

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

EA
(LOCAL)

21ST CENTURY HIGH
SCHOOL LEARNING
COMMUNITY

The Houston Independent School District pledges to support its high schools in the redesign and development of new structures and processes that will optimize the performance of all students, assuring them a seamless transition into higher education and the 21st century workforce.

The high school structure, as we currently know it, was originally designed to meet the needs of the industrial economy. Since that time, the economy has evolved into a technology-driven market, which requires students to have new and more advanced knowledge and skills to survive and compete in today's global economy. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, high schools must change in order to graduate students who are effective communicators, self-directed workers and thinkers, effective team members, proficient problem solvers, efficient technology users, responsible citizens, and knowledgeable of world-wide issues.

VISION AND GUIDING
PRINCIPLES

The following principles, based on research and best practices in high school reform, should guide the District's 21st Century High School Learning Community initiative.

I—HIGH
EXPECTATIONS

High schools shall set clear, fair, and high academic and conduct standards. An intellectual vision should be created, shared, and supported by all stakeholders in order to raise expectations for student achievement. There should be collective responsibility from adults and students for student outcomes. The District should provide students with a rigorous academic curriculum that challenges them to learn at high levels, and enables them to enter college or the workforce fully prepared to be successful, without the need for remediation.

II—
PERSONALIZATION

The most powerful use of the public school organizational structure is to set the size of the school learning environment to lower student/adult ratios, at the point where every adult can be expected to know each student personally. High schools should reorganize themselves into smaller units, with the ideal size being 300 students, and provide continuity of care for each student. Where appropriate, students should maintain instructional continuity to enhance mastery, and ideally each student should have a personal adult advocate who advises, supports, and assists the student with his or her academic and personal plans for success. A data management system is needed that provides structures and processes to allow teachers to easily identify and quickly intervene relative to students' individual needs, particularly the critical needs of ninth graders regarding literacy, class retention, and dropout issues. A mentoring system should be offered for students desiring peer support and relationships should be built with parents to engage them

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~~in their child's academic experience. College and career counseling programs should provide students with a variety of options to pursue after high school. School leaders should ensure that facilities are clean, attractive, safe, and well equipped.~~

~~III—COHERENCY~~

~~Teachers must redefine their roles and relationships to create more effective learning environments. They should use a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate individual learning styles to provide students enriched and diverse opportunities to learn, to perform, and to be recognized. They should engage students and help them make connections between what they are learning and real-world experiences. Students should demonstrate an understanding of core subjects through a variety of meaningful assessments, such as project-based learning, portfolios, and exhibitions. High schools should establish relationships with middle schools, higher education, and businesses to enhance student development. These relationships should help to align secondary and higher education curricula and help to ease the transition between high schools and the workforce.~~

~~IV—TIME AND
RESOURCES~~

~~The central office must turn the traditional management pyramid upside down and become an enabler rather than an enforcer. High schools should be empowered to institute flexible allocation of available resources including people, time, facilities, and money. A school schedule should be created that is supportive of the teaching and learning environment. Seat time should no longer be equated with learning; students should have the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned, and advance to the next level. Time should be provided for students requiring tutorials in core subjects. The school day should allow teachers to have common planning times to collaborate with colleagues.~~

~~V—TECHNOLOGY~~

~~Technology should be integrated into the teaching and learning process, including the curriculum, instructional process, and assessment. High schools should be equipped with the proper infrastructure needed for effective internal and external communication. The District should provide a Web portal that displays its curriculum and student grade and attendance reports so that anyone, with appropriate authority, can have easy access to this important student data at anytime. The appropriate staff should develop and implement a strategic plan for the use of technology in the school. Continuous training should be provided for the staff so they can stay current on dynamic technological advances.~~

~~VI—PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT~~

~~All staff should be equipped, empowered, and expected to improve instruction. The District should provide ongoing professional development for principals, teachers, and support staff through on-line instruction and through in-service and workshops. Each teacher~~

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~~should develop a repertoire of instructional strategies to deploy as appropriate, to meet the individual and collective needs of students. Relationships with business and community organizations will provide principals, teachers, and students opportunities to have hands-on experience with real-world job requirements. Learning communities should be created to allow teachers and support staff to share information for the purpose of improving student achievement. Every year, educators should have a personal development plan that identifies goals and priorities to enhance their knowledge and skills for improving student achievement. High schools should build relationships with higher education to provide teachers and administrators with ideas and opportunities to enhance the education and performance of students.~~

VII—LEADERSHIP

~~Schools must be responsive to their communities, providing parents and members of the community (and where appropriate, teachers, support staff, and students) with formal, structured input into decision making. High school principals will be evaluated on improvements on the measures listed below. They should also be the primary leaders in staff development by pursuing their own professional growth, including the knowledge required to lead and manage change. Principals should provide the school staff the appropriate tools needed to succeed on the job, as well as provide them opportunities to acquire the professional skills and knowledge needed for advancement. District administrators should exhibit leadership by supporting school principals in their efforts to plan, implement, and sustain long-term school improvement.~~

