

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## **HISD expands student access to mental health supports**

*Sept. 13, 2019* – Houston Independent School District Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan and community partners announced today the expansion of mental health and social-emotional supports for students as part of the district’s strategic priorities for the 2019-2020 academic year.

The expanded mental health supports aim to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of hundreds of students at 15 campuses who will have direct access to school administrators trained in trauma, crisis, abuse, and suicide prevention.

“We are firmly committed to supporting the needs of the whole child,” Lathan said. “We must ensure that all children have access to the mental health supports and interventions they may require. Social and emotional learning, anti-bullying, and crisis intervention efforts are a priority in HISD. This work will improve and potentially save lives.”

Schools participating in the initiative include Dogan, Hartsfield, and Rucker elementary schools; Attucks, Fleming, Holland, M.C. Williams, Sugar Grove, and Thomas middle schools; Liberty, Madison, Washington, Westside, Wisdom, and Yates high schools.

“We selected campuses for this initiative after analyzing data and identifying areas where additional social and emotional supports are needed,” said HISD Director of Social and Emotional Learning Roberta Scott. “As more children are exposed to traumatic events, such as Hurricane Harvey, we must address their non-academic needs to support their success in the classroom.”

Community partners in the initiative include LyondellBasell, Sewa International, WE, CapCityKids, The University of Houston, and The Menninger Clinic. LyondellBasell, the lead sponsor of the initiative, applauded the district’s work to expand mental health services.

“The stigma around mental health must be addressed and social-emotional support is equally as important, which is why we applaud Houston ISD and the HISD Foundation for taking action to expand the resources and tools students need,” said Kimberly Windon, LyondellBasell Director Global External Communications. “LyondellBasell is proud to support this program. It is our aim to advance the future we all know is possible, and it starts with our children.”

In addition, the HISD Foundation will sponsor a series of training sessions for HISD counselors, social workers, wraparound specialists, administrators, and educators to further develop the skills and capacity to support student mental health needs on campus. Training sessions will be led by industry experts.

On Friday, September 13 nearly 300 HISD students participated in a Mental Health Youth Summit sponsored by LyondellBasell and hosted by WE. HISD and WE partnered to deliver the WE Well-being program, where students received tools and resources to support peers at their respective campuses. Students engaged in activities, workshops, and conversations about promoting mental health and wellness in schools, families, and communities.

This initiative is part of the district's strategic priority to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of students. For more information on HISD's social and emotional resources for students, visit [HoustonISD.org/SEL](https://HoustonISD.org/SEL).

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The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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