

HISD PRESS RELEASE**HISD Board approves formation of District of Innovation Committee**

District remains on track to return to in-person instruction on Oct. 19, pending COVID-19 conditions

Sept. 10, 2020 – The Houston Independent School District Board of Education unanimously approved 9-0 by consent agenda, a resolution concerning virtual instruction that provides flexibility for the district, if needed.

Currently, HISD is scheduled to begin in-person instruction on October 19, 2020, pending COVID-19 conditions. The board voted to provide flexibility to extend the virtual learning period for an additional two weeks if that becomes necessary based on recommendations from health authorities. As announced on July 15, HISD's plan to provide face-to-face instruction beginning on October 19 has not changed.

Trustees also approved a plan to carry out online learning on Election Day, November 3, 2020 to accommodate voters and maintain safe conditions for students and staff amid COVID-19 conditions. Per state law, the district is required to make campuses available as voting sites during elections.

The board voted 7-2 to form a District of Innovation (DOI) Committee to develop a plan for HISD to obtain the DOI 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.

The board approved 9-0 a resolution designating September 30, 2020, as a day in honor of Vanessa Guillén, who graduated from HISD's César E. Chávez High School in 2018 before serving in the United States Army. Guillén's tragic death has focused a national spotlight on the treatment of women in the military, giving rise to the hope that her loss will be a catalyst for change and equal and fair treatment of all members of society.

Board members also recognized Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month in the district.

At its Thursday night meeting, trustees also authorized the district to submit its finished asynchronous learning plan to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), once the plan has been finalized, so that the district can earn average daily attendance (ADA) funding. HISD has implemented an asynchronous or independent instructional model for students, which provides periods of synchronous live support from educators during virtual instruction.

Additionally, trustees approved more than \$58,000 in cash and in-kind donations to provide school supplies, uniforms and clothing to Holland Middle School and Tijerina Elementary School students. The donations are from the Christian Community Service Center and the Assistance League® of Houston in partnership with Operation School Bell®.

Trustees also reviewed and discussed a Board Operating Procedures Manual, which is intended to formalize the general practices of the governing body.

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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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