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
HISD was awarded the 2012 Green Pioneer Award from the U.S. Green Building Council for its dedication to building sustainable schools.



In 2012, the City of Houston honored Rick Cruz with the Hispanic Heritage Award for his work with the EMERGE program.

## Aiming for the top

“Colleges want more HISD students. They know our students are capable, and they bring a rich, dynamic perspective to campus. High-achieving, low-income students need to understand that there are so many opportunities for them from Ivy League and top-tier universities.”

### Rick Cruz

Moreno ES Teacher Rick Cruz is the founder and executive director of the EMERGE Fellowship, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping bright and driven students from underserved communities attend Ivy League and top-tier universities.



At Fondren Middle School, Math Fellow Lyndel Butler brings 31 years of teaching experience to the table. Photo by Dave Einsel

## Apollo 20 achievement gains match top charter schools

All students deserve an opportunity to achieve greatness, and HISD is committed to not just narrowing, but eliminating, the achievement gap. Math Fellows play a key role in [Apollo 20](#), a bold initiative to transform public education in Houston and improve the academic achievement of all students. Hailed as one of the most important efforts going on in the country today to increase performance and close the achievement gap, the program has demonstrated academic gains that are on par with those achieved in the nation's most successful charter schools.

Other schools in HISD are adopting some of these practices to improve achievement at their campuses. In 2012, HISD students matched or beat the average scores posted by students across the nation on the Stanford and Aprenda exams in reading, math, science, and language.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Since 2010, the HISD Foundation has raised more than \$16.8 million for the Apollo 20 program.



## Rounding up support

Generations of HISD students have benefited from the generosity of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. That has never been more true than in 2012, when the Show awarded scholarships to 103 HISD graduates worth \$1,648,000.

In 2012, the Show raised its pledge to the Apollo 20 school turnaround program to \$2 million. The Show's support of Apollo 20 has helped HISD provide intensive tutoring for students attending schools that have a long history of academic struggles, but are now showing real signs of progress.

The Show is also a generous supporter of HISD's reading initiative, donating \$500,000 to help Houston teachers reach the goal of having every student reading at or above grade level. The Houston Independent School District is grateful to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for its consistent support of our city's children.



Students at the annual HISD Back-to-School Fest receive supplies for the upcoming school year. Photo by Rony Canales

## Houston community meeting students' needs

It takes a community to help students succeed in life, and there is no greater satisfaction than giving to those in need.

In HISD, 80 percent of students are considered economically disadvantaged. But the Houston community is not one to back down from a challenge – businesses, organizations, and individuals are determined to unite students with the resources they need to help them reach their full potential. In August, [more than 25,000 HISD students and their families started the new school year](#) more prepared after receiving backpacks, school supplies, uniforms, vaccinations, and other services at the annual Back-to-School Fest.

Individual volunteers and organizations are vital to the success of HISD students, and HISD has hundreds of generous community partners who show a continuous commitment to helping Houston's children. Throughout the year, community partners also provide students with unique opportunities that will prepare them for the workforce.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
In 2012,  
more than 9,000  
laptops were  
purchased to boost  
students' literacy  
proficiency.



## Learning from other amazing teachers

“I see amazing teachers, and I’ve had amazing teachers all throughout my life and career. I try to copy the best things I’ve seen, incorporate them into what I do, and always put my students in the forefront of my planning. Ultimately, everything I do, writing lesson plans, grading papers, picking up trash around my room at the end of the day, all of this is for the benefit of my students.”

### Armando Orduña

HISD teacher Armando Orduña was named a “White House “Champion of Change” for his work with Hispanic youth. Armando serves on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s national Teacher Advisory Council and is a faculty member at Austin High School’s teacher-preparation magnet program, the only magnet program of its kind in Houston.



Davis High School Principal Jaime Castañeda gives students letter jackets for outstanding academic performance. Photo by Dave Einsel

## Providing a high level of academic rigor in every school

You won’t just see purple at Davis High School. You’ll see academic greatness on proud display, worn on letter jackets awarded to high-performing students.

HISD is working to ensure that all students receive a rigorous education. Every high school in HISD offers at least 15 Advanced Placement courses. Two HISD high schools, Lamar and Bellaire, offer [International Baccalaureate Diploma Programs](#), comprised of academically challenging and advanced academic curriculum. That curriculum focuses on problem-solving and independent critical-thinking skills. Lamar’s IB Diploma program is the largest in Texas and one of the top 10 IB Diploma programs in the United States.

