



# STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

ASPIRE, ACT, ATTAIN:  
ALL TOGETHER

2007

## ANNUAL REPORT

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL DISTRICT





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*The Board of Education is the official policy-making body of the Houston Independent School District. The nine trustees who sit on the board are elected to staggered four-year terms from separate geographic districts. They represent the residents of their individual districts, but they also serve the larger community as a whole and are dedicated to what is best for students. The trustees are guided by A Declaration of Beliefs and Visions. Adopted in 1990 and reaffirmed by the board in 2001 and 2004, Beliefs and Visions triggered a districtwide reform movement dedicated to improving scholastic performance by focusing resources on students and schools and establishing critical decision-making and accountability at the campus level.*

More information about the HISD Board of Education, including agendas and a schedule of meetings, is available online at [www.houstonisd.org/board](http://www.houstonisd.org/board).

## Board of Education Nationally Recognized for Excellence in Governance, Building Community Relationships

In 2007, HISD's Board of Education received the Urban School-Board Excellence Award presented by the National School Boards Association's Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE). As co-winners of the honor, the boards from Houston and Miami-Dade County Public Schools were recognized for their excellence in school-board governance, community engagement, closing the gap/equity in education, and academic excellence. Totalling 113 districts in 36 states, including nine of the largest school districts in the nation, CUBE member districts educate nearly eight million students in more than 12,000 schools.

HISD was one of 18 school districts across the nation to win the prestigious 2007 *American School Board Journal's* Magna Award for the Board of Education's innovative Community Builders Program. The Magna Awards recognize districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning and encourage community involvement in schools. HISD created the Community Builders Program in 2004 to reach out to individuals and groups in the community that are interested in or affected by public education. The goal is to build strong lines of communication, bring forward multiple perspectives, and seek public feedback on the district's policies and programs. Just before each month's board meeting, trustees and the superintendent of schools meet with a cross section of public stakeholders, including business leaders and representatives from government, the arts, higher education, and religious groups.

# MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



This annual State of the Schools report outlines the many successes that the Houston Independent School District achieved in 2007. Those accomplishments include record-high scores on both state and national achievement tests, the highest number of top-rated schools in HISD history, and gains in our efforts to improve district schools and facilities. This level of progress grew out of the hard work and commitment of teachers, principals, other administrators, and employees at every level of the organization, and moved the district closer to achieving its overarching goal of creating a college-bound culture in every school and family in Houston.



Every year, HISD builds on the accomplishments of the previous year, setting new standards and targets and doing everything possible to meet them. These efforts include an emphasis on best practices (implementing what has already proved to be successful) and the creation of new initiatives and strategies (finding new ways to achieve district goals). In 2007, HISD not only refined its operations to make them more effective, it also launched programs and models that we predict will produce significant gains in student achievement in the years to come. Chief among them are ASPIRE (Accelerating Student Progress. Increasing Results & Expectations) and the ongoing districtwide implementation of performance management.

ASPIRE is a districtwide education improvement model that will enable HISD to align its major education initiatives and strategies, enhance teaching and learning, monitor student growth more closely and thoroughly than ever before, and use value-added analysis to guide and focus instruction and any needed intervention. ASPIRE will also help HISD reward the teachers and other school staff members who help students make strong academic progress through the ASPIRE Award Program of performance-pay bonuses.

“Aspire, Act, Attain: All Together,” the theme of the 2007 State of the Schools report and luncheon, calls for the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders to implement the ASPIRE model and continue to achieve at the highest levels. I want to thank students, parents, community and business partners, and every member of the HISD family for the progress that the district made in 2007. I also want to stress that their continued support is crucial as HISD works to make further improvement by closing the achievement gap, addressing dropout and graduation rates, developing stronger leadership in every classroom and school, improving literacy at all grade levels, and build stronger, more communicative relationships between HISD and the community it serves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Abelardo Saavedra'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Abelardo' and last name 'Saavedra' clearly distinguishable.  
Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D.

HISD student performance will demonstrate gains as evidenced by scores on TAKS, SAT, and other state and national tests, while performance gaps between minority and nonminority students will narrow.



## GOAL 1

### INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

#### **HISD Launches Groundbreaking ASPIRE Model to Improve Teaching and Learning**

HISD adopted ASPIRE (Accelerating Student Progress, Increasing Results & Expectations), which aligns all of the district's education-improvement efforts to make the most of their impact on students. ASPIRE includes a new data system that monitors individual student progress at the school, grade, teacher, and student levels; informs classroom instruction; and helps teachers to provide more targeted support.



Accelerating Student Progress  
Increasing Results & Expectations

Houston Independent School District

By tracking the individual academic growth of every child using ASPIRE's "value-added" data system, teachers are better able to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and target their support where it is needed most, helping all students to meet the high academic standards set by HISD and the state. Campus-level analysis of the student-improvement data is made available to parents and the community, and the district has created tools for parents and the community to learn about value-added analysis, including a Web site ([www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE](http://www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE)).

The new ASPIRE Award Program awards the highest bonuses—up to \$7,300—to teachers of core academic subjects, including reading, math, language arts, science, and social studies, for their individual success in helping students improve academically. The new program also rewards groups of teachers for their successful teamwork and all instructional-staff members whose campuses make the highest amount of comparable improvement or earn the highest ratings under the Texas accountability system.

HISD has received \$8.1 million over three years from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Los Angeles-based Broad Foundation. The grants will be used for several major components of the ASPIRE program, including professional-development opportunities for teachers to learn how the "value-added" data system can be used to guide planning and instruction, and to support new communication systems and online tools to help share the knowledge across the district. ASPIRE also received financial support from the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **More Special Education Students Tested on Grade Level, Scored Higher**

HISD significantly increased the number of students with disabilities being tested on grade level, a move that indicates better service for children and one that could help improve HISD's federal accountability status. In 2006, HISD failed to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" under the federal No Child Left Behind education law primarily because too many children were tested with the off-grade-level alternative assessment instead of the on-grade-level alternative assessment. In 2007, HISD dramatically increased the number of students with disabilities being tested on grade level in reading using the state's alternative test, from 465 to 3,666, for an increase of nearly 800 percent. In math, 3,524 children with disabilities were tested on grade level with the alternative test, up from only 542 in 2006. Furthermore, the test scores of students with disabilities in HISD improved, as well, with the percentage of those who met their academic goals in math ranging from 79 percent in ninth grade to 97 percent at third grade, for example.

#### **SAT Scores in HISD Rise Again While National Average Falls**

For the second straight year, HISD's average scores on the SAT, an important college-readiness exam, showed more progress than national or state averages. In addition, the scores went up while HISD was testing more students—7 percent more HISD students took the SAT in 2007 than in 2006.

HISD's average SAT math score for the Class of 2007 rose four points, while the national average math score fell three points and the state average went up by only one point. HISD's reading scores were up one point, while the national average fell one point. SAT math scores for African-American students at HISD rose four points, and those for white and Hispanic students rose five points. Reading scores for Hispanic students at HISD rose one point in 2007 and those for white students rose five points, while African-American students' declined by one point.

In addition, 2007 was the second consecutive year HISD has surpassed the state and national averages for progress. In 2006, HISD's average SAT reading score increased five points while the Texas average score fell two points and the national average score fell five points. In math last year, HISD's average SAT score was up five points, while the national average fell two points and the Texas average rose four points.



## HISD's TAKS Passing-Rate Gains Exceed State's Average Improvement

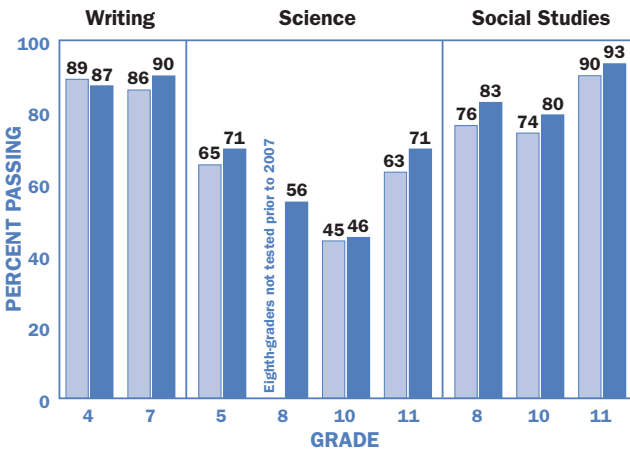
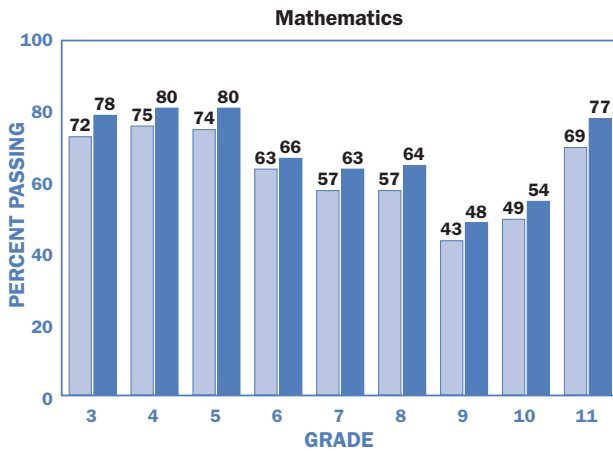
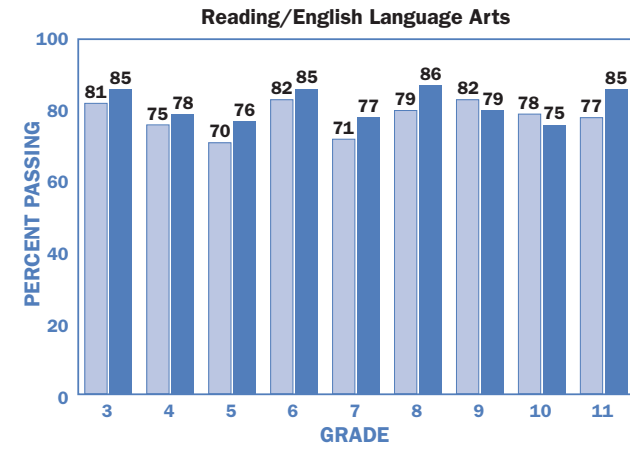
HISD students set record highs on the 2007 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), making strong progress at nearly every grade level (see charts). For example, in reading, passing rates were up by eight points for eleventh-graders, seven points for eighth-graders, and six points for seventh-graders and English-speaking fifth-graders. In math, passing rates increased by eight points for eleventh-graders, seven points for eighth-graders, and six points for seventh-graders. Overall, on the English-language TAKS, 75 percent of schools showed improved passing rates in math and social studies, 70 percent improved in reading, and 60 percent improved in science.

