

The Next Generation of ASPIRE

*Engaging All HISD Employees in Creating a Culture of Excellence
to Prepare All Students to Be College/Career-Ready*

ASPIRE

Accelerating Student Progress
Increasing Results & Expectations

Houston Independent School District

*A Comprehensive Educational-Improvement
and Performance-Management Model*



Accelerating Student Progress Increasing Results & Expectations

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. To maximize our impact, we align all of these efforts through our ASPIRE (Accelerating Student Progress. Increasing Results & Expectations) model. Since the district launched ASPIRE in the 2007–2008 school year, our students have achieved outstanding results, and we are continuing to build upon this success.

The HISD Board of Education and district administration recognize that every employee plays a vital role in achieving this goal. That is why HISD is evolving the next generation of ASPIRE as an **educational-improvement and performance-management model**.



ASPIRE performance management

A continuous process of aligning the goals of individuals and teams with the organization's strategic goals and harnessing the power of data to improve results and develop people.



*ASPIRE’s four core components—
Developing Human Capital, Improving
Teaching and Learning, Informing
Practice, and Recognizing Excellence—
serve as the catalysts to focus our work
and achieve our mission.*

The next generation of ASPIRE

The next generation of ASPIRE is designed to engage **every HISD employee** at the central-service department and campus levels in achieving the district’s strategic goals and building a culture of continuous learning and improvement that produces optimum results. HISD employees, families, businesses, and community members benefit from ASPIRE, as this model enables and supports their efforts to provide students with the highest-quality and most-relevant education possible. Through ASPIRE, HISD:

- Creates a culture of continuous improvement
- Continues connecting and aligning all campus and central-service initiatives and functions to support district goals
- Continues fostering collaboration and communication among HISD employees, families, businesses, and community members
- Optimizes performance and efficiency while ensuring the highest-quality service and support
- Creates more clarity around expectations and accountability measures for all campus and central-service initiatives and functions
- Replicates best practices and recognizes departments, campuses, and individuals for excellence

Developing Human Capital

HISD's most-important resource in helping our students become college- and career-ready is without question—our employees.

The district applies various innovative, research-based strategies to recruit and retain a highly talented workforce that will best serve and support all aspects of our core business—student learning.

ASPIRE performance management engages all employees in aligning department/campus/team goals with district goals. This alignment creates synergy and a focus to our work that enables us to be more efficient and effective. Maintaining high expectations and adopting performance metrics across the district allows all HISD employees to maximize the impact of their efforts and be recognized for their excellent work.

HISD uses data on scorecards to monitor and assess performance as well as to inform and shape our training and development efforts. The district offers a system of support and ongoing opportunities for professional growth, including mentorship, leadership training, career paths, and coaching. Additionally, through partnerships with colleges and universities, HISD facilitates unique opportunities for employees to continue their education and earn advanced degrees and various industry certifications.



Our success as one of the best public school systems in the nation depends on our ability to develop our human capital and provide the necessary support for our employees to excel in their work.



Improving Teaching and Learning

HISD's framework for improving teaching and learning requires that all stakeholders work together to align the goals of everyone in the organization to provide the best learning experience possible for our students.

Our **central-service employees** use research-based and innovative practices to deliver high-quality services, increase efficiencies in operations, and implement cost-saving strategies. For example, HISD builds environmentally-friendly “green” schools to save energy costs and installs Global Positioning Systems on school buses to track and improve routing systems. These practices ensure that more resources can be directed where they are most needed—to the classrooms.

Efficiency and cost-saving strategies are just a few practices that central-service employees use. They provide vital services and resources that schools and classrooms need to support teaching and learning and seek ways to improve their service quality.

Our **campus-based employees**, especially our teachers and administrators, are vital to differentiate and personalize learning for students. This individualized approach requires the use of research-based and innovative practices, instructional and classroom-management technology tools, and curricular alignment. HISD also uses formative and summative assessment data to monitor student learning. Also, we implement a Pyramid of Interventions to provide additional support to students who are not achieving learning targets. These practices allow HISD to accelerate student progress and achievement.

Curriculum, assessment, intervention, and acceleration are the primary topics that employees discuss as Professional Learning Communities at the campus level.



In these ways, HISD fosters collaborative learning among our employees and raises accountability for results.

Informing Practice

HISD is committed to maintaining a culture of continuous improvement. Reaching and exceeding our high standards requires that we use multiple data sources on a daily basis to inform our practices. But we don't just review our district's data in isolation. HISD regularly collaborates with and measures ourselves against best-in-class schools and districts to identify flagship practices that will maximize student learning.

Some ways in which HISD uses data to hone our skills and guide our work are:

- Analyzing longitudinal trend data across departments
- Holding ourselves accountable in achieving goals by using scorecards and other information to monitor, measure, and improve performance
- Collecting and analyzing input and feedback to ensure that our internal and external stakeholders are highly satisfied with our customer service districtwide
- Collaborating through professional networks to determine and share best practices
- Participating in national conferences, reviewing the latest research, and discussing practices with education thought-leaders

At the campus level, HISD also engages in:

- Gathering detailed school-performance data comparing HISD schools to high-performing schools with best-in-class practices nationwide
- Interpreting value-added analysis and achievement data to accelerate student progress at the district, campus, grade, and teacher levels

In tandem with providing access to data, we offer the necessary support systems to bolster our employees' efforts to use this information to guide their practices.



Recognizing Excellence

HISD is committed to excellence and recognizing the outstanding work of our employees. The district recognizes excellence in various ways, including:



- **Acknowledging and Sharing Best Practices:** HISD develops video vignettes of high-progress and high-achievement campuses, as well as of highly effective teachers. These vignettes address the key factors leading to success from the perspectives of administrators, teachers, parents, and students. We provide discussion tools to help Professional Learning Communities and teams integrate these best practices across the district. HISD also conducts recognition ceremonies and honors employees' efforts through HISD publications and the ASPIRE portal.
- **Awarding Differentiated Compensation Through the ASPIRE Award Program:** HISD campus-based employees have the opportunity to earn performance pay based on their success in raising students' academic progress and achievement levels. We use a statistically rigorous metric to measure student academic progress and state achievement data to calculate the ASPIRE Awards. HISD awards millions of dollars in performance pay each year to our high-progress campuses and staff members.
- **Offering Opportunities for Advancement and Growth:** HISD encourages our employees to achieve excellence by supporting alternative career programs, mentorships, and certification programs that have a competitive selection process. In addition, HISD honors its employees, departments, and campuses through obtaining local, state, and national recognitions for high-quality service and results.

HISD is pleased to celebrate and reward the efforts of our many employees who are making a significant difference in providing high-quality services and accelerating students' academic progress.



Increasing Results and Expectations— Among All HISD Stakeholders

HISD has high expectations for the next generation of ASPIRE, and we are proud of our many resulting accomplishments in accelerating student progress. All of our stakeholders—staff members; students; parents and families; board members; business, community, and political leaders; foundations; policy-makers; media; and the many others who make up our greater HISD family—make essential contributions to our ability to achieve these results.

The district offers many programs and communication vehicles, such as parent-teacher conferences, ASPIRE Community Forums, and Learning Labs, to engage our community and gain its support. We encourage you to visit the HISD Web site (www.houstonisd.org) as well as the ASPIRE portal (www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE) to learn more about these programs, ASPIRE, and the many other ways you can support student growth at HISD.

Together, we will ensure that HISD maintains the highest standards possible in all aspects of our organization. Together, we will achieve our aspiration of preparing all HISD students for success in college, in their careers, and in life.

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ASPIRE

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Increasing Results & Expectations

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