

HISD PRESS RELEASE

Superintendent F. Mike Miles Announces First Cabinet Appointments

The leadership team brings together HISD veteran leaders, with some of Texas' best education talent to lead the district forward

June 5, 2023 - Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, F. Mike Miles today announced the initial members of the HISD leadership team. The team brings together veteran HISD leaders with the expertise and vision of some of Texas' most exceptional education talent. These appointments are effective immediately, and just the first in a series of leadership appointments that will be made in the coming weeks.

Appointed to the Cabinet:

- Kerri Briggs, Chief of Staff
- Orlando Riddick, Division Superintendent
- Luz Martinez, Division Superintendent
- Imelda De La Guardia, Division Superintendent
- Jim Terry, Chief of Finance and Business Services
- Wanda Paul, Chief Operations Officer
- Kristen Dobson Hole, Chief Academic Officer
- Sandi Massey, Chief of Leadership and Professional Development
- Catosha Woods, General Counsel
- Scott Gilhousen, Chief Information Officer

"It is my great pleasure to announce that these outstanding education professionals have made the commitment to serve the children, families, and staff at HISD. Their collective experience and expertise make this one of the most skilled education leadership teams in the nation," said Miles. "More important than that, they share the clear and ambitious vision to implement system-wide reform in HISD that improves student outcomes for all HISD students, eradicates the massive achievement gaps for Black and Brown students, and provides a full set of education experiences to prepare all HISD graduates for the year 2035 and beyond."

Biographies are included below with this release.

Kerri Briggs, Chief of Staff

Kerri Briggs, Ph.D., is a seasoned professional with extensive expertise in federal and state government, K-12 education, higher education, and corporate social responsibility. Before joining the HISD team, Kerri was a partner at Cicero Group, where she led projects across industries in the social impact and K-12 sectors – working alongside partners to measure, evaluate, and implement strategies that realize change.

Prior to joining Cicero Group, Kerri was the Education Program and Policy Officer for ExxonMobil. In this role, she managed the education grantmaking portfolio for the company and provided policy advice on issues related to teacher quality, state standards, and federal policy issues. Formerly, Kerri was the founding Director of Education Reform at the George W. Bush Institute, where she oversaw its education reform interests.

Kerri also served as State Superintendent of Education for Washington D.C., where she led the state system that included early childhood education, school food services, federal K-12 policy and finances, and higher education programming. In this role, she managed \$100 million in local and \$550 million in federal funding. Building partnerships was key to her success; she was the liaison to the State Board of Education, D.C. City Council, and the Mayor's Office.

Briggs was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education and was confirmed in June 2007. In this role, she played a pivotal role in policy and management issues affecting students. This role capped off nearly eight years of service at the USDE, where she was involved in policy creation and implementation, state engagement, regulatory development, and budget creation and administration. In addition to roles at OESE, she held positions in the Office of the Deputy Secretary, and Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.

Kerri is also actively involved in several local and national boards dedicated to communities and improved social outcomes. She earned a Ph.D. in Education Policy and a master's degree in Public Policy, both from the University of Southern California. She earned her B.A. from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Orlando Riddick, Division Superintendent

Mr. Riddick joins HISD with a strong believe in entrepreneurial leadership and a career centered around the *Listen, Learn, and Lead* philosophy. Mr. Riddick has served as Superintendent of Midland ISD and Cedar Hill ISD. He has worked in the central office administration for Mesquite ISD as the ESSER Effectiveness Officer, Dallas ISD as Chief of Schools, Houston ISD as Chief of High Schools, and Austin ISD as the Director of High Schools.

His educational background includes teaching at Antonio Maceo Smith High School and serving as principal of W.T. White High School in Dallas ISD. He was an assistant principal and academic dean in several schools in Fort Worth and San Antonio.

Orlando graduated with a BA in journalism from University of Texas at El Paso, where he received his commission into the US Army. He later completed a post-baccalaureate degree in English literature

and a minor in education from University of Texas, El Paso. He earned his master's degree in educational administration from Texas Woman's University and was also a graduate student in the Cooperative Superintendency Doctoral Program at The University of Texas.