In many cases, performance on the TAKS surpassed the average improvement across Texas. For example, the passing rates for HISD fifth-graders on the TAKS math test rose seven points in 2007, far surpassing the average improvement across Texas. Eighty-one percent of HISD fifth-graders passed the English-language version of the math TAKS test, up seven points from the previous year, while the Texas average increased only four points. HISD also made more progress than the Texas average on the TAKS reading test this year, with 85 percent of third-graders passing the English reading test and 76 percent of fifth-graders passing. Their passing rates climbed as many as six percentage points, while statewide third-grade students made no progress this year in reading and the reading passing rate for fifth-graders statewide improved by only two percentage points, compared to the six-point gain for HISD fifth-graders.

HISD students taking the TAKS test in Spanish also made strong improvement, with the passing rate for Spanish-speaking third-graders increasing from 80 percent to 87 percent this year in reading and from 74 percent to 83 percent in math. HISD's 81-percent passing rate also eliminated the previous year's two-point gap between the Texas average and the performance of the district's Hispanic fifth-graders on the English-language version of the TAKS math test. African-American fifth-graders in HISD also made much more progress than their peers elsewhere in Texas with a nine-point gain in their passing rate (73 percent versus the previous year's 64 percent) that surpassed the six-point gain in the state average (68 percent to 74 percent). And white fifth-graders in HISD outperformed the state average, passing at a rate of 94 percent (the same as the previous year), compared to 92 percent statewide.

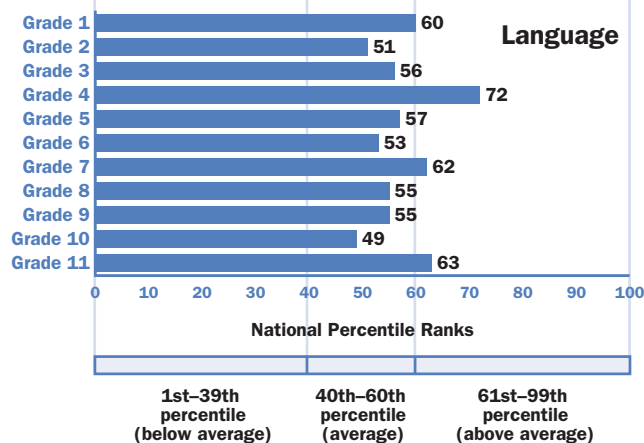
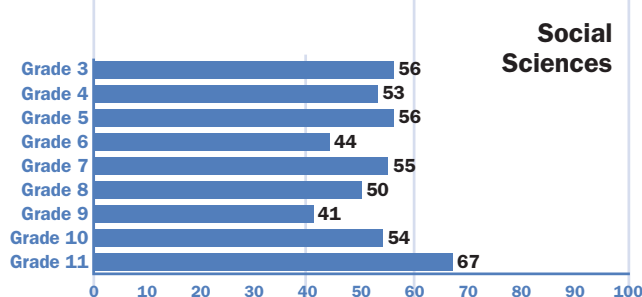
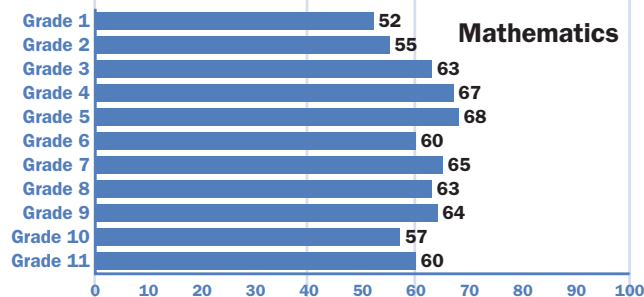
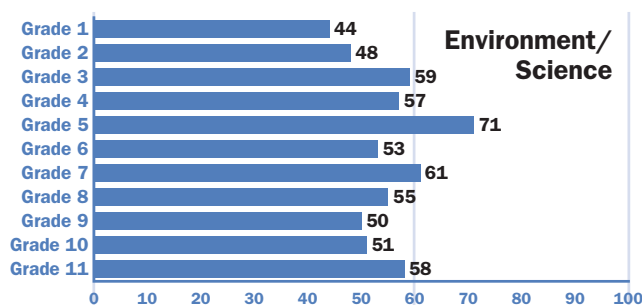
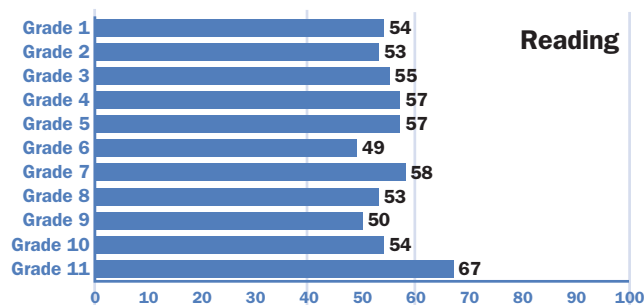
HISD also eliminated the three-point gap between the state and Houston in the academic achievement of poor children in fifth grade, with a 79-percent passing rate that equaled the state average.

Finally, far more HISD students this year also reached the "commended" performance level, with the number of sixth-graders earning commended status on the English reading test jumping 13 percentage points (from 25 percent to 38 percent). In addition, 33 percent of HISD fifth-graders scored commended in math, for an improvement of four percentage points versus a one-point increase in the state average commended rate.



*The charts show the percentage of all HISD students passing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (English and Spanish) in 2006 and 2007.*

**2006** **2007**



### 2007 Stanford/Aprenda

The ranges of academic performance in terms of national percentile ranks are Below Average (1st–39th percentile), Average (40th–60th percentile), and Above Average (61st–99th percentile), with the 50th percentile the arithmetic average score. In the 2007 results for non-Special Education students, no HISD Stanford percentile ranks were in the Below Average range, and the district's percentile ranks in the Above Average range for grade-level subject tests rose from 7 in 2006 to 13 in 2007.

## Most HISD Students Score Above National Average on Stanford/Aprenda

More than 140,000 HISD non-Special Education students in grades 1 through 11 took the Stanford 10 test or its Spanish-language equivalent, the Aprenda. At every grade level, HISD students tested at or above the national average range (40–60 NPR) in the basic battery areas tested on the Stanford (see charts), and HISD's Spanish-speaking students far surpassed the national averages at almost every grade level. Percentile ranks by grade went as high as the 72nd on the Stanford test and the 92nd on the Aprenda. Such outstanding results are especially significant because 78 percent of HISD students are considered economically disadvantaged, compared with only 30 percent in the norm-referenced group.

## Students Score Higher on PSAT

Reading and math scores on the Preliminary SAT reasoning exam—the PSAT—for both tenth- and eleventh-graders rose in 2006–2007 compared to the previous two school years. The PSAT is an important qualifying test for students who want to win National Merit Scholarships and is also used to identify students who may be successful in Advanced Placement courses. More than 17,000 HISD sophomores and juniors—nearly 78 percent of students in those two grades—took the PSAT, with juniors making the greatest gains. The PSAT mean reading score for HISD eleventh-graders rose to 41.5, up from 40.2 in 2005–2006 and 39.3 in 2004–2005. Math scores for eleventh-graders averaged 42.8, up from 41.5 and 41.7. Tenth-graders also made progress, with reading scores up to 37.5 versus 37.3 and 36.3 previously and math scores also improved to 39.2 versus 38.5 and 38.3.

## **HISD Students Get High Marks on “Nation’s Report Card”**

HISD students outperformed their peers in most other big-city school districts in America that were tested in reading and math on the “Nation’s Report Card.” HISD students surpassed the large central-city average across America in every category except fourth-grade reading, and other school districts declined in other areas while HISD improved. The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial Urban District Assessment showed that HISD fourth- and eighth-graders were third-best among 11 school districts in the percentage of students scoring at or above the basic level in math. HISD eighth-graders were tied for third-best among the 11 big-city school districts compared in reading.

The NAEP scores also showed HISD students making more progress than their urban counterparts across Texas and around the country in meeting the basic standards in math and reading. Overall, HISD’s scores were up, and HISD slightly improved its overall standing in comparison with the other 11 big-city school districts that take part in the assessment.

African-American and Hispanic students in HISD also outperformed their counterparts at most urban districts tested. African-American eighth-graders in HISD were second nationally in reading and tied for second in math, Hispanic fourth-graders in HISD were tied for first in math and were eighth in reading, and African-American fourth-graders in HISD were third in reading and fifth in math.

## **More Schools Make AYP for Second Straight Year, Number of Schools Missing Mark Declines Again**

Eighty-eight percent of HISD schools rated met the tough federal standard for improvement in 2007, and that number was up for the second straight year. After 10 Houston schools won their appeals of preliminary ratings, 238 schools made “Adequate Yearly Progress” under the federal No Child Left Behind standard, up from 233 in 2006 and 230 in 2005. Only 33 HISD schools missed meeting the federal standard for progress, down from 42 in 2006 and 50 in 2005. Twenty-three schools were not evaluated.

Statewide, the number of schools missing AYP increased this year by 23 percent, from 541 to 664, while the number of HISD schools missing AYP declined sharply, by 21 percent, from 42 last year to 33 this year. Statewide, the number of schools meeting the federal AYP standard also declined by about 1 percent while HISD’s number of schools meeting AYP increased, by about 2 percent from 233 to 238 this year.

## **More Schools Earn State’s Top Accountability Ratings**

HISD significantly improved its standing as measured by school ratings in the Texas Education Agency accountability systems. While the number of schools rated Exemplary in the Standard Accountability System remained the same from 2006 at 15, the number of Recognized schools rose from 64 to 69, the number of Academically Acceptable schools grew from 159 to 169, and the number of Academically Unacceptable schools plummeted from 32 to 13. In the Alternative Education Accountability System, the number of Academically Acceptable alternative schools went from 9 in 2006 to 7 in 2007, and the number of Academically Unacceptable alternative schools went from 1 to 2.

## **Record Number of HISD Students Take, Pass College-Level AP Exams**

A record number of HISD students took and passed college-level course exams in 2007. The number of HISD students taking Advanced Placement (AP) tests rose 11 percent in 2007, a larger increase than the Texas or national average. In addition, the number of AP tests in HISD with a score of 3 or higher climbed 12 percent, also surpassing the Texas and national averages for improvement by up to five percentage points. Twenty-one HISD schools increased the number of students taking AP exams this year and 15 schools increased the number of AP scores of 3 or better, with one HISD high school achieving a 1,500-percent increase in the number of students taking AP exams and another more than doubling the number of students scoring 3 or higher.

## **Number of Students Taking Dual-Credit Courses Increases**

The Dual-Credit Program gives students the opportunity to earn college credit while working toward a high-school diploma. HISD offers dual-credit courses at high schools throughout the district. A total of 2,524 HISD students were enrolled in at least one dual-credit course in 2007, up from 1,699 the previous year—a 49-percent increase. From fall 2006 to fall 2007, the total number of dual-credit enrollments increased to 3,443 from 2,204, a 56-percent increase, with some students enrolled in more than one course.





