

HISD PRESS RELEASE

HISD board approves \$250,000 grant for family mental health supports related to pandemic

Newly appointed District IX Trustee Myrna Guidry joins board

Dec. 10, 2020 — The Houston Independent School District Board of Education on Thursday accepted a \$250,000 grant from School-Based Healthcare Solutions Network to address students' and parents' mental health issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grant, approved by an 8-0 vote with one abstention, will be used at 10 participating schools to assist families whether their students are enrolled in virtual or face-to-face instruction. Only 25 recipients across the nation are receiving the grant. The HISD schools are: Highland Heights and Wesley elementary schools; Attucks, Cullen, Henry, and Thomas middle schools; and Bellaire, Madison, North Forest, and Waltrip high schools.

Joining the board for her first regular meeting was newly appointed Trustee Myrna Guidry (District IX) who was sworn in Thursday at noon. The Houston attorney and law professor will fulfill the unexpired term of Wanda Adams who resigned to serve as a Harris County Justice of the Peace. The board term expires December 31, 2021.

Also at its Thursday evening meeting, the board approved an agreement for the University of Houston to hire, train and supervise select students to tutor and mentor HISD students enrolled in the district's Miles Ahead Scholars (MAS) program. Students identified as needing support at Kashmere, Wheatley and Worthing high schools will also participate. The UH students will work with a teacher at the high schools or a program manager with the MAS program. UH tutors will also provide MAS students with college application guidance.

The board approved the district's annual Targeted Improvement Plans for Comprehensive Support schools that require additional resources and for schools that received an F rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) during the 2018-2019 school year. Ratings for 2019-2020 were not issued by the TEA due to COVID-19. Plans for the schools include essential actions needed to address the identified focus areas for school improvement, goals for the improvement process, and persons responsible for implementing and monitoring improvement activities. All campuses were required to have their Targeted Improvement Plans approved by HISD's Board of Education so that the documents may now be submitted to the TEA.

Additionally, the board accepted a \$20,000 donation from the family of the late Irma Rodriguez, who was a veteran teacher at Sanchez Elementary School. The donation will be used for

instructional classroom technology. Rodriguez is remembered as a devoted, award-winning, generous teacher who donated toys, laptops, and groceries to assist students and their families.

Trustees approved a \$20,000 cash donation from the Houston Texans and Reliant, an NRG company, to eight HISD schools to support technology. The Texans and Reliant are also donating \$84,000 worth of drawstring bags, phone chargers, and Deshaun Watson jerseys and autographed footballs to reward attendance.

The board voted to accept \$10,000 worth of supplies and materials donated by FedEx's Purple Totes campaign to four HISD elementary schools in response to wish lists provided by the schools.

Trustees also approved a \$31,700 in-kind donation of video production equipment and a sound mixing console from NASA's Johnson Space Center for Sam Houston Math, Science, and Technology Center High School to support STEM education through student-led productions.

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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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