

Beliefs and Vision

The Board's Declaration of Beliefs and Vision for the Improvement of the District is as follows:

Beliefs

- We believe that equity is a lens through which all policy decisions are made.
- We believe that there should be no achievement gap between socio-economic groups or children of ethnic diversity.
- We believe that the District must meet the needs of the whole child providing wraparound services and social and emotional supports.
- We believe our classrooms/schools should be safe, vibrant, joyful spaces where students are guaranteed access to a challenging and deep educational experience.
- We believe that instruction should be customized/personalized to meet the learning needs for each individual child including students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and English Language Learners so they have the support and opportunity they need to flourish.
- We believe that recruitment and retention of qualified and effective personnel are the keys to enhancing the quality of education and increasing student achievement.
- We believe that the community has a right to transparent operations across the District in all schools, departments, and divisions.
- We believe that meaningful engagement with the community is important in all major decision making.

Vision

Every child shall have equitable opportunities and equal access to an effective and personalized education in a nurturing and safe environment. Our students will graduate as critical thinkers and problem solvers; they will know and understand how to be successful in a global society.

Mission

To equitably educate the whole child so that every student graduates with the tools to reach their full potential.

Mandate for Change

Human Capital

The District's greatest strength is its human capital. The personal, face-to-face contact between teacher and child shall always be the central event in education. Changes in the District's structure, governance, and policies underscore the importance of this relationship; that is, through reform, they exist to support the relationship. In addition, the District sets high expectations for school leadership to inspire creative thinking and innovative approaches that lead to instructional and operational excellence.

- Employees identified as high performers using value-added data should be rewarded. The District must establish levels of compensation and differentiated salaries driven by performance, value-added data, and accountability for all employees.
- Reform measures must focus on higher standards for recruitment and selection, job performance and compensation, and professional development and career planning and must provide employees with a viable career path within the organization.

School
Empowerment

Schools must be empowered to develop and implement the methods that best achieve their unique and individual instructional goals. The District is fully committed to a decentralized system of schools, giving principals the authority over the educational and operational systems. In such a system, the Board of Education remains accountable to the public for high-quality educational services for all children. The Board provides guidance and support to schools by establishing clear, consistent Districtwide goals, high standards and expectations, and effective systems of evaluation; but the individual school is held accountable for innovation and instructional results within those District-wide parameters.

The Board believes that:

- Principals are the leaders of the decision-making process affecting their schools, and their leadership is measured not only by results but also by their collaboration with teachers, parents, and the community.
- Recognizing that schools are where decisions should be made and that successful decentralization is a function of leadership capacity at the school level, the District shall establish a tiered system of differentiated autonomy focusing on instructional competencies, budget, and business operational systems. Schools demonstrating higher levels of student performance, innovation, and operational excellence (including school safety) are further empowered with greater autonomy and decision making. However, other schools may need greater support and guidance; and until they reach acceptable levels of performance, the District must manage for them critical areas such as curriculum, professional development, and operational systems. When guidance over decision making is needed, structured interventions shall help develop the competencies toward greater autonomy. Annual performance monitoring of instruction, operations, and attractiveness to the

community served shall determine the level of principal autonomy or central office intervention at the school.

School Choice

School choice must remain an integral part of the HISD system. School choice ignites the spirit of competition, motivates excellence, promotes innovation, and empowers parents to match their children with the schools that best meet their children's needs. It is important for the District to focus more on developing, improving, and using creative educational tools so that every child at every school has access to the instructional program that best suits his or her unique interests.

Equal access to instructional excellence requires adequate and equitable allocation of resources. That, in turn, requires fair funding formulas. The District shall remain a system of schools rather than a school system where every campus offers the same programs.