During the 2012-2013 school year, 56 HISD seniors were named semifinalists for the National Merit Scholarship program. Additionally, 21 HISD high schools earned recognition in the [Washington Post High School Challenge](#), a list of 1,800 schools representing the top 9 percent in the nation when it comes to preparing graduates for college.



Each day, about 875 HISD school buses travel 80,000 miles as they transport 30,000 students to and from school.

## Focus on safety

“HISD was recently recognized for its safety practices and received an exemplary assessment under the Larson Quality Award from the National Association for Pupil Transportation. All HISD bus drivers and attendants are now certified in first-aid training through the American Red Cross and they also participate in mock-disaster drills so that they are well-trained on how to respond to emergency situations. In addition, an annual anti-bullying awareness campaign includes training in recognizing bullying behaviors on the bus and successful intervention strategies.”

**Nathan Graf**  
HISD Transportation  
General Manager



Two students at the Pilgrim Academy visit with Lily, a Healing Species Dog of Character. Photo by Dave Einsel

## Character education program teaches respect, self worth

They can't talk, but these four-legged visitors send a clear message to all the students they meet: Be loyal, respect yourself, and respect others. [Healing Species Dogs of Character](#) travel to schools in HISD to teach students about respect, self worth, and the importance of persevering in the face of hardship.

Emotional and physical safety is a priority at all HISD schools, where students and teachers have taken a stand against bullying through character education programs and other initiatives. HISD also employs nearly 200 fully certified police officers, and every school performs safety drills and has an emergency preparedness plan in place. To improve bus safety, Transportation Services [upgraded camera systems on 400 HISD school buses](#). Newly installed exterior cameras on the right and left sides, as well as the rear, allow bus drivers a better view of traffic when students are boarding and exiting the bus.



## Parents drawn to Vanguard programs

“My husband and I both have Ph.D.’s in science, and we decided to send our daughter to an HISD school because of the quality of the academics. Looking at the curriculum, we realized she was going to get everything she needed in the Vanguard program. That was two years ago – and I have never regretted the choice we made. I look for ways I can contribute – such as serving as a science ambassador and teaching the students concepts based on real-world applications.”

**Imelda Johnson**  
Geoscientist



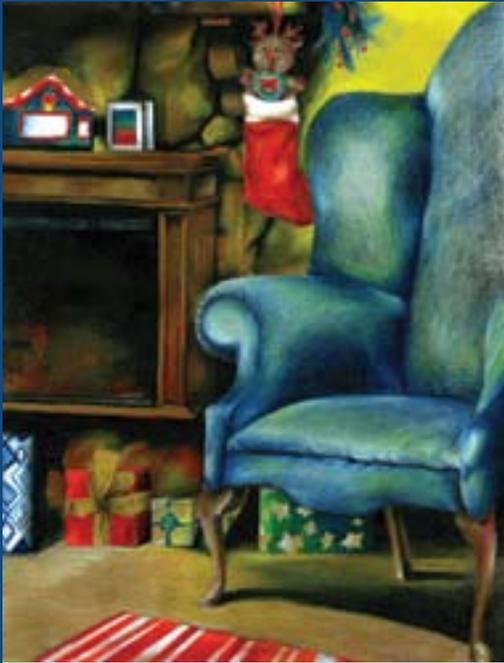
Students at East Early College are engaged during an interactive lesson. Photo by Dave Einsel

## Early college high schools help students get ahead

Students at HISD’s early college high schools get a jumpstart on their college careers by earning an associate’s degree through a dual-credit program with Houston Community College. The program provides a significant savings for families because students can earn up to two years of college credit for free.

HISD pioneered the early college high school concept in Texas when it launched the state’s first such campus (Challenge Early College High School) in the fall of 2003. Early college high schools are just one of the many educational options available to HISD students. Other offerings include dual-language; Montessori; International Baccalaureate; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); and dozens of magnet programs.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
East Early College High School and Project Chrysalis Middle School were named 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools.



## Celebrating creativity

Alexandra Lartigue, a student at the Sam Houston Math, Science, and Technology Center, created the artwork chosen for the 2012 HISD Holiday Greeting Card.



Students in Parker Elementary's fine arts program perform at a holiday concert. Photo by Dave Einsele

## Well-rounded education fosters student talent

Greatness isn't measured by a singular benchmark. It's measured by the richness of experience, imagination, and knowledge gained through a well-rounded education that includes fine arts, debate, and other opportunities to develop critical thinking skills.

HISD is a district of choice, [with more than 100 magnet programs providing diverse opportunities to learn](#). A magnet curriculum is 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.