Luz Martinez, Division Superintendent

Dr. Luz. Martinez is a charismatic, visionary, innovative, biliterate and equity-driven educator. Dr. Martinez has over 20 years of experience in educational leadership in Texas, including her most recent one as Chief of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as Round Rock ISD, Associate Superintendent at Midland ISD, and principal and assistant principal at various schools of all types. She also has over fifteen years of experience serving as a faculty/adjunct at various colleges and universities in Texas, Arizona, Virginia, and abroad. As a former military spouse of over 23 years, she served multiple military communities in the U.S. and abroad as an employee, school board member/president, and volunteer.

Dr. Martinez has a proven track record of continually seeking and implementing equity-based instructional and leadership best practices to maximize the success of the entire organization. She strongly believes that all students can succeed when provided with the support, care, and guidance they need and deserve.

Imelda De La Guardia, Division Superintendent

Imelda De La Guardia is a seasoned educator with nearly three decades of successful experience advancing student outcomes as a teacher, building leader, and district-level administrator. She began her professional teaching career as a high school Spanish teacher in Aldine, where she taught for several years before becoming an assistant principal in Aldine and Spring Branch.

In her latest principal role in Spring Branch, she led her elementary school from an "acceptable" to "exemplary" rating within three years while managing a staff of over 100 to increase attendance rates and build even stronger community partnerships and mentorship opportunities to further enhance parent engagement and hence student achievement.

At the district leadership level, she has served as School Improvement Officer/Area Superintendent for HISD, Assistant Superintendent for Colorado Springs, School Services Officer for Spring ISD, and Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services in Spring ISD.

Imelda received her master's degree in Education, Mid-Management from Stephen F. Austin University and two bachelor's degrees from Texas A&M University in Modern Languages and Speech Communications. She also has her Superintendent's Certification.

Jim Terry, Chief of Finance and Business Services

James Terry, Ph.D., CPA RTSBA started his professional career in education over 30 years ago. He was hired out of the MBA program at the University of Texas and began his career at the North East ISD in San Antonio. He rose through the ranks to become the top financial and accounting executive of the district.

After leaving the district, he became an investment banker with M.E. Allison. After a few years, he decided return to the education finance field as Chief Financial Officer in Dallas ISD. While in Dallas, he helped implement a new pay system based on the performance and effectiveness of teachers and school administrators. Following his tenure at Dallas ISD, James became a Managing Director for the Dallas Office of Seibert, Shank and Cisneros, a Wall Street investment banking firm. During COVID, James taught college and wrote a book about the Dallas ISD Miracle: Miles to Equity. He then became CFO for Third Future Schools, then moved to the Texas Education Agency as Associate Commissioner of School Finance; Chief Financial Officer.

James holds a BA, MA, and Ph. D. degree in psychology. After going back to college, he earned his CPA license and did a post-doctoral program in Finance and Accounting at the University of Florida business school.

Wanda Paul, Chief Operations Officer

As HISD's current chief operating officer, Ms. Paul leads more than 6,000 employees from key public-facing departments, including transportation, nutrition, construction, and facilities. Her oversight includes a fleet of over 1,000 buses, a food service operation that serves thousands of meals daily, a \$2.1 billion bond construction program, and maintenance of 30 million square feet of facility space in more than 300 buildings.

Prior to joining HISD, she spent four years as chief operating officer for The School District of Palm Beach County in Florida. In this role, she oversaw more than 1,700 employees, 187 schools, and a \$63 million capital budget. She also implemented a program to better track energy use and reduce utility costs. Before going to Florida, Ms. Paul served four years as chief operating officer for the Dallas Independent School District. She began her career in public schools in HISD, working in various roles in operations and facilities both in HISD and later in the Spring Branch Independent School District.

Ms. Paul also served in a variety of leadership roles during her career in the U.S. Army. Ms. Paul earned a Bachelor of Arts in Government from University of Texas in 1986, a Master of Education from National-Louis University in 1994, and a Master of Business Administration from University of St. Thomas in 2005. She also graduated from the Atlantic's National Superintendent's Academy in 2019.