## REACH OUT TO DROPOUTS WALK INCLUDES MORE CAMPUSES

More than 1,200 volunteers—including Mayor Bill White, U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, and State Representative Sylvester Turner—took part in the fourth annual Reach Out to Dropouts Walk and visited 1,741 homes in the neighborhoods around 23 HISD high schools (three more than in the previous year). They persuaded 60 dropouts to come back to school right away and made direct contact with 686 more students or parents about getting dropouts back into class.

## Dropout Recovery Center Created to Keep Students in School

HISD partnered with the nonprofit Kingdom Builder's Center to create a new charter high school designed to help keep children in school. The Dropout Recovery Center serves students who are over-age for their grade level, are far short of meeting graduation requirements, and are likely to drop out of school unless a nontraditional, accelerated intervention program helps them make progress toward graduation. The Dropout Recovery Center offers flexible and self-paced distance learning and nontraditional classroom schedules. Students and their families are linked to social and community programs designed to help them until the student receives a high-school diploma. Students are also provided job opportunities in the Houston area that will enable them to work and go to school until graduation.

## Truancy Initiative Helps Get Students Back in Class

To help students get back in the classroom and graduate from high school, HISD created a "Truancy Initiative" in which HISD Police supervisors work with other departments in the district to locate students who are not coming to school. Managers in the Student Engagement Department, who administer the "Reach Out to Dropouts" walk each year, get enrollment lists from school administrators that provide student names, addresses, schools, and periods of truancy. Working the truancy detail in two-hour shifts, twice per week, HISD Police officers then conduct address checks and home visits. HISD also strengthened the *Code of Student Conduct* by making repeat offenders of truancy eligible for referrals to disciplinary alternative-education programs.

## HISD Redesigning Four High Schools

In addition to an initial grant from the Texas Education Agency, HISD received a \$2.39-million grant from the Texas High School Project to redesign Stephen F. Austin, Ebbert Furr, Jesse Jones, and Evan Worthing High Schools. As part of this redesign, the schools used the "High Schools that Work" model, which is based on high expectations and creating a culture of continuous improvement. The schools used the funds to collaborate on focused improvement and were given additional flexibility on staffing, training, scheduling, and other issues under the direction of a new executive principal of high-school redesign. The Texas High School Project is a unique public-private partnership dedicated to making sure all Texas students graduate from high school ready for college and career success and prepared to be contributing members of the community. Major partners include the Texas Education Agency, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and the Communities Foundation of Texas.

## State Awards HISD Grant to Improve Struggling Schools

HISD received nearly \$3.9 million from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for 23 campuses that needed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind law. The district also appropriated \$2 million for additional resources for schools that were rated as Academically Unacceptable under the state accountability system for one or two years or are "targeted schools," which are schools that would have been academically unacceptable under the 2007 state standards. The improvement efforts included assistance from a TEA-approved campus administration mentor and technical assistance providers who work with the principal and teachers as consultants to guide each school through the improvement process.



## HISD Offers Tuition-Based Prekindergarten, Extends PreK to Daycare Centers

Because early childhood education is important to future academic success, HISD began offering prekindergarten on a tuition basis to students who do not meet the eligibility requirements to attend prekindergarten for free. With the expansion of the district's early childhood education program, parents may enroll their four-year-old children in a full-day, ten-month HISD prekindergarten program at participating neighborhood schools (on a space-available basis), for a state-set fee of \$405 per month.

HISD also received a \$5.2-million state grant to continue HISD's full-day prekindergarten programs and provide instructional support through professional development; the grant will help HISD continue to provide services for nearly 3,400 students in 154 classrooms at 70 elementary schools.

Also, HISD used a \$250,000 Prekindergarten School Readiness grant from the Texas Education Agency to fund a Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) program. Under the program, five certified HISD prekindergarten teachers teach more than 25 TEEM prekindergarten classes in five licensed daycare centers to help their teachers provide early childhood education services to young children. HISD's Research and Accountability Office tracks the participating students to kindergarten to determine whether they scored "developed" ("has mastered the skill") in more areas than their peers districtwide on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory's reading and comprehension tests or those of the *Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas (Tejas LEE)*.

## HISD Expands Chinese and Japanese Language Programs

Because China and Japan are economic powerhouses in the world and learning their languages opens up many exciting and well-paying career opportunities in the global marketplace, HISD strengthened the instruction in one or both of those languages at Jennie Kolter Elementary School and Albert Johnston Middle School. A U.S. Department of Education grant enhanced Kolter's existing Japanese program and supported the continuation of a new Chinese program to serve one class at each grade level (kindergarten through 5) for both languages. This enabled Kolter students to study Chinese or Japanese in middle and high school without needing remedial coursework. The project will also deepen the language instruction at Kolter by involving students' families. The Chinese Community Center will provide adult "leisure learning" activities to increase family knowledge of and respect for these ancient cultures. In addition, a federal grant will help Johnston Middle School create a program in which students in grades 6–8 will learn to read, write, speak, and understand Mandarin Chinese. The funds will also support summer Mandarin Chinese classes for teachers at Johnston and other schools.

## TV Show Teams Up Math, Sports

In 2007, HISD premiered a new TV show targeted to students in kindergarten through the sixth grade. *Math-A-Let's* makes mathematics fun and exciting by presenting it from a challenging sports angle designed to engage kids' imagination through their love of athletics. The show is broadcast on the HISD Educational Access Channel and was also featured on FOX News 26 on a "Building Better Minds" segment.

## After-School Enrichment Programs Receive Harris County Funding

HISD received a \$927,000 grant from the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment (CASE) Partnership Project, part of the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) to improve after-school programs for students between the ages of 4 and 12 at 19 schools. The programs include lessons in creative writing, karate, gymnastics, dance, and etiquette.



## RUSK ELEMENTARY LAUNCHES SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY MAGNET PROGRAM

To give young students a solid grounding in the crucial subject of science, HISD created a new science technology Magnet program at Thomas Rusk Elementary School that includes the addition of additional grade levels, the expansion of the library and computer lab, and the installation of a fully equipped science and technology center appropriate for both middle-school and elementary-school students. The school is located near downtown in Houston's Second Ward and serves students from the neighboring Star of Hope homeless shelter and other small shelters in the community.

## Summer Program Helps Students Retain Knowledge

HISD and the City of Houston launched a program that makes sure students do not lose academic ground made during the school year over the summer vacation. Studies have shown that students can lose as much as one-third of a school year of learning during the summer months—and it can take weeks to recover lost ground when school resumes in the fall. More than 200 second-graders from 24 HISD elementary schools took part in a four-week-long pilot program called the Summer Opportunity Session. The free program is based on a proposal prepared for the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution by two Princeton University economists.

## Math Initiative Implemented in HISD Middle Schools

Building on the successful Houston A+ Challenge/Exxon-Mobil K–5 Math Initiative, which has produced on average a 22-point gain on the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), HISD expanded the elementary-school math program into four West Region middle schools. The ExxonMobil Foundation contributed \$840,000 to develop and launch the Houston A+ Challenge/Exxon-Mobil Middle School Math Initiative, which is expected to reach more than 5,000 middle-school students each year. The program trained and placed one math specialist into each of the four participating HISD middle schools—Walter Fondren, Jane Long, Paul Revere, and Sharpstown. This full-time staff-support specialist helps teachers and administrators enhance their understanding and instruction of math in the classroom, and ultimately affect student achievement in mathematics. In addition, to make sure parents understand the concepts that their children are learning in school, the math specialists and classroom teachers lead Family Math Nights, a parent math-education series featuring “make and take” activities for parents to share with their children. These presentations inform families of the career opportunities in math and engineering, and educate them about the high-school math classes their children will need to take in order to succeed beyond high school.

## College-Readiness Efforts Target Middle Schools

HISD partnered with the national “Just for the Kids” organization to train elementary- and middle-school teachers, administrators, and other members of campus teams in how to make their students better prepared for high school, college, and careers. In the new program, which is sponsored by the National Center for Educational Accountability and designed to help the district to develop a system and culture that will enable all elementary- and middle-school students to reach

college and career benchmarks before they enter high school, teachers and administrators will work in teams to study how their students’ academic performance varies over a three-year period and will compare that academic performance to that of other top schools in Texas. These reports will assist teachers and administrators in helping students be college-ready, regardless of their current skill levels, in four years. The NCEA trained hundreds of program participants, including leadership/improvement teams and district and regional staff members who support the teams, in the most successful educational practices studied in 500 high-performing schools throughout the country and HISD.

## SuccessExpress Buses and Sixth-Grade Program Promote College, Careers

HISD joined with the Sallie Mae Fund and the Kids2College program to create a new college-awareness project to teach sixth-graders about college that sent a specially equipped “HISD *SuccessExpress*” bus to schools and through neighborhoods to inform students, parents, and school staff members about preparing for, getting into, and paying for college. In all, the *SuccessExpress* visited numerous elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition, 1,200 HISD sixth-graders from four middle schools took part in a special six-week curriculum that combined hands-on activities with information about career options and college life, with an option available to spend a day on a college campus to learn more. The University of Houston, Texas Southern University, and Prairie View A&M University were HISD’s partners in the program.



## After-School Soccer Program Also Targets Student Achievement

HISD joined forces with Minute Maid and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department to create a Soccer After School (SAS) program that also advances student achievement. It includes weekly tutorial sessions and was designed for students who do not qualify for University Interscholastic League competition and, for the most part, were not playing organized soccer. Students from three middle schools learned soccer skills, practiced and studied at their schools, and played six weekly games. The program is expected to expand to include three more schools next year.

## **Tennis Initiative Provides Lessons for Inner-City Youth**

HISD received \$360,000 from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment (CASE) for a three-year "After-School Tennis Initiative" that provides students at participating elementary and middle schools with four hours of tennis instruction weekly by coaches at the Houston Tennis Association and the Zina Garrison All-Court Tennis Academy. Twenty after-school sites received the program in 2007, and the number will increase to 40 in 2008 and 60 in 2009.

## **Heart of a Champion Program Stresses Character Education in Middle Schools**

HISD worked with the Houston Texans football team, the Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, and the Heart of a Champion Foundation to teach students at six middle schools the value of teamwork, perseverance, and other positive character traits. The "Heart of a Champion" character-education program makes real-life stories part of weekly lessons that encourage students to apply nine traits—commitment, leadership, perseverance, teamwork, respect, integrity, responsibility, self-control, and compassion—to their own lives through a number of group and individual exercises.

