

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## HISD releases report detailing inefficiencies, outlining path forward

*Problems uncovered include wasteful spending, overtime abuse, broken systems, among others*

February 20, 2024 - The Houston Independent School District (HISD) today released a report that outlines how it is addressing long-standing operational problems and inefficiencies that have been allowed to persist across the District, hindering efforts to transform the system so it serves all students well. The report, titled, [HISD Efficiency Report: An analysis of the District-level systems that challenge HISD's transformation efforts](#), details eight key problems, explains why they matter, and describes what leaders are doing to resolve each issue.

Problems include wasteful spending on a grand scale, even as student enrollment declines; extreme overtime abuse; contracts for work in every area of the District that could have been done by HISD's own employees; broken HR and transportation systems; a morass of curricula and programs that were not linked to any particular standards of quality; and a bureaucracy that creates obstacles and is divorced from progress and student outcomes.

HISD is making systemic changes to address these problems. Improvements include the creation of a new action planning and budgeting process that will keep the District above an \$850 million fund balance and help ensure spending is aligned to key priorities and goals, maximize the use of resources, promote collaboration among departments, and hold leaders accountable. The District is also developing systems to help determine if the services of a vendor are actually needed or if an HISD employee can do a particular task or project. In addition, the report describes ways that HISD is strengthening its HR, payroll, and transportation systems including through regulations, processes, standards, and technology. Every aspect of the work is focused on structuring operations in ways that best support students.

"The transformation taking place in HISD is the nation's largest and most significant effort to dramatically improve K-12 education," **said Superintendent Mike Miles**. "Too many of our Houston students are not achieving what we know they are capable of. That's why we're making big changes – with urgency – to raise the quality of instruction and ensure our kids catch up in their learning, develop the skills they need for the future world, and graduate ready to succeed in college, work, and life."

"In the course of this transformation, the HISD team has encountered deep and wide problems in our District operations. Such dysfunction impedes the positive shift we seek to accomplish. We are sharing this report with the community so people know the major challenges in our system, how they impact what educators are working to do for kids, and how we will fix these problems to make our District more effective and efficient. Through the action steps outlined in the report, HISD will become the first urban district to serve all its students well – where excellence is the expectation and failure is not an option."




The report explains that HISD's efforts to improve academic outcomes and prepare students for the modern workplace and world will not be successful without effective central office systems and processes.

“There are so many HISD employees who are working hard and have been for a long time. We really appreciate their efforts,” **said HISD School Board Member Ric Campo.** “But when there is serious dysfunction in the system itself – when policies are not consistently enforced, when there is no accountability, when decisions are not tied to what educators are here to do – this erodes morale and affects everyone’s ability to do their best work for kids. We know that, by and large, Houston students aren’t where they need to be academically, and we only have so much time to help them get there. Systemic operational problems like those in the report prevent us from improving in the ways our students need. I am glad to see that HISD is tackling these issues with the same strategic focus and urgency it brings to raising our quality of instruction.”

Each section of the report describes a specific challenge, including information the team uncovered about the problem and how it negatively affects District operations and, ultimately, students.

“This report provides an honest, introspective assessment of how well HISD is operating in service of its core mission,” **said Greater Houston Partnership President and CEO, Steve Kean.** “While it illuminates systemic challenges, it also shows a true path forward – including many steps that are already underway. We know that successful organizations do this type of analysis on a regular basis so they can continually improve. It is rarer to see in public education. However, there is no doubt it is what Houston students need and deserve. I’m pleased to see HISD moving in this direction so students graduate ready for high-skilled jobs in our vibrant city and the global economy.”

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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