

HISD PRESS RELEASE

HISD schools, facilities closed July 3-19 due to increasing COVID-19 cases across Houston

June 29, 2020 — The Houston Independent School District is restricting access to all district schools and facilities beginning Friday, July 3 through Sunday, July 19, in response to public health guidance and an increasing number of COVID-19 cases throughout the city.

All athletic practices are canceled. HISD students will be allowed to keep laptops until the fall rather than return them to campus, eliminating the need to bring additional staff and families on site.

The district continues to operate virtually and will continue to provide educational and related services during the disruption of normal operations. Employees reporting to a location as a part of their assigned duties will continue to practice social distancing and wear appropriate personal protective equipment in accordance with district policy and public health guidelines. The Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center will remain open for limited purposes.

The [Curbside Summer Meals](#) program will continue to operate at designated sites under its current schedule. Additionally, custodians will continue to monitor buildings for emergencies, and grounds crews will continue basic groundskeeping. Bond school construction will also continue.

“These new measures are imperative for the health and safety of our students and staff. Every decision we make has them in mind,” HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “I urge you all to please be safe in the coming weeks — stay home when you can, wash your hands, and wear a mask if you must go out.”

The restriction comes as local, state, and federal officials have pointed to worsening outbreaks in Texas and, more specifically, Harris County.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on Friday ordered bars closed, reduced restaurant capacity to 50 percent, and limited outdoor gatherings to no more than 100 people. He urged people to stay home when possible and wear masks when they are required to go out.

Locally, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo issued a Level 1 red alert, indicating severe and uncontrolled transmission of COVID-19 with worsening outbreaks. She urged people to stay home and go out only for emergency needs, like food or medication.

City of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner also urged people to stay home and be safe, noting that the city's COVID positivity rate is now three times higher today than it was three months ago.

Additionally, the White House Coronavirus Task Force held a briefing, during which federal health officials specifically pointed to Texas as one of the three states with the most spread.

Most HISD employees have been working from home since the district announced its building closures in March, but some staff have been allowed to re-enter and complete necessary duties, such as registration, technology distribution, equipment inventory, and classroom space assessments.

Employees have through Thursday, July 2, to complete campus-based tasks and take home any needed items, but administrators must streamline operations and limit the number of people on site through the week.

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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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