## **New Space-Oriented Physics Program Promotes Math and Science**

HISD collaborated with Space Center Houston, BP America, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and NASA to create the BP Physics Challenge. In this program, which enabled 1,600 HISD juniors and seniors and nearly 100 teachers to work with NASA astronauts and engineers from Houston's aerospace industry, physics students from throughout the district gathered at Space Center Houston and the Johnson Space Center to build and launch rockets and then calculate how much thrust their engines would generate and how high they would fly. Students also explored robotics and the physics of free-falling objects to calculate the mass of other planets. Aligned with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the rigorous science program is designed to stimulate students' interest and abilities in math and science.

## **Grant Helps HISD Find More Science, Math Teachers**

HISD was awarded a nearly \$1.6-million "Transition to Teaching" grant by the U.S. Department of Education for the Science and Mathematics Alternative Route to Teaching (SMART) Project. The third and largest Transition to Teaching grant HISD has received, it will help the district's Alternative Certification Program to recruit 150 nontraditional math and science teachers over the next three years.

## **District Partners with UH to Develop Math and Science Teachers**

HISD forged a partnership with the University of Houston that is helping the district address the critical shortage of math and science teachers by recruiting aspiring educators early in their college careers. The new "teachHouston" program offers UH freshmen and sophomores who plan to major in math or science the opportunity to earn a teaching certificate in their majors, take education courses, and receive tuition reimbursement for their first two education courses.



## **SECOND WINTERFEST BENEFITS FINE-ARTS PROGRAM**

Recognizing the important role that the fine arts play in increasing achievement and developing the talents of our students, HISD and a host of corporate and media partners sponsored the second annual WinterFest, a family-themed arts festival whose proceeds benefit the HISD fine-arts program. Sponsored by H-E-B, KBR, JPMorgan Chase, Chevron, Pepsi, TXU Energy, Wells Fargo, and many other corporations and organizations, the 2007 event raised \$200,000, which will be used to buy or repair musical instruments for our schools.

## **15 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS RECEIVE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FROM THE VH1 FOUNDATION**

The VH1 Save the Music Foundation donated \$450,000 worth of musical instruments to 15 HISD elementary schools to support the role of the fine arts, including music, in a comprehensive, well-rounded education. The HISD Foundation and the VH1 Save the Music Foundation have developed a three-year initiative to establish instrumental music programs in elementary and middle schools. The two foundations worked together to raise local funds for the project, and the VH1 Save the Music Foundation also matched those funds at about 6 to 1 through its national fundraising efforts. The project enables schools that do not provide instrumental music instruction during the regular school day to offer it, by a qualified teacher. Each school chooses the kind of instrument package it would like, with each package valued at \$30,000.



### **GeoFORCE Texas Program Promotes Geoscience Careers**

Through a new partnership with the Jackson School of Geosciences at the University of Texas, math and science students at 25 HISD secondary schools may apply to take part in a free week-long summer program involving geological fieldwork, scientific workshops, and museum visits. The program, called GeoFORCE Texas, is designed to inspire students to pursue college degrees in geological sciences and increase diversity in the field of geosciences. Locations featured in the program include the Grand Canyon in Arizona, Zion National Park in Utah, the Everglades and Canaveral Shores in Florida, the headquarters of the U.S. Geological Survey in Virginia, and the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C.



### **International Studies Academy, International High School, YES Prep Charter Launched**

HISD created the Houston Academy of International Studies to prepare students for college and possible careers in international business. Located on a Houston Community College campus, the dual-credit program is designed to serve up to 400 students in grades 9–12. The graduation requirements include two service-learning projects, four years of foreign-language study, the Texas Scholars curriculum, and a 180-hour internship with an international focus.

The new HISD International High School is located on the campus of Sharpstown High School. This school within a school's rigorous curriculum requires students to take Advanced Placement courses and four years of foreign language and complete an internship with an international focus to graduate. Students also participate in projects and trips that will provide a worldwide perspective. Asia Society and the Houston A+ Challenge were HISD's partners in creating both of these International schools.

In addition, the successful YES Prep Public Schools charter-school organization opened a campus inside HISD's Robert E. Lee High School. YES Prep, an intensive college-preparatory school based on longer school days and weeks and intensive instruction, meshes a comprehensive traditional program with the freedom of a charter school.

### **District Building Another Early College High School**

HISD will build an early college high school on the new east campus of Houston Community College. As part of HISD's college-bound culture, the program provides high-school students the opportunity to earn college credit as well as have access to college facilities to get a jump-start on college. The \$7-million Early College High School facility will open in August of the 2008–2009 school year.

### **Furr High School Opens HISD's First Film School**

Committed to meeting students' needs and serving their interests, HISD closed the international-studies Magnet program at Ebbert Furr High School and opened the district's first Magnet film school on that campus. The groundbreaking program gives Furr students, 91 percent of whom live at or near the poverty line, a chance to learn how to create their own movies. Furr decided to develop a new film school because the campus already has a successful documentary film class, whose work is aired on the HISD cable channel, and the school has been home to a successful Fine Arts Academy, integrating visual arts and humanities since 2000. Also, surveys of students, teachers, parents, and feeder-pattern principals indicated strong interest in the fine arts among students on Houston's east side.



## HISD Creates Newspaper and Television Journalism Program

More than a dozen students from five different HISD high schools graduated from the inaugural *Houston Chronicle* Classroom Program. The 13 students from Ebbert Furr, Jesse Jones, Booker T. Washington, Westbury, and Jack Yates High Schools visited the newspaper's headquarters for a few hours every weekday afternoon during the school year to learn from professional journalists how to interview sources, conduct research, and write their own articles. The students published two newspapers in which they generated the ideas, conducted all the interviews, provided photographs, and wrote and edited most of the stories. Several students also had stories published in the *Chronicle*, and they all contributed stories and blogs to a Web site. They also completed a two-week internship at KHOU-TV (Channel 11), in which they learned how to create story budgets, operate a camera, edit videotape, and produce and stage a newscast.

## Newcomer Charter High School Gets New Home, Name

Opened in January 2005 on the campus of Robert E. Lee High School for recent immigrants between the ages of 17 and 21, HISD's Newcomer Charter High School moved into its own facility in January 2007. As suggested by students, teachers, and community members, HISD gave the school a new name that reflects its mission and significance. Liberty High School helps older school-age recent immigrants graduate from high school, go to college, and become productive, informed members of society. The school offers intensive instruction in English, year-long schooling, and flexible scheduling to 195 students. This is especially important because many of them must work full-time to support their families.

## District Pilots Electronic Course Program

HISD began taking part in a virtual-school pilot program sponsored by the Texas Education Agency that gives schools and students the flexibility they might need to perform at their highest levels. The Electronic Course Pilot program requires students to be enrolled in a class for a certain number of hours every weekday and to work a minimum of six hours per day using a combination of online and offline instructional activities. The courses are available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to HISD students in grades 9–12, and the expectation is that students will log in to their courses at least once a day for five days within a seven-day week.

## HISD Students Recognized for Excellence

HISD's annual National Academic Achievement Awards Reception recognized the 120 HISD students who were finalists in the National Achievement Scholarship, National Hispanic Recognition, and National Merit Scholarship programs. All three scholarship programs select finalists on the basis of performance on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), participation in community activities, and application essays.

## HISD SCHOOLS MAKE STATE HONOR ROLL

Sixteen HISD schools were named to the prestigious Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) Honor Roll. Fewer than 5 percent of the more than 8,000 public schools in Texas earn the honor. Some of the 16 HISD schools recognized in 2007 have been on the list for several consecutive years. The TBEC Honor Roll recognizes schools that have demonstrated three years of consistent, high performance in all subjects compared to other schools serving similar student populations. TBEC Honor Roll schools have the highest percentage of students meriting "commended" status on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

### HISD schools making the TBEC Honor Roll for 2007

Andrew Carnegie Vanguard High School\*  
Al Condit Elementary School\*  
John Cornelius Elementary School  
Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions\*  
Eastwood Academy High School  
Energized for Excellence Middle School\*  
The High School for Performing and Visual Arts\*  
John F. Kennedy Elementary School\*  
Sidney Lanier Middle School\*  
E. A. "Squatty" Lyons Elementary School\*\*  
Project Chrysalis Middle School  
T. H. Rogers Elementary School\*  
T. H. Rogers Middle School\*  
West University Elementary School\*  
William Wharton Elementary School  
Edward White Elementary School\*

*\*Honored for two or more consecutive years*

*\*\*Honored for five consecutive years*

## Class of 2007 Offered Almost \$64.5 Million in Scholarships

Every year, HISD's graduating seniors receive scholarship offers from dozens of organizations and local, state, and national colleges and universities. In all, 1,850 members of the Class of 2007 received nearly \$64.5 million in scholarship offers: \$54.4 million in academic scholarships for the district's most-successful, college-ready students and more than \$7 million in athletic scholarships for HISD's outstanding student athletes.

The district shall develop and implement a strategic plan with specific long-range actions that ensure the safety and security of all who are at district schools and facilities or attending district-related events.



## GOAL 2

### PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

#### HISD Drafts Sweeping Safety Plan

HISD drafted a district safety plan that recommended a wide variety of ways to make students and employees safer and was commended by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott. The proposal called for the number of HISD Police officers assigned to high schools and middle schools and patrols around elementary schools to increase from 175 to 220 over a period of time, and even before a final version of the plan was submitted to the Board of Education, HISD increased the police presence on district campuses by 20 officers in 2007 and developed plans to add another 30 officers over the next several years.

The draft proposal recommended doubling the number of random metal-detector searches and the number of random drug and weapons searches by the department's trained dogs. The plan also proposed more counseling to prevent crime at school, more school buses with cameras and satellite tracking systems, a new system of gathering and reporting crime data, a new truancy unit to work with school attendance specialists and the community to make sure students are in school every day, more precise targeting of schools with potential crime issues so that more officers can be added to those campuses, more counseling and other services for students to help them stay away from unsafe situations, training for HISD counselors in how to do a violence risk assessment, and a full evaluation of schools' closed-circuit security-camera systems.

Other recommendations in the proposal were the creation of a Gang Prevention and Enforcement program to work with HISD's Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Department and the City of Houston to help identify gang affiliation among students and reduce it, the development of a special training program to help students be safe while they are traveling to and from school every day, and the testing of a program to identify and track school-bus riders.

#### HISD Police Department Earns Second National Accreditation

The HISD Police Department was reaccredited as a law-enforcement agency by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. First accredited in 2003 for meeting more than 300 standards in nine different areas of performance, HISD continues to be the only school district in the United States and Canada with an accredited police department.

#### New Radio System Upgrades Police Communication

To ensure maximum student, employee, and campus safety districtwide, the HISD Police Department acquired access to Harris County's radio system, enabling the department to instantly communicate with dozens of local, county, and state law-enforcement agencies in the event of an emergency or crisis situation. New radios and a partnership with Harris County provide HISD Police officers with the ability to communicate with emergency first-responders immediately, without the delay of first going through a dispatch center. These improvements will also eliminate "radio blackout" areas, places where HISD Police officers cannot communicate using their radios.