Kristen Dobson Hole, Chief Academic Officer

Prior to joining the HISD team, Kristen was the Associate Commissioner of Instructional Strategy at the Texas Education Agency where she focused on developing curriculum and instruction products and services for school systems to increase outcomes for more than 5 million students. She launched the first statewide curriculum evaluation system that provides free, transparent, and user-friendly reviews about the quality of curricular resources used in the Texas market to all educators. Kristin also oversaw the agency's curriculum implementation programs focused on providing intensive training, technical assistance and job-embedded support to educators, coaches, and administrators.

Prior to this work, Kristen was a Manager at Deloitte in the Strategy and Operators practice where she focused on helping K-12 and Higher Education clients answer strategic questions to increase scale and deepen impacts.

Kristen spent time at Excel Academy Charter Schools, Bellweather Education Partners, TOMS Shoes, and Stanford's Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies. Kristen holds a BA in Business Honors and Finance from the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas, an MBA and MA of Education from Stanford University and an MA in Education Leadership from the Broad Residency.

Sandi Massey, Chief of Leadership and Professional Development

Ms. Massey is starting her 30th year in education. Sandi has had the distinct opportunity to work in private, public, and charter school education from early childhood through Early College. After her first seven years in the classroom, she was asked to take over the South-Central Region of the U.S. as Early Education Director for Association of Christian Schools International, where she trained teachers and principals in areas of school law, philosophy, and led accreditation teams. Included in this role was planning, leading, and speaking for Early Education conferences around the South-Central Region, which included Texas and the surrounding states.

After completing her teaching career, Sandi earned her master's in educational leadership and spent several years as Elementary and Middle School Assistant Principal, then was promoted to High School principal for a total of nine years. Ms. Massey was able to lead her Dallas ISD Thomas Jefferson high school team from an F to a B while serving as principal and obtained Master Principal designation. During this time, she was allotted the privilege of being named one of America's top 500 educators in 2022, designated Marquis Who's Who of 2022, and named Preston Hollow's "Person of the Year".

Over the last two years Ms. Massey has served the Third Future Schools Network as Executive Director and Deputy Chief of Schools. Serving the Houston community as Chief of Leadership and Professional Development is her greatest honor yet.

Catosha Woods, General Counsel

Catosha Woods has been serving as General Counsel of the Houston Independent School District since March 2023. She joined the district's legal department in February 2013 as Assistant General Counsel and served as Deputy General Counsel since 2015.

Her work at HISD bridges her passion for children and her love of the law. Woods' legal foundation began as a plaintiffs' attorney where she sought justice on behalf of victims exposed to asbestos. Later, Woods worked as Senior Litigation Associate where she gained valuable trial and litigation experience representing companies in various areas of the law. That work provided valuable trial and litigation experience that guides her work today.

Currently admitted to practice law in California (2003) and Texas (2013), Woods obtained her Juris Doctorate from the University of California-Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law in 2003. Woods graduated summa cum laude from Tuskegee University in 2000 with Bachelor of Arts degrees in both English and Political Science.

Scott Gilhousen, Chief Information Officer

Scott Gilhousen is the Chief Information Technology Officer for the Houston Independent School District where he leads all aspects of information technology, data and analytics, and information security. His overarching mission is to ensure equitable access to advanced learning technologies,




modernize the existing application software portfolio, and bolster cybersecurity and data privacy to safeguard the interests of students, teachers, and employees across the organization.


With over two decades of experience in strategic and operational leadership roles, Scott brings a wealth of expertise to his current position as CITO. Prior to assuming this role, he served as the Director of IT Infrastructure, Engineering, and Operations at HISD, where he led the delivery, operation, and maintenance of technology infrastructure, telecommunications, and computing services that were aligned with the organization's educational and business programs.

Throughout his career, Mr. Gilhousen has been involved in the educational community and IT professional organizations such as Council of Great City Schools, Center for Digital Education, Consortium for School Networking, Texas Education Technology Leaders, and Gartner.

Mr. Gilhousen received his Bachelor of Science in Management of Information Systems from the University of Houston.

The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the eighth-largest in the United States, with 276 schools and nearly 190,000 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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