- The District shall offer diverse school settings to meet the needs of its diverse community of students. All schools, whether they are specialty, magnet, or neighborhood, shall be accountable to identify educational and programmatic standards, including a common core of academic subjects, approved by the administration and the Board of Education. All students are expected to meet those standards.
- Achievement gaps between student groups are unacceptable. Closing achievement gaps requires unequal resources for unequal needs. Weighted funding allocations address individual differences, allowing the money to follow the child in accordance with his or her unique instructional needs and thereby ensuring access to the resources that enhance student achievement.
- The District must be proactive in the early identification of schools that may have too few students enrolled to provide adequate resources. The District must be ready to provide the school with appropriate interventions.

Meaningful
Engagement

Meaningful engagement is defined as actively listening to constructive input, collecting and exchanging information, and sharing outcomes. The Board of Education understands and appreciates the need for constructive engagement with both the community and District employees and shall aggressively solicit their opinions and ideas without relinquishing its responsibility as an elected body. As a publicly funded entity, the District must maintain open and respectful relationships, both internally and externally, and be a model for a service-oriented culture. Schools belong to the people; communities shall be engaged in the decision-making process.

- Everyone in the District, including the Board and the Superintendent, must be responsive to the District's diverse communities. Consistent, meaningful two-way communication with those who support the District as well as those with differing philosophies is essential to establishing public trust and confidence. The District shall provide parents and the public (and, where appropriate, students) with formal, structured systems for input into decision making that sets high achievement standards for all children.
- All employees must be encouraged to play a more active, visible role in representing the District to the community.

Change in Action

For nearly two decades, the District's Board of Education has been guided successfully by an uncompromising statement of its beliefs and its visions for improving education in Houston. We, the 2009 Board of Education, shall continue to move the District forward. We shall work openly and creatively with administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders to put in action this new mandate for change.

Change is essential if we are to make our children's education our very highest priority. We, alone, cannot affect school transformation; and we, alone, cannot simply demand it. As our predecessors clearly understood, meaningful improvement is not a top-down exercise. It must include and involve everyone at all levels of the organization and the community. We pledge to seek input and ownership by those who will be most affected by reform and restructuring in the District, and we shall guide the Superintendent to ensure that the District is collaborative on issues of such importance to the entire community. This is a solemn pledge, and it is a privilege to accept this great responsibility on behalf of the children of Houston.

Decentralization

The District shall decentralize. Effectiveness requires that decision making be placed as close as possible to the teacher and the student. Decisions should be made in schools; accordingly, principals shall be the leaders of that decision-making process. To accomplish this goal:

- The Board shall provide guidance and support to local schools by establishing clear goals, high standards, and effective systems of evaluation, while at the same time giving schools maximum freedom to develop and implement the methods that best achieve those goals.
- The central office shall turn the traditional management pyramid upside down and become an enabler rather than an enforcer. Its role shall be to train, consult, provide resources, and evaluate.

- The individual school shall be the unit of accountability and improvement.
- Schools shall be responsive to their communities, providing parents and members of the community (and where appropriate, students) with formal, structured input into decision making.
- Schools shall be given control over budgets, delivery of curriculum, teaching methodologies, and personnel, provided they are led by a strong and effective principal, function as a team, and collaboratively develop a vision and a plan to achieve that vision.

The following core beliefs and principles shall guide District decentralization:

1. Academic success is paramount;
2. All resources shall be at the schools unless managerial issues such as efficiency dictate otherwise;
3. The District shall pursue a goal of equity in funding;
4. Accountability and resource allocation decisions shall be matched (linked); and
5. Good sense shall guide implementation.

Purpose and Strategic Intent

The District exists to strengthen the social and economic foundation of Houston by assuring its youth the highest quality elementary and secondary education available anywhere.

The District's strategic intent shall be to earn so much respect from the citizens of Houston that the District becomes their prekindergarten–grade 12 educational system of choice.

Goals and Progress Measures

The District has adopted goals and goal progress measures in accordance with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Lone Star Governance continuous improvement model and the Framework for School Board Development.

Goal 1

The percentage of students reading and writing at or above grade level as measured by the percent of students at the Meets Grade Level standard on STAAR for grade 3 through English II shall increase by three percentage points annually from 37% to 46% between spring 2017 and spring 2020.