#### Armored Car Service Extended to Elementary Schools

Because the HISD goal of "Provide a Safe Environment" applies to employees as well as students and visitors to district facilities, HISD began using an armored-car service to take secondary schools' daily cafeteria funds to the bank, relieving employees of that potentially dangerous responsibility. This year, HISD extended professional courier service to elementary schools, thereby protecting their employees from possible robbery, as well.

#### Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Department Honored

The Houston Mayor's Crackdown Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Clear Channel Outdoor Communication recognized HISD's Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program for its work in ridding the district's communities, schools, and workplaces of drugs. The salute included the public display of a billboard donated by the DEA and Clear Channel that names HISD as the recipient of the Community Star Award.

#### School-Bus Safety, Reliability Enhanced

HISD reduced the number of school-bus breakdowns and accidents in 2007 and enhanced students' safety, thanks to improved maintenance procedures and the district's annual training program for its approximately 1,000 bus drivers. The number of breakdowns fell 25 percent, from 1,297 in 2006 to 976 in 2007, and the district's more than 800 buses were involved in eight fewer accidents, 332 in the 2006–2007 school year versus 340 during 2005–2006 school year.



*HISD Police Chief Charles Wiley (right) congratulates Officers Stephanie Clinton and Richard Frankie, along with their canine partners Reno (left) and Teka, after their induction into the American Police Hall of Fame in 2007.*

## **HISD CANINE TEAMS WIN GOLD MEDAL AT STATE POLICE COMPETITION, INDUCTED INTO NATIONAL HALL OF FAME**

An HISD Police officer and her canine partner won a gold medal in the Texas Police Games, an annual competition hosted by the Texas Police Athletics Federation. Stephanie Clinton and “Reno” placed first in the canine narcotics search event, in which canine teams from throughout the state search a building and a parking lot for various hidden drugs such as cocaine and marijuana. The team that finds the drugs the quickest, without making mistakes, wins. In addition, Officer Clinton and Reno, along with Officer Richard Frankie and his canine partner Teka, were inducted into the American Police Hall of Fame. Located in Titusville, Florida, it is operated by the National Association of Chiefs of Police and the American Federation of Police and Concerned Citizens.

To help make sure that students are safe as they travel to and from school, HISD toughened the *Code of Student Conduct* to prohibit disruptive behavior at school-bus stops. The district has also installed hundreds of digital video cameras on school buses for on-board surveillance and annually trains bus drivers to be alert to signs of potential terrorist behavior and to inspect a school bus before starting a route, including checking for hidden, suspicious packages left between seats or near the driver’s seat or on other parts of the bus. Drivers are also taught to be aware of and immediately report anyone at a school-bus facility or along a route who is asking unusual questions about school buses and bus routes. The training enables the drivers to become certified experts in the “School Bus Watch” program directed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

## **Ban on All Forms of Harassment Strengthened, Clarified**

Because a safe learning environment is essential to a good education, HISD broadened and clarified the district’s ban on all forms of harassment. The *Code of Student Conduct* was strengthened to forbid unwanted physical or verbal aggression, harassment (including sexual harassment), and other forms of bullying by students on school grounds and in school vehicles. Board policy was also revised to outline the steps the district takes to process and investigate complaints of harassment by HISD students or employees. To make the new policy as clear as possible, it includes examples of behavior that courts and federal antidiscrimination laws have identified as prohibited harassment.

## **Harsher Penalties for Bullying and Cheating**

HISD augmented the districtwide *Code of Student Conduct* with new penalties for any student who bullies or verbally abuses another student, and for any kind of academic cheating. The new policy made bullying or verbal abuse a serious offense, with principals having the authority to suspend students or send them to a disciplinary alternative school. Cheating, plagiarism, and copying the work of another student also were categorized as serious offenses. Students who are found to be cheating have their parents notified immediately, and the parents are required to attend a special conference with the principal. The students could also receive in-school detention or suspension, lose the right to ride a school bus, and be barred from extracurricular activities such as sports and band.





HISD will have in place a decentralized organizational structure with operational practices and procedures that distinguish between the school district's pedagogical and business aspects and employ best practices with proven business and administrative operational principles for efficient delivery of services and goods to the schools.



## GOAL 3

### INCREASE MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

#### **HISD Earns High Marks for Financial Integrity, Top Credit Ratings**

HISD received the highest rating possible for financial integrity (as established by the Texas Education Agency) in a report released by the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas ("School FIRST"). The report showed that the district's administrative cost ratio (administrative expenditures versus instructional expenditures) was 5.5 percent—significantly below the state's 11.05 percent limit for large districts, and below that of most other large Texas school districts.

HISD also earned and maintained exceptional bond ratings from Standard and Poor's (S&P) and Moody's credit-rating services. HISD enjoys a "triple-A" (AAA) program rating and "double-A" (AA) issuer credit rating on the district's bonds and notes. S&P recently assigned a double-A rating to HISD's 2007 debt offering. In addition, Moody's assigned the high "Aa2" rating to HISD's 2007 debt issue and affirmed the "Aa2" rating on the district's long-term debt, noting that HISD's conservative budgeting is keeping reserves well above policy levels.

The hard work and expertise of the Offices of the Controller and Chief Financial Officer that produced these distinctions also earned prestigious national awards. The Association of School Business Officials awarded HISD the district's 30th Meritorious Budget Award. The criteria for this honor, which HISD has won more often than any other school district in America, were developed to provide school business officials with budgeting guidelines that encourage a user-friendly budget document that explains to the general public what is happening in the school district or college in language that everyone can understand. In addition, HISD

won an award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the outstanding work of the Budgeting and Financial Planning Department and Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Founded in 1910, the Virginia-based ASBO International is a professional association of approximately 6,000 school-business-management professionals.

#### **New Contract for Superintendent Raises Level of Accountability**

HISD replaced the superintendent of schools' three-year contract with a renewable one-year pact to raise the level of accountability for student progress and place the superintendent's employment in the district on par with other administrators'.

#### **Medical Plans Offer More Services With No Increase in Premiums**

To help employees prevent or treat diabetes and high blood pressure, which can cause serious physical disorders, heart attacks, and strokes, HISD launched a pilot program to offer generic diabetes and hypertension drugs, as well as injectable insulin, with no insurance co-pay requirements to participants in any of the HISD medical plans. The program was so well received by employees that the district expanded it to include several other classes of therapeutic drugs that treat high blood pressure and various other conditions, particularly the classes called beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, and diuretics.

#### **HISD Health-Care Partnership Program Recognized**

HISD won an award from former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop for improving employee health care and saving millions of dollars in the process. The district received an Honorable Mention C. Everett Koop National Health Award from Dr. Koop's "The Health Project" for "The Health Care Partnership." The HISD-created health-care program operates as a partnership in which member districts choose plan structures and other options on the basis of their own needs, as well as launching new additions to the program. It is estimated to have saved participating districts about \$300 million over five years. In recognizing HISD, the Health Project said the district is "doing sound and effective work at the very cutting edge of excellence."

#### **Workers' Compensation Department Wins National Award**

HISD became the first public-school system to win the Theodore Roosevelt Workers' Compensation and Disability Management Award when the district's Workers' Compensation Department was recognized for its innovative back-to-work program's success in lowering the number and cost of injuries to workers. Through an initiative begun in 2002, the department developed detailed job descriptions, including a physical-demand analysis of each job, and established a testing regime for injured employees that includes safely



performing physical maneuvers associated with their jobs. As a result, lost-time claims were reduced to 34 days from 152 days in four years. HISD has also cut the average number of employees off work every day because of work-related injuries by more than half (from 168 days in 2003 to 73 in 2007). In addition, the time lost due to injury in 2007 was one-fourth of what it was five years earlier (21.7 weeks versus 4.9 weeks), and the number of active claims dropped 26.6 percent (from 1,213 to 890). Overall, HISD has cut costs in what is one of the district's five biggest expenses, reducing claims costs by \$3.9 million—or 24 percent—and further program changes permitted a reduction to the 2006–2007 General Fund budget of more than \$3 million.

### **Per-Unit Allocation, Teacher Incentive Pay Increased by \$20 Million**

HISD is committed to providing a high-quality education to every student, and the district does everything possible to make sure its schools have the funds and other resources they need to continually increase student achievement. To help achieve this crucial goal, for 2007–2008 HISD raised the school-based allocations to cover the cost of the salary increases that the district made the previous school year. The per-unit allocations were \$3,071 for elementary schools, \$3,096 for middle schools, and \$3,085 for high schools. Each was just over \$200 more than what schools received last year. HISD also continued to pay small-school subsidies.

Also in 2007 the district increased the amount of teacher incentive pay that can be earned by adding an additional \$8 million to the amount available for teacher incentive pay at all schools.

### **HISD Makes External Charter Schools More Competitive**

Until 2007, HISD's external-charter schools collected tuition from students who live outside district boundaries even if their parents work in charter schools. To make them competitive with state open-enrollment charters—which can enroll students regardless of where they live and do not charge tuition—and to make sure they have enough resources—which are tied to the number of students enrolled—HISD began to allow its external charters to enroll out-of-district students, including the children of charter and district employees, on a nontuition basis after all qualifying in-district students have been enrolled. HISD receives the average daily attendance funding from the state for these students.

### **Athletics Programs Studied for Possible Improvement**

In keeping with the Board Monitoring System's requirement to evaluate programs and services for effectiveness, HISD formed an Athletics Study Committee to review the district's current athletics programs and systems, determine how they compare to those in similar school districts, and recommend ways they could be improved. Chaired by an official of the University Interscholastic League, the 10-member committee reviewed the HISD Athletics Department's organization, staffing, funding, and business operations, and considered ways to build and maintain high-quality coaching staffs, increase student participation in all athletics programs, and improve athletics facilities.

### **HISD OFFERS HIGH-DEMAND TEACHERS LARGER, EARLIER SIGN-ON BONUSES**

In order to recruit highly sought-after math, science, and bilingual teachers, including those who have not yet graduated from college, HISD began offering larger sign-on bonuses as high as \$6,000, and offering them earlier in the year, to give the most in-demand “core” teachers more time to make their career decisions.

### **SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS WITH NO TEACHER SHORTAGE**

HISD began the school year with a full complement of teachers, hiring 1,209 teachers over the summer and hiring them at a much faster pace than in recent years. Due to bonuses as high as \$6,000 offered earlier than previously (before new teachers get out of college and before veteran teachers in other districts had made their decisions), and to the district's new teacher-performance-pay program that lets teachers earn thousands more, HISD recruiters were able to hire 859 new teachers by the first closely with regional superintendents to make sure teacher candidates were interviewed, hired, and placed quickly. In prior years, the highest number of new teachers HISD had hired by the first week of July was 747, or 15 percent less than in 2007. HISD raised the average teacher's pay by 5.7 percent in 2007 and has raised teacher pay an average of 56 percent in nine years.





