

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## **HISD students eligible for Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer assistance**

*May 22, 2020* - HISD families may be eligible to receive Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), a one-time benefit of up to \$285 to be issued on an EBT card to assist families during the district's closure.

The \$1 billion benefit program was approved by the United States Department of Agriculture to help eligible families buy food during the COVID-19 pandemic. The EBT card can be used like a debit card to buy food from any retailer that accepts the Texas Lone Star Card.

Children up to 21 years old who are certified for free or reduced-price meals at school in Texas during the 2019-2020 school year and all children who attend a school that offers meals at no charge through the Community Eligibility Provision — as HISD does — are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits.

Foster youth, migrant youth, homeless youth, runaway youth, and Head Start participants are also eligible for P-EBT.

“HISD has been committed to providing food to our students and their families when they need it most,” HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “This is another much-needed source of help for the HISD community during this time of hardship.”

Families who received SNAP benefits for March 2020 and have children 5-18 years old as of May 17, 2020, do not need to apply for those children. These families will receive P-EBT benefits on their current Lone Star Card by May 22. No further action is required.

Families with children up to 21 years old who are certified to receive free or reduced-price meals during the 2019-2020 school year need to apply for P-EBT. This includes families who received SNAP benefits for March 2020 and have children under 5 and between 19 and 21.

These families will need to apply for P-EBT benefits online. Eligible families will receive a school email with a link to the P-EBT application in the first week of June.

The completed application must be submitted by June 30, 2020. Once approved, a P-EBT card will be mailed to their household. Families will have one year, from the date the benefits are issued, to use their P-EBT food benefits. P-EBT benefits are non-transferrable.

P-EBT benefits are in addition to SNAP benefits, grab-and-go school meals, such as Summer Meals, and other nutrition resources. Receiving P-EBT will not affect a family's ability to receive other benefits.

For more information, please visit [hhs.texas.gov/PEBT](https://hhs.texas.gov/PEBT). A P-EBT call center will be available in June when the application is available. The phone number will be included in the information sent with the application link.

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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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