

Beliefs and Vision

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

Beliefs

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

Vision

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

Mission

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

Theory of Action

- If the District creates a culture of support and the expectation that every child can succeed regardless of existing challenges; and
- If the District allocates resources equitably, through a weighted funding formula based on student characteristics and performance, that distributes all resources to meet differentiated student needs; and

- If the District offers equitable access to high-quality diverse school settings that meet the needs of its diverse community of students; and
- If the District defines and funds essential positions or functions that guarantee a basic standard for student health, safety, and well-being at every campus.

Then campuses will be able to accomplish the Board's student outcome goals while honoring the Board's constraints.

Mandate for Change
Human Capital

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

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

School
Empowerment

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

The Board believes that:

- Principals are the leaders of the decision-making process affecting their schools, and their leadership is measured not only by results but also by their collaboration with teachers, parents, and the community.

- Recognizing that schools are where decisions should be made and that successful decentralization is a function of leadership capacity at the school level, the District shall establish a tiered system of differentiated autonomy focusing on instructional competencies, budget, and business operational systems. Schools demonstrating higher levels of student performance, innovation, and operational excellence (including school safety) are further empowered with greater autonomy and decision making. However, other schools may need greater support and guidance; and until they reach acceptable levels of performance, the District must manage for them critical areas such as curriculum, professional development, and operational systems. When guidance over decision making is needed, structured interventions shall help develop the competencies toward greater autonomy. Annual performance monitoring of instruction, operations, and attractiveness to the community served shall determine the level of principal autonomy or central office intervention at the school.

School Choice

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

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

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

- The District must be proactive in the early identification of schools that may have too few students enrolled to provide adequate resources. The District must be ready to provide the school with appropriate interventions.

Meaningful
Engagement

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

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

Change in Action

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

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

Decentralization

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

- The Board shall provide guidance and support to local schools by establishing clear goals, high standards, and effective systems of evaluation, while at the same time giving schools maximum freedom to develop and implement the methods that best achieve those goals.
- The central office shall turn the traditional management pyramid upside down and become an enabler rather than an enforcer. Its role shall be to train, consult, provide resources, and evaluate.
- The individual school shall be the unit of accountability and improvement.
- Schools shall be responsive to their communities, providing parents and members of the community (and where appropriate, students) with formal, structured input into decision making.
- Schools shall be given control over budgets, delivery of curriculum, teaching methodologies, and personnel, provided they are led by a strong and effective principal, function as a team, and collaboratively develop a vision and a plan to achieve that vision.

The following core beliefs and principles shall guide District decentralization:

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

Purpose and Strategic Intent

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

Goals and Progress Measures

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

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

Goal 1

The percentage of grade 3 students performing at or above grade level in reading as measured by the Meets Grade Level Standard on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) will increase 8 percentage points from 42 percent in spring 2019 to 50 percent in spring 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 1.1

The percentage of grade 1 students reading on grade level as measured by the end-of-year literacy screener will increase eight percentage points from 63 percent in 2019 to 71 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 1.2

The percentage of grade 2 students reading on grade level as measured by the end-of-year literacy screener will increase eight percentage points from 61 percent in 2019 to 69 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 1.3

The percentage of grade 3 students reading on grade level as measured by the end-of-year literacy screener will increase eight percentage points from 57 percent in 2019 to 65 percent in 2024.

Goal 2

The percentage of grade 3 students performing at or above grade level in math as measured by the Meets Grade Level Standard on STAAR will increase 8 percentage points from 46 percent in spring 2019 to 54 percent in spring 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 2.1

The percentage of grade 1 students performing on grade level in math as measured by the end-of-year math screener will increase eight percentage points from 64 percent in 2019 to 72 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 2.2

The percentage of grade 2 students performing on grade level in math as measured by the end-of-year math screener will increase eight percentage points from 62 percent in 2019 to 70 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 2.3

The percentage of grade 3 students performing on grade level in math as measured by the end-of-year math screener will increase eight percentage points from 69 percent in 2019 to 77 percent in 2024.

Goal 3

The percentage of graduates that meet the criteria for college, career, and military readiness (CCMR) as measured in Domain 1 of the state accountability system will increase 8 percentage points from 63 percent for 2017–2018 graduates to 71 percent for 2022–2023 graduates reported in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 3.1

The percentage of students who by the end of grade 11 have demonstrated college readiness by satisfying the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements via SAT, ACT, or Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) will increase eight percentage points from 24 percent in 2019 to 32 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 3.2

The percentage of students who by the end of grade 11 have demonstrated college readiness via Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) examinations, dual credit coursework, or dual-enrollment credit eligibility will increase eight percentage points from 26 percent in 2019 to 34 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 3.3

The percentage of students who by the end of grade 11 have demonstrated career readiness via an industry-based certification will increase 18 percentage points from 0 percent in 2019 to 18 percent in 2024.