**GENERAL FUND:** *Comparative statements of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2007 and 2006.*

## Revenues

	2007	2006
Local Sources	\$ 1,158,076,317	\$ 1,137,543,114
State Sources	358,462,504	211,851,570
Federal Sources	5,785,208	6,620,729
Total Revenues	<u>1,522,324,029</u>	<u>1,356,015,413</u>

## Expenditures

Current		
Instruction	790,080,885	731,205,216
Instructional Resources and Media Services	14,193,678	14,019,798
Instructional Staff Development	8,649,259	8,641,657
Curriculum Development	3,942,755	2,870,842
Instructional Leadership	14,342,081	14,474,824
School Leadership	109,853,186	103,518,067
Guidance, Counseling, and Evaluation Services	36,606,692	34,620,951
Social Work Services	1,122,104	1,233,347
Health Services	17,664,335	16,426,806
Student (Pupil) Transportation	45,889,515	37,261,632
Food Services	174,304	144,594
Cocurricular/Extracurricular Activities	10,575,488	11,449,167
General Administration	28,915,387	31,743,141
Plant Maintenance and Operations	176,253,763	163,089,014
Security and Monitoring Services	18,608,151	15,422,118
Data Processing Services	30,293,346	24,243,292
Community Services	2,199,579	2,286,572
Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs	329,541	1,759,380
Tax Reinvestment Zone Payments	32,221,847	30,446,611
Debt Service	118,495	101,034
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	448,320	727,507
Total Expenditures	<u>1,342,482,711</u>	<u>1,245,685,570</u>

Deficiency of Revenues Under Expenditures	<u>179,841,318</u>	<u>110,329,843</u>
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## Other Financing Sources (Uses)

Operating Transfers In	13,200,000	13,126,472
Operating Transfers Out	(100,878,706)	(48,931,576)
Capital Leases	47,521	97,233
Issuance of Bonds and Other Debt	13,000,000	21,000,000
Premium on the Sale of Bonds	2,000	38,520
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	<u>(74,629,185)</u>	<u>(14,669,351)</u>
Net Change in Fund Balances	105,212,133	95,660,492
Fund Balance at Beginning of Year	<u>352,552,141</u>	<u>256,891,649</u>
Fund Balance at End of Year	<u>\$ 457,764,274</u>	<u>\$ 352,552,141</u>

## Money-Saving Records Center Opened

HISD opened its own Records Center so it would no longer have to rent storage space from the Harris County Department of Education. The district moved 19,000 boxes of stored paper-based records into the new facility, which is now the district's records repository and will save HISD approximately \$40,000 annually in storage fees.

## New Online Program Teaches Drivers' Education, Raises School Funds

HISD provided a convenient way for students to complete their drivers' education by taking the online Parent-Taught Drivers' Education (PTDE) course on their own time and at their own pace. In addition, high schools received up to \$20 from the course provider for each student who signed up for the class, a mix of interactive online modules and printable lesson plans that allows a designated parent or legal guardian to guide his or her teen through each step of learning to drive—from learning the rules of the road, passing the instruction-permit test, and practicing behind the wheel, to getting the actual driver's license.

## Redesigned District Web Site Adds Features, Improves Service

Teams from HISD's Technology and Information Systems and Communication Services Departments redesigned HISDConnect, the district's Web portal, to provide better service to employees and the public. Upgraded software improved overall site organization and performance, and simplified navigation reduced the number of "clicks" to find needed information. Many new features were added to the site, including home page tab areas with popular links for parents, employees, and the general public; improved search capability thanks to better keyword and category use; a bulletin-board feature (tabbed area on homepage) for departments and schools to announce events; and "Print-this-page" capability on most articles or pages.



The local, state, and national public will view HISD as a large urban district in which achievement is primary, performance is high, educators accept responsibility for student learning, administrators and support-services personnel exist to support the relationship between teacher and student, accountability exists at all levels, and there is respect among all segments of the community. Concomitantly, public confidence in public schools will improve.



## GOAL 4

### INCREASE PUBLIC SUPPORT AND CONFIDENCE IN SCHOOLS

#### **HISD Inaugurates Effort to Change Public Perception of Education**

To help create a college-bound culture in every school and household in the district, HISD launched an outreach campaign called “Changing the Way We Think.” With creative support from Yaffe|Deutser and financial support from the HISD Foundation, media companies, and other organizations, the outreach effort used billboards, television messages, newspaper announcements, and the HISD Web site to change the way the community thinks about learning, teachers, college, tomorrow, parents, community, and partnership.

#### **Vanguard Programs Open to More Students, Selection Process Fairer, Expectations Higher**

To make the system fairer for parents and students, HISD opened its popular Vanguard programs for gifted and talented children to more students and improved the selection process by standardizing the criteria used to identify gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade 12. These programs serve nearly 25,000 students in gifted and talented (G/T) programs, Vanguard neighborhood programs in every school, and 20 Vanguard Magnet schools throughout the city. The changes were recommended by a special committee of parents and community members created to examine all of the school district’s services for gifted and talented students. With additional input from school-based employees,

the district developed 14 standards based on those recommendations. In addition, to make the programs more challenging, administrators make random, walk-through evaluations of G/T classroom instruction, and G/T students in high school must take at least two advanced academic classes, such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes, rather than just one. Further, G/T students are expected to score above grade level on the Stanford achievement test or its Spanish-language equivalent, and to achieve “commended” status on the state TAKS test.

#### **Earlier Magnet Notification Helps Parents Make Placement Decisions**

The district moved up the date for notifying parents whether their children had been accepted into HISD Magnet programs, including Vanguard programs, to help them make their decisions about whether to place their children in public or private school. The earlier date (March 30 rather than April 11) meant that parents knew their children’s Magnet-program status and public- and private-school options prior to the deadlines for enrolling in other schools. The April 20 deadline for parents to notify a Magnet program that their child will participate remained the same.

#### **HISD Expands Adult-Education Programs, Launches Parent Prep Academy**

HISD strengthened its efforts to help parents improve their English literacy, civics knowledge, and computer skills and to help develop parents as partners, learners, and leaders. The district created the Parent Prep Academy as an umbrella for existing parent-development opportunities and to build additional resources throughout HISD. The Parent Prep Academy provides vital information and resources and offers capacity-building courses in neighborhood schools and community centers at convenient times. The programs include Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), which focuses on parenting and school readiness for children ages 3 to 5; and the Family Leadership Institute, which provides immigrant/migrant Hispanic families with the knowledge and tools to help their first- and second-generation children succeed in school and in life. HISD also continued its partnership with the Mexican Institute of Greater Houston, which offers basic computer courses through Community Learning Centers in Houston and the surrounding areas. These centers, located in HISD schools and area community colleges, teach basic computer skills to Hispanic parents in Spanish. HISD now offers the four-year-old program in 62 locations, more than 4,200 parents have taken the classes, and more than 2,230 have graduated from the 16-week program. The district used an English-Literacy and Civics Education grant from the Texas Education Agency to offer more English-literacy services and develop adult-education programs that combine English literacy and civics education. The goal is to help parents learn to read and write English, obtain the knowledge and skills needed to find good jobs and manage their daily lives, complete a secondary-school education, and become full partners in the educational development of their children.





*2007 HISD Board of Education (l-r) Second Vice President Greg Meyers, Trustee Dianne Johnson, Superintendent of Schools Abelardo Saavedra, First Vice President Harvin C. Moore, Secretary Arthur M. Gaines Jr., Trustee Kevin H. Hoffman, President Manuel Rodríguez Jr., Trustee Lawrence Marshall, Trustee Diana Dávila, and Assistant Secretary Natasha M. Kamrani.*

## BOARD OF EDUCATION EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS

HISD's Board of Education received two national honors for its outstanding and innovative leadership of the largest school system in the country. Previously nominated for the recognition in 2006, the school board shared with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools board the Urban School-Board Excellence Award presented by the National School Boards Association's Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE). The HISD board also won a 2007 Magna Award from the *American School Board Journal* for its Community Builders Program for community outreach. The inside cover of this report contains a full description of these honors and their criteria.



## HISD Seeks Health Insurance for Every Student

Texas has the highest rate of uninsured children in the nation, but HISD is working to get health insurance for every HISD student. The district joined the "100% Campaign," paid for entirely by the Children's Defense Fund Texas through the support of local hospital partners. The goal of the campaign is to enroll every eligible HISD student in a health-insurance plan and to reduce emergency-room costs for local hospitals and taxpayers. The project will use data from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation "insure•a•kid" Texas Grants for School Outreach that identifies the health-insurance status of children by adding a question to school enrollment forms. Health-care partners in the project will include Memorial Hermann Healthcare System, Texas Children's Hospital/Texas Children's Health Plan/Texas Children's Pediatric Associates, and St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities.

## District Replaces Students' Risky Food for Free

To ensure students' safety, in February 2007 HISD reacted to a nationwide peanut-butter recall issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a result of possible salmonella contamination by collecting peanut-butter sandwiches children brought from home and replacing them with safe sandwiches made in school cafeteria kitchens. Schools used HISD's automated phone-messaging system to tell parents about the recall and the districtwide, no-charge replacement of peanut-butter sandwiches brought from home.

## District Finds New Way to Fund, Support School Projects

HISD teamed up with DonorsChoose, a Web-based non-profit organization that has directed more than \$7 million in charitable contributions to teachers for much-needed projects or learning materials. Teachers in 30 HISD schools have received more than \$150,000 worth of donations through the program, which combines teachers' proposals for educational projects and needs for materials with contributors willing to help.

## Sports Clubs Join HISD in Urging Athletes to Stay Steroid- and Drug-Free

Four Houston professional sports teams—the Houston Astros, Houston Dynamo, Houston Rockets, and Houston Texans—joined forces with HISD in an unprecedented joint effort to urge middle- and high-school athletes to stay drug- and steroid-free. A member of each team appears in the "Be Smart. Stay Drug Free." poster created for display in all HISD middle and high schools. Among the organizations endorsing the project are the University Interscholastic League, Texas Association of School Administrators, Texas High School Coaches Association, and Taylor Hooten Foundation Against Steroid Abuse.



## HISD Schools Make Two Magazine “Best” Lists

Twenty-eight HISD schools made *Texas Monthly*’s fourth annual honor roll of the “Best Public Schools in Texas.” *Texas Monthly* assembled the list in partnership with the National Center for Educational Accountability (formerly Just for the Kids), which analyzed student test results for the past three years to rank Texas public schools. Out of 7,956 public schools in Texas, 859 were named the best in the state. According to the *Texas Monthly* article, “Students at the elementary schools that are included performed better, across all grades, on the TAKS test than did their counterparts at other schools around the state. Middle schools and high schools made the list because their students’ improvement on the TAKS test was higher than predicted by their previous test scores.”