- Goal Progress Measure 1.1

End of year reading data collected on the District-wide screener shall annually show a three-percentage point improvement in the percentage of students reading on grade level from 38% to 44% between spring 2018 and spring 2020. Results on the District-wide screener will be presented to the board after the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year testing windows.

- Goal Progress Measure 1.2

Grades 4 and 7 students shall be assessed in writing in the fall and spring; percent of students meeting the grade level standard shall increase at least three percentage points annually from 22% in spring 2018 to 28% in spring 2020. Results will be presented to the board after the fall and spring testing windows.

Goal 2

The percentage of graduates meeting the Global Graduate standards as measured by the College and Career Readiness component of the Texas accountability system shall increase three percentage points annually per year from the 2017 graduates baseline of 52 percent up to 67 percent by 2022.

- Goal Progress Measure 2.1

The percentage of students completing (earning a 70 or better) a career and technical education (CTE) course shall be reported for each semester and shall show improvement of two percentage points annually from 63.0 percent in Spring 2017 to 69.0 percent in Spring 2020.

- Goal Progress Measure 2.2

The percentage of students completing (earning a 70 or better) an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course shall be reported for each semester and shall show improvement of 1 percentage point annually from 39.1 percent in Spring 2017 to 42.1 percent in Spring 2020.

- Goal Progress Measure 2.3

The percentage of students completing (earning a 70 or better) a dual credit or dual enrollment course shall be reported for each semester and shall show improvement of 1 percentage point annually from 10 percent in spring 2017 to 13 percent in spring 2020.

Goal 3

Among students who exhibit below satisfactory performance on state assessments, the percentage who demonstrate at least one

year of academic growth, as measured by the STAAR Progress Measure, shall increase three percentage points annually in reading and in math from 57 percent in spring 2017 to 66 percent in spring 2020.

- Goal Progress Measure 3.1

The percentage of students identified as needing intervention in reading on the district's screener who demonstrate growth from the beginning to end of year benchmarks shall increase three percentage points annually from 48% in spring 2018 to 57% in spring 2021. Results will be reported after each testing window.

- Goal Progress Measure 3.2

The percentage of students identified as needing intervention in math on the district's screener who demonstrate growth from the beginning to end of year benchmarks shall increase three percentage points annually from 58% in spring 2018 to 67% in spring 2021. Results will be reported after each testing window.

Goal 4

The reading and math performance gap between historically underserved and non-historically underserved student groups, as measured by the average of the percentage-point gaps ~~between economically and non-economically disadvantaged student groups~~ at the Meets Grade Level Standard on STAAR between (1) economically and non-economically disadvantaged student groups, (2) African-American and White student groups, (3) Hispanic and White student groups, (4) English Learners (ELs) and non-English Learners (non-ELs), and (5) students receiving special education services and students not receiving special education services, shall annually show a one-percentage point decrease from an average of 30.3 percentage points in spring 2018 to an average of 27.3 percentage points in spring 2021. Monitoring of student performance for all groups listed above along with the specified gaps will be provided to the board. All student groups should make progress; therefore, if this average gap decreases but the percentage of students at the Meets Grade Level Standard on STAAR for any of the student groups listed in this goal declines, then this goal shall be considered not met.

- Goal Progress Measure 4.1

End of year data collected on the District-wide screener shall annually show a one-percentage point decrease in the gap between economically and non-economically disadvantaged students performing at or above benchmark (40th percentile)

from 24% to 21% between spring 2018 and spring 2021. Results on the District-wide screener will be presented to the board after the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year testing windows.

- Goal Progress Measure 4.2

End of year data collected on the District-wide screener shall annually show a one-percentage point decrease in the gap between English Learners (ELs) and Non-English Learners (Non-ELs) performing at or above benchmark (40th percentile) from 11% to 8% between spring 2018 and spring 2021. Results on the District-wide screener will be presented to the board after the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year testing windows.

