

HISD PRESS RELEASE

HISD Board to consider \$54.6 million budget amendment to help students Reconnect Safely, Return Strong

Trustees also set to vote on changes in 2020-2021 academic calendar

Aug. 13, 2020 – The Houston Independent School District Board of Education will consider a \$54.6 million amendment to the 2020-2021 budget, which includes a \$31 million purchase of devices and wireless hotspots to help close the digital divide and ensure students are equipped to [Reconnect Safely and Return Strong](#) when classes resume virtually on Sept. 8.

The board’s virtual regular monthly meeting begins at 5 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, and can be viewed live online at www.hisd.tv and on HISD TV (Xfinity channel 18 or AT&T U-verse Channel 99). Click [here](#) to view the full agenda.

The district has provided 76,362 devices for students in need since the pandemic and plans to distribute 22,750 additional devices by next month. HISD has provided 6,628 hotspots for students in need and plans to distribute an additional 19,151 of the wireless devices by next month as well.

The added appropriations in the proposed budget amendment would also fund additional special education positions, personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing signage, plexiglass dividers, and instructional supports.

Also at its Thursday meeting, the board is scheduled to vote on updating the 2020-2021 academic calendar due to the delayed start to the school year necessitated by the pandemic. All previously approved holidays and the number of teacher preparation and professional development days are maintained in the proposed new calendar.

Key Dates - Proposed Updated 2020-2021 Academic Calendar

- Teachers’ first day – virtual professional development and in-service: Aug. 24, 2020
- Teachers’ first day – virtual instruction: Sept. 8, 2020
- Students’ first day – virtual instruction: Sept. 8, 2020
- First day of in-person school: Oct. 19, 2020
- Thanksgiving holiday: Nov. 23-27, 2020
- Winter Break: Dec. 21, 2020 - Jan. 1, 2021
- Last day of first semester: Jan. 29, 2021

- First day of second semester: Feb. 1, 2021
- Spring Break: March 15-19, 2021
- Last day of school for students: June 11, 2021

The board will also discuss changes and updates to emergency constraints, put in place when the pandemic began, that address the social and emotional, health and safety, academic, nutritional, and digital needs of all students, as well as the health and safety of staff.

The discussion will center around academic progress measures, the number of Wraparound Services interventions and guidance, wellness checks by nurses, meals provided, and documented access to digital equipment for students in the months ahead. Additionally, the board will discuss the implementation of a student and staff COVID-19 safety course as well as maintaining safety procedures on campuses and in buildings when COVID cases occur.

Trustees will also consider approving the formation of a District of Innovation (DOI) Committee to develop a plan for HISD to obtain the designation. Receiving the DOI designation would allow the district to set an earlier school start date, have flexibility from the state's 90% attendance rule, and increase the district's ability to hire teachers specifically for Career and Technical Education courses that are difficult to staff due to certification requirements. The district previously held a virtual public hearing on pursuing DOI status. 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.

Additionally, trustees will consider an agreement with the City of Houston Municipal Courts Department to continue the Juvenile Case Manager Program. The program reduces juvenile referrals into the criminal justice system through effective, preventive case management and utilization of intervention procedures at almost a dozen HISD middle and high school campuses.

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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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