Out of more than 18,000 high schools in America, Andrew Carnegie Vanguard High School and Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions both made *U.S. News and World Report*’s first-ever “gold medal” list of the top 100 high schools in the nation. This made HISD the only school district in Harris County to have any schools on the inaugural top-100 list. DeBakey was ranked number 87 and Carnegie Vanguard number 96. Four other HISD schools were named silver and bronze medal-winners by the magazine, signifying they also are among the nation’s best. The High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice and High School for Performing and Visual Arts won silver medals, and Challenge Early College High School and Eastwood Academy won bronze medals. In all, 14 Harris County schools were rated as either gold, silver, or bronze, and six of the 14 schools are in HISD. To create the list, *U.S. News and World Report* used a formula produced in collaboration with School Evaluation Services, a K–12 data research and analysis business operated by the investment-information firm of Standard & Poor’s.

## HISD Helps Preserve Urban Wildlife Refuge

HISD had owned an Inner Loop property on West 11th Street between T. C. Jester and Ella Boulevard for 57 years, for the purpose of someday building a school on the site. But the district never built a school on the 20-acre wooded area, which was home to more than 200 plant species, 33 species of butterflies, 81 species of birds (including five species of woodpeckers and a pair of great horned owls), and a number of separate wetlands. HISD sold the site, which had been used as a park by residents of the area and other citizens, to the City of Houston for preservation as an urban wilderness area.

## HISD Headquarters’ Sculpture Garden Showcases Student Art

As part of HISD’s new fine-arts focus, the district created a permanent sculpture garden in front of the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center to display three-dimensional student artwork. The first works to be displayed were four student-painted cowboy boots that were entered in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo “Boot Scoot” competition. The six-foot-tall boots were painted with unique designs by middle- and high-school students.

## Educators from Around the World Visit HISD

Every year, scores of educators from throughout Texas, across the nation, and around the world visit HISD to study the district’s programs and operations. In 2007, HISD hosted delegations from California, New York, North Carolina, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri, Utah, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Indiana, and New Mexico. The foreign nations that signed HISD’s guest book included Austria, France, Scotland, the United Kingdom, Holland, Denmark, China, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands, South Korea, Iraq, Taiwan, Tunis, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Brazil, South Africa, New Zealand, the Republic of Georgia, Belarus, the former Yugoslavia, Mongolia, the Czech Republic, and Latvia.

## PARTNERS, VOLUNTEERS HONORED FOR SERVICE TO EDUCATION

HISD highly values the many individuals, corporations, and organizations who donate their time, resources, services, and expertise to help the district give Houston’s children the finest education possible. Every year, HISD formally recognizes its most active and supportive community and corporate partners at the Partnership Hall of Fame breakfast. In 2007, Devon Energy Corporation, Fund for Teachers, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System, and Schlumberger were named to the Hall of Fame. The district also hosts an annual Salute to Volunteers in Public Schools awards ceremony to recognize individuals’ and groups’ contributions to public education in Houston. The honorees at these prestigious events have included some of Houston’s leading citizens and financial, civic, cultural, medical, and philanthropic organizations. This year, more than 45,000 volunteers were registered, an increase of nearly 50 percent over the previous year.



*Four of HISD’s most dedicated community partners were honored in 2007 for their service to Houston’s schoolchildren. The representatives of the companies and organizations inducted into the HISD Partnership Hall of Fame were (l–r) Devon Energy Vice President of the Gulf Division and General Manager Tony Vaughn, Fund for Teachers Executive Director Karen Kovach-Webb, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System Vice President of Clinical Effectiveness and Management Carol Paret, and Senior Vice President of Technology and Strategy for Schlumberger Limited Rod Nelson.*

HISD will have a clearly articulated purpose, with specific goals and objectives that support it. Those will serve as the catalysts for creating a powerful sense of community and shared direction among HISD personnel, parents, students, and the public.



## GOAL 5

### CREATE A POSITIVE DISTRICT CULTURE

#### Statement of Strategic Intent Amended to Include Commitment to Prekindergarten

Because providing Houston's young people with the best education available anywhere requires beginning the learning process as early as possible, HISD has begun offering full-day prekindergarten programs to all eligible four-year-olds. To reflect this expanded focus on early-childhood education as a vehicle for increasing student achievement in all grades, which is HISD's primary goal, HISD expanded one of its foundation philosophies to include prekindergarten, not just kindergarten. The district's statement of strategic intent now reads "to earn so much respect from the citizens of Houston that HISD becomes their prekindergarten through grade 12 educational system of choice."

#### Survey Helps HISD Central Office Better Serve Schools

To find out how the central administration could do a better job of meeting the needs of the district's schools, HISD commissioned an independent survey of their principals. Part of the district's new "Changing the Way We Think" outreach campaign and its emphasis on customer service, the survey asked principals to rate departments on a five-point scale on support given to the schools, responsiveness, courtesy and professionalism, quality of knowledge, and an overall rating. Most departments earned ratings of 3 ("acceptable") or 4 ("above average"), and virtually every HISD central department earned far more "exemplary" and "above average" ratings from principals than "below average" or "unacceptable." In keeping with HISD's commitment to performance management and outstanding customer service, central-office departments were urged to concentrate on providing better service to schools and prompt and courteous customer service.

#### ASPIRE Award Program Improves on Year-Old Teacher-Performance-Pay System

HISD developed a landmark teacher-performance-pay system in 2006 as a way of identifying and rewarding teachers for strong academic growth by children and as a tool for recruiting and retaining the best teachers. The district paid out more than \$15 million in bonuses to teachers and staff members in January 2007. The district then expanded and refined the program by creating the ASPIRE (Accelerating Student Progress. Increasing Results & Expectations) Award Program, with input from an advisory panel of teachers and respected national experts. The new plan pays the most money—up to \$7,300—to teachers of core academic subjects such as English language arts, math, science, and social studies for their individual success in helping children improve academically. It also rewards groups of teachers for their successful teamwork and all instructional staff members on a campus when a school makes the highest amount of comparable improvement or earns the highest ratings under the Texas accountability system.

As part of the ASPIRE Awards, HISD also implemented a new and improved performance-pay program for school principals that ties high-performing principals' performance pay directly to that of successful teachers. The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, which presented HISD with the inaugural Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2002 for the district's overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low- income students, awarded HISD a nearly \$3.6-million Broad Foundation grant for its ASPIRE initiative and the ASPIRE Award Program. The grant will fund award-data development and management, an ASPIRE Web site where teachers can access the information, planning for continuous improvement of the program, and districtwide professional development for teachers and administrators.



#### HISD Gives Back to the Community

Educating Houston's young people is just one way that HISD contributes to the well-being and future of this city. The district also takes part in charitable campaigns that benefit the community and give employees a valuable sense of altruism and partnership. Districtwide HISD efforts in 2007 included the Combined Charities Campaign, which raised tens of thousands of dollars for more than 600 charities and organizations; the March of Dimes' annual WalkAmerica (now called March for Babies), in which more than 700 employees raised thousands of dollars to prevent birth defects; the Junior Achievement Bowl-a-Thon, which attracted nearly 400 employees; and quarterly blood drives at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center. HISD also conducts coat drives, food drives, and programs to support needy families; and the district's HISDConnect Web portal alerts employees and the general public to opportunities to contribute to efforts to fight breast cancer, AIDS, and heart disease, as well as the Toys for Tots campaign.



*During Fine Arts Friday in December 2007, James Burrus Elementary School fourth-graders Chrishay Jones (left) and Aleeshia Moffett (center), and third-grader Denisha Esparza danced to the music of "Ave Maria."*



*Eighth-grader Vianna Trevino sang and played violin with the Albert Johnston Middle School Mariachi Band during a Fine Arts Friday performance in January 2007.*

## **FINE ARTS FRIDAYS SHOWCASE STUDENT PERFORMERS**

As part of the campaign to strengthen HISD schools' fine-arts programs and showcase student performers' talents, the district launched the "Fine Arts Fridays" initiative. For two lunch-time hours every Friday (except during holidays and testing periods), the lobby or the cafeteria lounge area in the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center becomes a performance space for young singers, dancers, and musicians. Coverage of the weekly concerts (including photo galleries) was posted on the district's *HISDConnect* Web portal and shown on the HISD cable channel, and the live performances were complemented by a permanent art gallery in the first-floor hallway of the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center (where installations are changed twice during each school year).



*In December 2007, the Stephen Waltrip High School Jazz Band, under the direction of Charles Stephens, gave a dazzling performance of classic jazz at Fine Arts Friday.*



*Kindergarten students (l-r) Domonick Forney, Antonio Herrera, and Tristan Garcia sang holiday songs in the Eugene Field Elementary School Choir at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center at a Fine Arts Friday performance in November 2007.*



There will be in place a program designed to make all necessary repairs and renovations to bring HISD facilities up to standard. The plan will include the level of long-range and preventive maintenance necessary to keep the buildings properly up to standard.



## GOAL 6

### PROVIDE FACILITIES-TO-STANDARD PROGRAM

#### Voters Approve HISD Bond Proposal 2007

Houston voters approved HISD's \$805-million bond issue in the November 6 general election. The initiative, which required no increase in the tax rate, included the construction of 24 new schools, renovations at 134 others, new and



improved science labs at every middle and high school, infrastructure and accessibility improvements at HISD's three sports stadiums, and major safety and security upgrades at every school in the district, including fencing, lighting, and public-address systems,

and security camera systems that can be monitored constantly by the HISD Police Department. The bond issue is the third in a series of three; Houston voters previously approved the 1998 bond issue of \$678 million and the 2002 bond issue of \$808 million. The two previous programs built 41 new schools, renovated more than 100 others, completed \$10 million in playground safety upgrade projects for 125 schools throughout the district, provided \$35 million worth of heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning system upgrades for all middle- and high-school sports complexes in the district, and invested in a new \$14-million bus-maintenance and transportation staff-training facility.

#### Independent Study Identified Facilities Needs, Recommended Ways to Meet Them

In 2007, HISD commissioned Magellan Consulting to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the district's facilities needs. The firm's study, which the district used to prioritize projects when developing its 2007 bond proposal, also included a review of HISD's capital needs, the properties that could be sold, and the funding sources that could be used for the district's future construction programs. The facilities evaluation focused on educational adequacy (What is missing?), building condition (What is broken?), and life-cycle forecasts (What is going to break?) and included room-by-room campus inspections, interviews with principals, and districtwide and school-by-school enrollment projections. The Magellan assessment identified a total facility need of \$1.1 billion and recommended safety and security upgrades for all schools, science-lab upgrades at all secondary schools, 24 new schools, expansion of four existing schools, renovation of the 134 schools not in the Rebuild 2002 bond program, and improvement of stadium infrastructure and accessibility.

