

## HISD PRESS RELEASE

### **HISD partnership to explore opportunities to enhance district's School Choice process**

*Comprehensive study with HERC and UH planned to help develop new roadmap*

*April 22, 2021* – The Houston Independent School District has partnered with research partners at Rice University's Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC) and the University of Houston to improve the district's School Choice process and develop a plan to make it more family-friendly, efficient, and equitable.

With support from Houston Endowment, the project will entail gathering input and feedback from families, students, and district administration and campus staff to better understand what is working well regarding school choice and to identify areas of improvement. In addition, data and district guidelines and policies related to School Choice will be examined.

"HISD is one of the most committed districts to School Choice in the nation, offering our students and families a plethora of programs and opportunities available to them across the district," said HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan. "However, we know that the process can be complex at times for families and students. This project represents a big step to address that, and we are grateful to Houston Endowment and our research partners for their support towards making School Choice easier for our families to navigate."

The Houston Endowment is a committed partner in HISD's commitment to making education more equitable.

"We believe Houston students benefit when school systems partner with families to inform and improve system practices," said Alex Rouse, Houston Endowment's Education Program Director. "We are pleased to support HISD in this important work."

HISD Chief of Strategy & Innovation Rick Cruz also underscored the potential this project has to increase equity across the district.

"What most excites me about this project is the potential it has to level the playing field and make our quality programs more accessible to all our families and students, especially those from underserved backgrounds," Cruz said.

A final report that summarizes the findings and outlines a plan for improvement is expected to be available this upcoming summer. This will enable the district to begin implementing changes to improve the school choice process for the 2021-2022 application cycle.

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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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