



FALCON NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020 - VOLUME 20, ISSUE 1

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Rice School Parents & Guardians.

With the health and safety of students, families, and staff as the top priority, all HISD students will begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually on September 8, 2020. Virtual instruction for all students will continue for six weeks through Friday, October 16, 2020. On Monday, October 19, 2020, face-to-face instruction for students will begin. This date is subject to change based on COVID-19 conditions across the City of Houston and guidance from local, state, and federal health officials. I hope all of our Rice School Families are doing well. We look forward to the start of a new school year!

Principal Hobbs

THE RICE SCHOOL VIRTUAL MEET THE TEACHER

Grade Levels	Date	Time
Kindergarten, 1st, & 2nd	September 1st	4:00 to 6:00 pm
3rd, 4th, & 5th	September 2nd	4:00 to 6:00 pm
6th, 7th, & 8th	September 3rd	4:00 to 6:00 pm

TAKE THE COURSE: "PARENT INTRODUCTION TO VIRTUAL LEARNING"

This school year, your child will begin school with virtual learning. This will allow HISD students to continue their education while HISD continues to monitor conditions across the district and make adjustments as necessary to ensure the health and safety of all students. During virtual learning, parents and students will be able to use HISD @ H.O.M.E. and district platforms to access instructional supports and resources.

The transition to virtual learning can present various challenges for families. To ensure parents and guardians are better informed, this course is designed to provide an introduction to virtual learning and guidance to support your student's virtual learning experience.

Take the Course: "Parent Introduction to Virtual Learning" (<https://www.houstonisd.org/ParentCourse>)

CAMP SPARK

We are inviting all our Rice School students to participate in HISD's **Camp Spark** which will be held Aug. 24 through Sept. 4, and is free of charge for all HISD students in pre-K through 12th grade.

The HISD Academics Department is hosting this virtual interactive Academic Enrichment Camp designed to provide

students with enrichment leading up to the first day of the 2020-21 school year while reinforcing academic skills.

Students will participate in interactive engaging activities in science, math, literacy, technology, and art.

Elementary:

- Virtual field trips
- Interactive literacy, math, science, and technology activities

Secondary:

- Interactive activities on navigating the HUB, Microsoft, and Google
- SAT prep, college admissions, financial aid, and scholarship preparation

As part of Camp Spark, the academics team has also created the "Attend to Win" program. Students who participate daily will have the chance to win gift cards and a Bluetooth Boombox.

To register for Camp Spark visit the [registration page](https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/182867) at (<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/182867>).

REOPENING TIMELINE FALL 2020

September 8, 2020	First day of school (all students virtual)
October 19, 2020	Face-to-face instruction begins*
September 8, 2020	January 29, 2021 - First semester of virtual learning for students/parents who choose online instruction.
*Parents will have the option to choose online instruction for the fall semester (through January 29) or entire school year (through June 11). Read more about this process here (https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/182556)	

Starting on August 24, parents will receive a phone call from the district, asking them to indicate their choice for the 2020-2021 school year. Parents will be asked to select one of the following options:

- Option 1: On-Campus Learning
- Option 2: Virtual Learning

After each six-week grading period, parents may change their selection. Teachers will report to work virtually on Monday, August 24. All other district employees will continue to work virtually and will be notified by their direct supervisor regarding the date they will be expected to return to the office.

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PARENT UNIVERSITY TO KICK OFF THIRD YEAR WITH VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

The Houston Independent School District will kick off its third year of Parent University on Tuesday, Sept. 15 with the first of six virtual workshops.

The workshops will connect parents and children to resources offered by the district to create successful academic careers as well as safe and healthy environments at home and at school.

The theme of the first session is “2020-2021 School Year 101” and will focus on the district’s “Reconnect Safely, Return Strong” reopening plan. After the September session, Parent University virtual workshops will take place on a monthly basis:

- Tuesday, Oct. 20 – Family Engagement
- Tuesday, Nov. 17 – Digital Citizenship
- Tuesday, Jan. 19 – School Level(s) Transition
- Tuesday, Feb. 16 – Non-Academic Supports Offered in HISD
- Tuesday, April 20 – Supporting Your Child’s Social and Emotional Needs

All HISD families are encouraged to attend. A variety of community resources will be available for parents, and Spanish interpretation will be offered. Registration and more information for each event can be found at [HoustonISD.org/ParentUniversity](https://www.houstonisd.org/ParentUniversity).

HISD LAUNCHES ‘LET’S STAY CONNECTED’ MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The Houston Independent School District has announced the launch of Let’s Stay Connected, a mental health hotline for students and parents to provide emotional, social, and psychological support to students and parents who feel the need for assistance.

Students and parents may call the Let’s Stay Connected Hotline at 713-556-1340 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Trained staff from HISD’s Social and Emotional Learning Department are available to offer counseling, mental health education, and make referrals in English and Spanish.

“One of the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis we have seen is an increase in the need for mental health support among our students and parents,” Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “May is Mental Health Awareness Month so what better time to launch our hotline to address families’ needs in a way that is easily accessible and at no cost to them.”

Callers to the hotline may remain anonymous.

All HISD staff members are reminded they have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which may be reached by calling 833-812-5181 and is offered at no cost to employees.

HISD NO-COST SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM

ATTENTION: When the Houston Independent School District reopens its curbside summer meals program on Monday, July 20, it will do so with 12 sites strategically located throughout the city.

Seven of those locations will be operated in partnership with the Houston Food Bank, allowing families to pick up several days’ worth of student meals as well as packages of produce – and other food items when available – for families.

HISD Nutrition Services previously operated several dozen smaller sites but streamlined operations to maximize resources in areas with the most need and reduce the staff needed on-site as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the city.

Sites will continue to be open on Mondays and Thursdays through Monday, Aug. 31.

For more information, go to HISD Nutrition Services <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/147368>

HISD @ H.O.M.E.

The HISD @ H.O.M.E. Hotline – 713-556-INFO (4636) will be available Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The HISD @ H.O.M.E. Webinars: You can rewatch all Parent and Student webinars at the following page: <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/180154>