

HISD PRESS RELEASE

Four new HISD trustees to be sworn in ahead of regular Board of Education meeting

Board to elect new officers and consider expansion of after-school programs

Jan. 15, 2020 – Four newly elected Houston Independent School District Board of Education members will join five current trustees Thursday for the board’s regular monthly meeting, which will be preceded by a swearing-in ceremony.

The swearing-in ceremony begins at 1 p.m. on Thursday, January 16, followed by the board’s regular January meeting at 5 p.m., in which new officers will be elected. Both events will take place in the Manuel Rodríguez Jr. Board Auditorium of the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 W. 18th St., 77092. Click [here](#) to view the full agenda.

Newly elected board members will join current members Elizabeth Santos (District I), Susan Deigaard (District V), Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca (District VI), Anne Sung (District VII), and Wanda Adams (District IX). They are:

Kathy Blueford-Daniels (District II)

Kathy Blueford-Daniels is a lifelong Houstonian who attended HISD’s Dogan Elementary, Fleming Middle and Wheatley High schools. She studied nursing at Houston Community College, and accounting/bookkeeping at Massey Business College before beginning a 28-year career with the U.S. Postal Service. She retired in 2008. Blueford-Daniels is currently employed as community liaison for state Sen. Borris L. Miles. She founded Black, Latino, Asian, Caucasian Mourners of Murder (BLAC MoM) to serve as a support group after the 2006 slaying of her 20-year-old son in a case of mistaken identity. She organized “Young Soldiers Marching for Christ,” establishing youth and young-adult drill teams to take a stand against violence and to encourage self-discipline and positive engagement. Blueford-Daniels is married to her best friend, Joe Daniels, and has one daughter, three grandchildren, and a blended family including a stepdaughter, stepson, and three grandchildren.

Daniela “Dani” Hernandez (District III)

Daniela “Dani” Hernandez is a native of Houston’s East End and attended HISD schools. She is the daughter of immigrants, and a first-generation graduate from both high school and college. She earned her bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Boston University in 2011 and returned to Houston to be a bilingual teacher at the same elementary school she attended as a child. Hernandez went on to earn a master’s degree in Educational Leadership from the University of St. Thomas. She then became an administrator in HISD and remained with the district for six years before becoming a real-estate agent with Keller-Williams. Hernandez is a community advocate for eliminating educational inequities and closing the achievement gap between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. She believes all students must be held to

high expectations, so they can graduate ready for college, career, or military service, and have the best possible opportunity to succeed in life.

Patricia K. Allen (District IV)

Patricia K. Allen is a third-generation career educator who retired in 2015 after working for HISD for 35 years, most recently as principal of MacGregor Elementary School. Under her guidance, the school earned a “Met Standard” rating from the state and five of six state distinctions. Previously, she worked in the district as a magnet coordinator, teacher trainer, and classroom teacher at MacGregor, Thompson, and Lockhart elementary schools. As business liaison at MacGregor Elementary School, Allen began and/or fostered relationships with the Houston Rockets, PricewaterhouseCoopers, the Judson Robinson Community Center, First Presbyterian Church, St. Paul’s Church, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Recipe for Success. Allen is a graduate of Madison High School. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Houston as well as a master’s degree in Education and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction.

Judith Cruz (District VIII)

Judith Cruz is a native Texan who has lived in Houston for more than 15 years. Her mother is from Guatemala, and she grew up in a bilingual, Spanish-speaking home. Cruz received a Bachelor of Arts in Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction, Bilingual Special Education from George Washington University. Cruz has over 20 years of experience as an educator and volunteer in public schools. She taught at Lee High School (now Wisdom) in HISD and was part of the team that created Liberty High School in the Gulfton area, where she was a founding teacher. Cruz is a Teach for America alumna and has served on multiple HISD committees, including the Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Committee. She co-founded and was president of the parent/teacher association at her neighborhood school, Lantrip Elementary. Most recently, Cruz worked at DiscoverU, a Houston nonprofit whose mission is to broaden the world view of underserved youth through experiential learning activities. Cruz currently resides in District VIII in Eastwood with her husband and three sons, who attend HISD schools.

In addition, at the first meeting of the new board, trustees will consider acceptance of a \$240,000 City of Houston-Mayor’s After-School Achievement Program grant to expand quality after-school programming for elementary and middle school students. Also, board members will hear a progress report on implementing Legislative Budget Board recommendations in the district.

The board meeting will be broadcast live online at www.hisd.tv and on HISD TV (Xfinity channel 18 or AT&T U-verse Channel 99).

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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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