VIII—RESULTS OF THE
21ST CENTURY HIGH
SCHOOL
IMPLEMENTATION
PROCESS

~~All high schools will report in benchmarks for each of the following areas and be evaluated in subsequent years on improvements in these measures:~~

- ~~• Lower grade 9 retention rates;~~
- ~~• Lower dropout rates;~~
- ~~• Higher student attendance rates;~~
- ~~• Higher literacy rates with students reading at or above grade level;~~
- ~~• Higher number of students taking the SAT and other college entrance exams;~~
- ~~• Increase in SAT/ACT scores;~~
- ~~• Increase in the number of Texas Scholars;~~
- ~~• Increase in the number of G/T students;~~
- ~~• Increase in the number of students taking AP courses;~~

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- Increase in the number of students passing AP exams;
- Improvement in TAKS scores and pass rates;
- Improvement in end-of-course exam scores and pass rates;
- Higher number of students reporting satisfaction with high schools on student surveys;
- Higher number of students taking dual credit courses;
- Higher number of students attending college;
- Lower number of students requiring remediation as college freshman; and
- Higher number of graduates prepared to successfully enter the workforce.

CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION

The District shall provide a well-balanced curriculum and deliver effective instruction to all students enrolled. The District shall adhere to and comply with statutory mandates and Texas Education Agency guidelines and shall implement local policies in a manner that will enable all students to participate in the educational process and become productive members of society.

The District shall extend learning and ensure a challenging curriculum. In addition, the District shall provide for special populations the necessary modifications in methodologies, pacing, and resources to ensure that appropriate instruction on essential knowledge and skills is delivered and aligned to District expectations.

CURRICULUM
PHILOSOPHY

The District shall strive to provide all students with equal access and opportunities to progress through a curriculum of objectives that set high learning expectations for students in the regular program in prekindergarten-grade 12 and for students with disabilities from preschool to age 21. Curriculum shall be designed, developed, and implemented through the collaborative efforts of all District personnel.

Districtwide curriculum planning shall be coordinated to ensure that the needs of learners are met and that the goals and objectives shall be aimed at giving students the knowledge and skills needed to make informed and reasonable decisions.

The curriculum shall be articulated for prekindergarten through grade 12 and teaching of courses/grades shall be aligned to the curriculum in accordance with the best practices for instruction and for maximum effectiveness. The curriculum shall provide congru-

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	ency among the written, the taught, and the assessed. The curriculum must reflect current research, best practices, and technological advancements across all content areas and all levels. Students with disabilities shall be afforded the same expectations when participating in an instructional program based on their individualized education program (IEP).
CURRICULUM RESPONSIBILITY	The appropriate instructional departments and District office personnel shall work with schools to provide long-term training and ongoing monitoring to ensure implementation of the District's curriculum. It is the responsibility of the teacher, as a facilitator of learning, to plan instruction that ensures that curriculum objectives are taught and that student learning is assessed. The teacher shall use a variety of instructional and assessment strategies with multiple resources to teach and measure the acquisition of those objectives. The teacher may enhance instruction beyond those objectives. It will be the responsibility of the building principal, as instructional leader, to ensure that the required and enriched curriculum objectives are being planned for, taught, and assessed in all content areas at all levels.
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PLAN	The District's curriculum development plan shall address the following aspects: 1. An aligned, written, taught, assessed, and Board-adopted curriculum; 2. A periodically reviewed curriculum for all subjects/courses; 3. Vertical prekindergarten-grade 12 articulation and horizontal coordination; 4. A diversity of materials aligned to the curriculum; 5. Staff training and monitoring for delivery of all of the District curriculum; and 6. A multifaceted assessment system to make informed curriculum decisions. It is the intent of the District that budget be linked to curriculum priorities and that data-driven decisions be made to provide learning environments supported by adequately trained personnel. The plan will define roles and responsibilities for those involved in curriculum development, and a five-year plan for curriculum development will be implemented to ensure long-range planning. Annual reports on the status of curriculum, curriculum development, implementation, and program effectiveness shall be made to the Board.

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~~Curriculum frameworks/guides and assessment instruments shall be developed that meet the highest design standards and shall be made available to District personnel, parents, students, and the learning community to promote understanding of the educational scope and sequence of the curriculum.~~

~~The District shall establish a procedure for the addition of new courses so that they adhere to state guidelines and meet the needs of special populations.~~

~~COURSE OFFERINGS,
TIME ALLOTMENTS~~

~~The District shall adhere to TEA guidelines regarding course offerings. All local credit courses, honors courses, innovative courses, and independent study courses shall be submitted for Board approval in accordance with appropriate administrative regulations. A complete listing of all courses offered in the District shall be found in the *Master Catalog of Courses* for the current year.~~

~~SPECIAL PROGRAMS~~

~~The District may operate magnet schools or programs to serve student populations with specialized interests and aptitudes. [See EGA(LOCAL)]~~