At schools like [Parker Elementary, a music magnet](#), students as young as 5 years old can learn to play an instrument while achieving at high levels academically.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
**More than 111,000 elementary and middle school students receive breakfast every day through HISD's First Class Breakfast program.**



## College success begins at HISD

“ My time at HISD exposed me to extraordinary people. The college and career planning department at Scarborough High School provided me with many scholarship and university touring opportunities that opened many doors to me. I was able to have a head start on college life and experience rigorous college courses. ”

**Brittini Harris, Scarborough High School Class of 2009**

Brittini Harris plans to attend law school at the University of Texas after earning a degree in criminal justice from Wiley College. While attending Scarborough, Brittini earned 16 hours of college credit through Advanced Placement and dual-credit enrollment courses. She also earned Wiley College's Presidential Scholarship, which covered the full cost of tuition, books, and room and board for four years.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Scholarship offers to HISD graduates hit a record high of \$180 million in 2012, compared to \$51.4 million in 2009.

# BECOMING GREAT ALL OVER





# Fiscal Responsibility

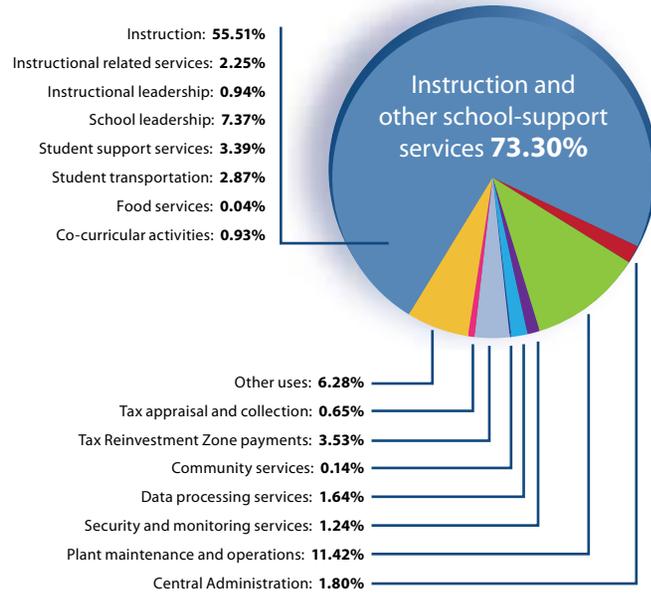
The Houston Independent School District has maintained the highest possible bond rating and the lowest property tax rate of the two dozen school districts in Harris County. At the same time, HISD has gained a national reputation for excellence in public school financial accountability.

## EXPENDITURES (General Fund)

Instruction	\$830,060,754
Instructional related services	33,678,024
Instructional leadership	14,067,402
School leadership	110,115,488
Student support services	50,663,944
Student transportation	42,867,338
Food services	581,427
Co-curricular activities	13,900,181
Central administration	26,854,596
Plant maintenance and operations	170,741,024
Security and monitoring services	18,603,259
Data processing services	24,487,550
Community services	2,084,277
Tax Reinvestment Zone payments	52,834,027
Tax appraisal and collection	9,775,757
Other uses	93,965,384
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,495,280,432</b>

## REVENUES (General Fund)

Local tax	\$1,044,127,686
Other local	20,670,943
State sources	431,238,072
Federal sources	5,700,141
Other sources	63,323,064
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$1,565,059,906</b>



**Chart:** Total expenditures for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2012 were \$1,495,280,432, with instruction and school-support services accounting for 73.30% of the total.

# BECOMING GREAT ALL OVER

## Highlights

- Largest school district in Texas
- Highest school district bond rating in Texas
- Lowest property tax rate in Harris County
- 203,354 students
- 276 schools
- Graduation rate is at an all-time high of 78.5 percent.
- Dropout rate is at an all-time low of 11.8 percent.
- Scholarship dollars offered to HISD seniors have more than tripled, from \$51.4 million in 2009 to \$180 million in 2012.
- The number of students scoring 3 or higher on Advanced Placement exams has increased by 45 percent since 2009, from 4,915 to 7,106.
- HISD was one of four school districts in America to be named a finalist for the prestigious 2012 Broad Prize for Urban Education. HISD received high marks for its progress in narrowing the achievement gap.
- Voters in 2012 approved a \$1.89 billion school construction bond – the largest in the history of Texas – by an amazing 69 percent margin.
- HISD's Apollo 20 school turnaround program has received state and national recognition.

## Stay Connected to HISD



HISD's weekly e-newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. To subscribe to eNews, go to [houstonisd.org/subscribe](http://houstonisd.org/subscribe)



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