

HISD PRESS RELEASE

HISD to Reconnect Safely, Return Strong for 2020-2021 school year

All students to return to school virtually for six weeks; families may choose all-virtual learning

July 15, 2020 — 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 Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Virtual instruction for all students will continue for six weeks through Friday, October 16.

The decision to begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually and delay the start of the school year for two weeks was due to the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases in the area.

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.

“We have been working diligently to identify ways to continue providing quality education while ensuring the health and safety of our students, staff, and families,” HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “I believe this plan is the best option for the HISD community, given the current circumstances and challenges presented by COVID-19.”

Because it’s important for parents to have the ultimate choice on determining what is best for their child, there will be an option to opt out of face-to-face instruction entirely for the fall semester and 2020-2021 school year. All parents will be asked to complete the 2020-2021 Parent Introduction to Virtual Learning Online Course by August 28. The course will be available on July 31.

Here is a timeline for the re-opening dates:

- **September 8, 2020:** First day of school (Virtual only)
- **October 19, 2020:** Face-to-face instruction begins*
- **September 8, 2020 – January 29, 2021:** First semester of remote learning for students/parents who choose online-only instruction.
**Parents will have the option to choose remote instruction for the fall semester (through January 29, 2021) or entire school year (through June 11, 2021).*

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.

The district remains committed to assisting all students in need of technology as they participate in virtual learning. Parents of students in need of a laptop or a hot spot, who have not yet received one from HISD, are asked to contact their school principal and let them know of any technology needs before the school year begins.

When face-to-face instruction begins, all HISD students and employees will be screened daily before entering any HISD building. They will also be required to wear appropriate masks, hand-wash routinely, and adhere to physical distancing requirements. Additionally, it will be mandatory for nurses, custodial staff, food service workers, and special education staff to wear gloves.

These protocols were developed in part by the HISD Communicable Disease Plan Task Force, a group of key employees, educators, parents, community members, and health care officials. The task force was charged with reviewing safety guidance from local, state, and federal health and education officials. The district also considered feedback from parent and teacher surveys distributed over the summer.

To ensure learning is uninterrupted – no matter what happens, the HISD Academics team developed an Instructional Continuity Plan. The plan provides a robust framework that expands on the current HISD @ H.O.M.E. at-home learning platform and provides additional guidance and support for any future extended periods of closure.

For more information, go to HoustonISD.org/Reopening.

HISD PRESS OFFICE | 713-556-6393 | PressOffice@HoustonISD.org | HoustonISD.org/HISDmedia

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.

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 4400 West 18th Street | Houston, Texas 77092-8501
HoustonISD.org | facebook.com/HoustonISD • facebook.com/HISDEspanol | [@HoustonISD](https://twitter.com/HoustonISD) • [@HISDEspanol](https://twitter.com/HISDEspanol)