- Goal Progress Measure 4.3

End of year data collected on the District-wide screener shall annually show a one-percentage point decrease in the gap between students receiving special education services and students not receiving special education services performing at or above benchmark (40th percentile) from 37% to 34% between spring 2018 and spring 2021. Results on the District-wide screener will be presented to the board after the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year testing windows.

**Constraints and
Constraint Progress
Measures**

The District has adopted constraints and constraint progress measures in accordance with the TEA Lone Star Governance continuous improvement model and the Framework for School Board Development.

Board's Constraint
for the Board

The Board shall not spend more than 50 percent of its time on non-student outcome related discussion.

- Constraint Progress Measure

The Board shall increase the time it spends on student outcomes from 9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018 to 50 percent in the second quarter of 2019, maintaining 50 percent through the end of 2021.

Board's Constraints
for the
Superintendent

The Superintendent shall not permit the District to operate without a community school and feeder pattern framework, including a definition, processes, and goals.

Constraint 1

- Constraint Progress Measure 1.1

The District shall launch cohort one of Every Community, Every School with a minimum of 15 schools (5 percent) by the

end of the 2017–18 school year and shall increase annually until all schools (100 percent) are served in 2022.

- Constraint Progress Measure 1.2

The District shall develop tools for campuses to conduct a needs assessment, to access to a provider database, a data tracker, and professional development in 2017–18 and shall increase usage annually from 0 percent in Fall 2017 to 100 percent of campuses access the tools and training by 2022.

Constraint 2

The Superintendent shall not require teachers to administer more than two District-created assessments per semester.

- Constraint Progress Measure 2.1

The number of District-required, District-created assessments shall not increase from one per semester in fall 2017 to more than two per semester in spring 2020.

Constraint 3

The Superintendent shall not allow struggling schools to operate without highly qualified leaders and teachers in core subjects.*

*Struggling schools include Improvement Required (IR) schools, formerly IR schools, and schools receiving an overall accountability scale score of 65 or less. Teacher qualification should consider certification and experience.

- Constraint Progress Measure 3.1

The percentage of campus administrators at struggling schools rated as effective or above shall increase by two percentage points annually from 65 percent in 2017 to 73 percent by 2020.

- Constraint Progress Measure 3.2

The percentage of first-year teachers at struggling schools shall decrease by two percentage points annually from 10 percent in 2017 to four percent by 2020.

- Constraint Progress Measure 3.3

The percentage of teaching positions at struggling schools held by teachers certified in their assigned subject areas and grade levels shall increase each semester from 99 percent in 2017 until 100 percent is reached and maintained through 2020. The average number of teaching vacancies per struggling school at the end of October each year will remain below 1.0 from October 2017 through October 2020.

Core Values

The District's core values are as follows:

- **Safety Above All Else.**
Safety takes precedence over all else. A safe environment shall be provided for every student and employee.
- **Student Learning is the Main Thing.**
All decisions and actions, at any level, focus on and support the "main thing," which is effective student learning.
- **Focus on Results and Excellence.**
Each employee shall focus on results and excellence in individual and organizational efforts.
- **Parents are Partners.**
Parents are valued partners in the educational process, serving as the child's teacher in the home. All school and District activities shall give proper consideration to the involvement of parents.
- **Common Decency.**
The District shall be responsive and accountable to the public and its employees. Community members and employees shall receive respectful and courteous treatment.
- **Human Capital.**
Through recruitment, retention, dismissal, and professional development programs, the District shall work to make sure students are served by the top talent available, from teachers to superintendents.

**Central Office
Accountability
System**

The overall goal of the District's central office accountability system is to provide resources and services to schools in an efficient and timely manner that promotes schools' progress in achieving their educational missions.

Specifically, the objectives of the District central office accountability system are to:

- Establish and monitor progress toward performance indicators for each central office department, including evaluations of each departmental improvement plan goals and objectives;
- Determine which central office departments are meeting the District's objectives through the use of "customer" surveys; and

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- Determine whether central office departments that are failing to meet the objectives require assistance, reorganization, and/or replacement.

Effective Date

This policy shall be effective as of the adoption date, ~~August 9,~~
~~2019.~~