

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## **HISD Board of Education approves resolution to seek District of Innovation designation**

*May 15, 2020* –The Houston Independent School District Board of Education at its virtual meeting on Thursday voted 7-2 in favor of a resolution to initiate the process of designating HISD as a District of Innovation.

By adopting District of Innovation status, HISD could exercise greater local control over decisions impacting positive educational outcomes for students. The resolution approved by the Board of Education outlines specific exemptions from state law that the district would seek, including:

- Starting the school year earlier than the fourth Monday in August
- Hiring qualified industry professionals to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in areas where the district struggles to fill vacancies
- Exercising flexibility with the minimum attendance for class credit requirement (90% attendance rule)

The next steps in the process are for the district to gather public input and form a planning committee. HISD would join 893 other districts across Texas in becoming a District of Innovation. The designation would take effect in time for the 2021-2022 school year.

Trustees also approved an action to negotiate and execute renewal agreements with charter schools that are entering the final year of a three-year contract. The district seeks to improve student achievement, spur educational innovation and provide a framework for increasing the academic and financial oversight of the charter campuses.

During the virtual meeting, trustees also approved a turnaround plan for Sugar Grove Academy, which is in its second consecutive year as an F-rated campus. The district is required to submit the plan to the Texas Education Agency detailing how it will improve student achievement at the southwest Houston school.

Additionally, board members voted in favor of a contract to sanitize and disinfect technology equipment, primarily laptops that are being used at home by students and employees before the devices are reassigned to others. The projected cost of the contract is about \$400,000 annually for four years.

Trustees also approved cash gifts of \$500 donated through a partnership between ProUnitas and Give Together Now to support 174 HISD families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic who were identified through Wraparound Services.

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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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