Goal 4

The percentage of students receiving special education services reading at or above grade level as measured by the Meets Grade Level Standard on the STAAR 3–8 Reading and STAAR end-of-course (EOC) English I and II assessments will increase 8 percentage points from 21 percent in spring 2019 to 29 percent in spring 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 4.1

The percentage of students receiving special education services in second- through fifth-grade reading on grade level as measured by the end-of-year literacy screener will increase eight percentage points from 14 percent in 2019 to 22 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 4.2

The percentage of students receiving special education services in sixth- through eighth-grade reading on grade level as measured by the end-of-year literacy screener will increase eight percentage points from 7 percent in 2019 to 15 percent in 2024.

- Goal Progress Measure 4.3

The percentage of students receiving special education services enrolled in English I or II reading on grade level as measured by the end-of-year literacy screener will increase eight percentage points from 5 percent in 2019 to 13 percent in 2024.

**Constraints and
Constraint Progress
Measures**

Board's Constraints
for the Board

Constraint 1

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

The Board will not conduct its duties without including students, families, teachers, and community members (inclusive of those that speak languages other than English) in a manner that inspires broad community ownership of Board policy.

Constraint 2

The Board will not support recommendations or policy that contribute to historic patterns of disproportionate discipline.

Constraint 3

The Board will not allow five years to pass without an equity audit, a Legislative Budget Board (LBB) review, and a special education (SPED) review.

Constraint 4

The Board will not operate without an annual review of strengths and weaknesses and a plan for team building and Board professional development that includes anti-racist training.

Constraint 5

The Board will spend no less than 50 percent of its meeting time monitoring progress on student outcome goals – starting at zero today and shall be 50 percent by the end of the second quarter of 2022.

Board's Constraints
for the
Superintendent

Constraint 1

The Superintendent will not allow the District to operate without a system to recruit/employ strong teachers, who meet the needs of students needing the most support.

- Constraint Progress Measure 1.1

The percentage of students receiving special education services served by strong special education teachers will increase XX percentage points from XX percent during the 2018–2019 school year to XX percent during the 2023–2024 school year.

- Constraint Progress Measure 1.2

The percentage of bilingual education students served by strong bilingual teachers will increase XX percentage points from XX percent during the 2018–2019 school year to XX percent during the 2023–2024 school year.

- Constraint Progress Measure 1.3

The gap in retention rates of newly recruited, strong teachers between identified campuses* and other HISD campuses will decrease XX percentage points from XX percent during the 2018–2019 school year to XX percent during the 2023–2024 school year.

Constraint 2

The Superintendent will not allow the District to operate without students having effective, school-based wraparound support systems.

- Constraint Progress Measure 2.1

The number of annual interventions provided through Wraparound Services will increase from 628,753 during the 2019–2020 school year to 883,253 during the 2023–2024 school year.

- Constraint Progress Measure 2.2

The percentage of campuses engaged with cross-functional Wraparound Advisory Councils (WAC), as measured by attending at least two WAC meetings during the year, will increase from 50 percent during the 2019–2020 school year to 100 percent during the 2023–2024 school year.

- Constraint Progress Measure 2.3
The number of wraparound service partnerships will increase by 56 partners from 72 partnerships in spring 2020 to 128 partnerships in spring 2024.
- Constraint 3* The Superintendent will not allow the District to operate without notifying parents/guardians at least once each 12 weeks about how to help their student, if the student is one or more grade levels behind in literacy.
- Constraint Progress Measure 3.1
The percentage of students, one or more grade levels behind in literacy, whose parents/guardians are centrally documented as having been notified of their child's literacy level at least once every 12 weeks will increase 100 percentage points from 0 percent in spring 2020 to 100 percent in spring 2024.
 - Constraint Progress Measure 3.2
The percentage of campuses with a centrally documented literacy plan, including parent outreach strategies, to address the needs of students one or more grade levels behind in literacy will increase 100 percentage points from 0 percent during the 2019–2020 school year to 100 percent during the 2023–2024 school year.
- Constraint 4* The Superintendent will not allow the District to operate without students receiving special education services meeting individualized education program (IEP) progress.
- Constraint Progress Measure 4.1
The percentage of students with up-to-date IEP progress recorded every six weeks in the IEP system will increase from XX percent during the 2019–2020 school year to 90 percent during the 2023–2024 school year.
 - Constraint Progress Measure 4.2
The percentage of audited IEPs showing appropriately written goals shall increase from 0 percent* during the 2019–2020 school year to XX percent during the 2023–2024 school year.
 - Constraint Progress Measure 4.3
The percentage of students documented as meeting progress for all applicable IEP goals will increase from XX percent during the 2019–2020 school year to XX percent during the 2023–2024 school year.

Constraint 5

The Superintendent shall not allow the District to operate without significantly increasing quality seats for early childhood education including prekindergarten 3, prekindergarten 4, and kindergarten.

Core Values

The District's core values are as follows:

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

**Central Office
Accountability
System**

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

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

- Establish and monitor progress toward performance indicators for each central office department, including evaluations of each departmental improvement plan goals and objectives;

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- Determine which central office departments are meeting the District's objectives through the use of "customer" surveys; and
- Determine whether central office departments that are failing to meet the objectives require assistance, reorganization, and/or replacement.

Effective Date

This policy shall be effective as of the adoption date, March 12, 2021.