#### HISD Devotes \$63 Million to Critical Facility Repairs

HISD began allocating funds from the \$232-million, six-year facilities improvement and repair project approved in November 2006 by devoting \$61 million from that "pay-as-you-go" fund to critically important repairs of roofs and heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems. The plan allocated up to \$13.3 million to replace roofs at 40 schools, and up to \$47.3 million to repair or replace HVAC systems at 101 schools. The repairs and replacements are based on the independent studies that HISD commissioned to determine which roofs and mechanical systems needed immediate attention.

#### HISD Building "Green" Schools

The successful HISD Bond Proposal 2007 includes plans to build facilities that can earn certification under the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System. Developed by the nonprofit U.S. Green Building Council, which includes nearly 11,000 member companies and organizations, the LEED system defines high-performance "green" buildings, which are more environmentally responsible, more healthful for occupants, and more economical to operate. HISD, which has been emphasizing the importance of energy efficiency and environmental standards for several years, has already built two new schools—Ruby Thompson and Walnut Bend Elementary Schools—that are awaiting verification of LEED certification, and Sugar Grove Elementary School will be submitted for certification when construction is completed. In addition, HISD plans to build every new school according to LEED certification-system guidelines for sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Also, Richard Lindsay, the chief business operations officer of HISD's Bond Program, was one of ten organizations and individuals to receive a 2007 Synergy Award for Sustainable Planning by the Citizens' Environmental Coalition of Houston.



## Fourteen New Schools Opened or Dedicated

HISD is committed to providing the students, parents, and communities it serves with schools that are safe, inspiring, well-equipped, and technologically up-to-date learning environments. To achieve that goal, HISD has submitted a series of three bond proposals to Houston's voters in recent years (1998, 2002, and 2007). The public's approval of the bond issues has enabled the district to build or repair schools in virtually every community. In 2007, the new or replacement campuses that were opened or dedicated were

Mamie Bastian Elementary School, Briargrove Elementary School, Blanche Bruce Elementary School, Ethel Coop Elementary School, Charles Hartman Middle School, Dora Lantrip Elementary School, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Elementary School, Roderick Paige Elementary School (formerly Jim Bowie Elementary), John J. Pershing Middle School, The School at St. George Place, Ruby Thompson Elementary School, Walnut Bend Elementary School, Edgar Gregory-Abraham Lincoln Education Center, and Thomas Pilgrim Academy.



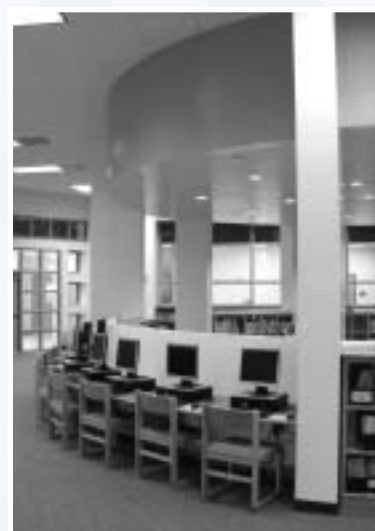
*Blanche Kelso Bruce Elementary School features a music Magnet program, and the September dedication of the school's new campus featured performances by the student choir and orchestra. Bruce students also receive strong instruction in all of the core subjects, and the well-equipped science lab will provide them with many exciting hands-on learning experiences.*



*The October dedication of the new "environmentally friendly" Ruby L. Thompson Elementary School featured a performance of "This School Is Your School." HISD first planned to renovate the school but later decided it was more cost-effective to replace it with a new facility.*



*Students performed "La Quebradita" at the October dedication of the new Dora B. Lantrip Elementary School. Lantrip offers an Environmental Science Magnet Program, and the new state-of-the-art campus includes three science labs, the latest technology, and an outdoor learning center.*



*The hub of the new Mamie Sue Bastian Elementary School, this state-of-the-art library provides computer workstations and a projection screen and has a separate entry so it can be used for public and community functions. Almost twice the size of the original Bastian Elementary, the new \$16-million replacement facility houses 44 new classrooms gathered into small learning communities.*

*The Houston Independent School District is committed to building on the progress it achieved in 2007. For 2008, the district has established a set of priorities designed to further improve the education and services provided to students, parents, and the entire community. Through the priorities outlined below, and other initiatives, HISD will continue its efforts to give Houston's children the comprehensive education they will need to be successful college students, valued employees, and responsible citizens.*



## PRIORITIES FOR 2008

### Creating a College-Bound Culture

**ASPIRE**—As part of its drive to make all students ready for college and careers, HISD will continue to implement the ASPIRE education-improvement model, and the related concept of performance management, at every level of the organization. Value-added analysis will help teachers to more closely monitor their students' academic progress, and to adjust instruction and possible intervention to meet their individual needs.

**Help for Low-Performing Schools**—Although the district's overall performance in mathematics and science has improved, the improvement was not consistent among all schools. HISD is committed to providing a comprehensive education to all students, so the district will work to develop effective intervention strategies for schools that were low-performing in the areas of mathematics and science.

**Raised "Literacy" Standards**—To help make sure that academic performance in language arts keeps pace with progress in mathematics and science, the district will work to develop new, higher standards for "literacy" in reading, writing, and speaking.

**Higher Graduation Rates**—In 2004, HISD's citywide "expectation: GRADUATION" summit launched an intensive series of dropout-recovery and prevention efforts that have returned hundreds of dropouts to their classrooms and helped thousands of at-risk students to stay in school. In 2008, the district will continue to build on those successful initiatives and strategies, which include the Student Engagement Department, the annual Reach Out to Dropouts Walk, and 10 dropout-prevention specialists. The activities of the HISD "expectation: GRADUATION" Committee—which consists of campus principals, executive principals, regional superintendents, and central-office personnel—will be expanded to reduce the dropout rate by mitigating the various factors that contribute to students' choosing to end their schooling early.

**Greater Flexibility**—HISD does everything possible to meet students' needs. The district's varied efforts include specialized schools and programs and flexible hours of instruction that accommodate employed students' job schedules. HISD will seek ways to broaden the range of options available to students with special needs or circumstances, including flexible school hours.

### Building Human Capacity

**ASPIRE Awards**—ASPIRE Awards will recognize and reward teachers who produce the most academic growth in their students, and to promote progress in the key subjects of mathematics and science, HISD will consider paying larger bonuses to high-performing teachers in those fields.

**More Outstanding Teachers**—Because the relationship between the teacher and the student is the foundation of effective teaching and learning, HISD will step up its campaign to recruit the best teachers for its classrooms, especially in the core areas of mathematics and science. Harvin C. Moore, upon his election as the president of the Board of Education for 2008, expressed his strong commitment to hiring outstanding educators by declaring 2008 "The Year of Human Resources" in HISD.

**Performance Management**—To maximize the district's operations and effectiveness, HISD will continue to strengthen its performance-management systems. The effort will build on an assessment that included multiple workshops with a cross-functional working team and interviews with schools and central-office departments. It will focus on building districtwide alignment of HISD's vision, goals, measurements, and strategies; implementing a central-office performance-management system that develops clear department accountabilities; optimizing a school-performance-management system grounded in the work of ASPIRE; and enhancing current information-technology systems to meet current and future district needs for performance management and overall district objectives.

### Building Stronger Relationships

**Stronger Community Engagement**—HISD is committed to creating more two-way communication with the community it serves by working to refine its efforts to inform the public about new initiatives, academic progress, operational improvements, successful partnerships, and events of interest to parents and other community members. HISD will also strive to reach out more to the community and solicit its input on district actions. In support of that effort, the new Superintendent's Public Engagement Committee will serve as an advisory body to engage the general public in the district's efforts to provide high-quality education to every child in Houston, to more effectively, communicate with the greater Houston community, and to provide the superintendent and board with valuable input on district initiatives from key community members and organizations. All HISD employees will also be encouraged to play a more active, visible role in the district's activities.

### Providing Safe, Inspiring Schools

**Bond Construction Program**—In 2007, Houston voters approved the last in HISD's series of three bond proposals. In 2008, the district will move to build new schools; expand, renovate, or repair more than 130 campuses; upgrade safety and security at all schools; update and improve all middle- and high-school science labs; and improve the infrastructure and accessibility at the district's sports stadiums.



# HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

## GOALS

*The district's primary goal is to increase student achievement.*

**Goal 1: Increase Student Achievement**—HISD student performance will demonstrate gains as evidenced by scores on TAKS, SAT, and other state and national tests, while performance gaps between minority and nonminority students will narrow.

*Additional goals are established in support of increasing student achievement, as follows:*

**Goal 2: Provide a Safe Environment**—The district shall develop and implement a strategic plan with specific long-range actions that ensure the safety and security of all who are at district schools and facilities or attending district-related events.

**Goal 3: Increase Management Efficiency**—HISD will have in place a decentralized organizational structure with operational practices and procedures that distinguish between the school district's pedagogical and business aspects and employ best practices with proven business and administrative operational principles for efficient delivery of services and goods to the schools.

## CORE VALUES

**Safety Above All Else:** Safety takes precedence over all else. A safe environment must 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": effective student learning.

**Focus on Results and Excellence:** Each employee focuses on results and excellence in individual and organizational efforts.

**STRATEGIC INTENT** To earn so much respect from the citizens of Houston that HISD becomes their prekindergarten through grade 12 educational system of choice

**Goal 4: Improve Public Support and Confidence in Schools**—The local, state, and national public will view HISD as a large urban district in which achievement is primary, performance is high, educators accept responsibility for student learning, administrators and support-services personnel exist to support the relationship between teacher and student, accountability exists at all levels, and there is respect among all segments of the community. Concomitantly, public confidence in public schools will improve.

**Goal 5: Create a Positive District Culture**—HISD will have a clearly articulated purpose, with specific goals and objectives that support it. Those will serve as the catalysts for creating a powerful sense of community and shared direction among HISD personnel, parents, students, and the public.

**Goal 6: Provide Facilities-to-Standard Program**—There will be in place a program designed to make all necessary repairs and renovations to bring HISD facilities up to standard. The plan will include the level of long-range and preventive maintenance necessary to keep the buildings properly up to standard.

**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 will give proper consideration to the involvement of parents.

**Common Decency:** All members of the organization, both students and employees, deserve and must receive respectful and courteous treatment.

Houston Independent School District



Creating a College-Bound Culture

## For More Information About the Houston Independent School District

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**Telephone:** 713-556-6005 **Web Site:** [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org)

It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, race, religion, sex, veteran status, or political affiliation in its educational or employment programs and activities.

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