Texas Education Agency

Commissioner Mike Morath

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101-912

Via Certified Mail,
Regular Mail & Email

May 30, 2025

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Mr. Mike Miles, Superintendent
Mr. Ric Campo, Board President, Board of Managers
Ms. Dani Hernandez, Board President, Board of Trustees
Houston Independent School District
4400 W. 18th St.
Houston, TX 77092

RE: Notice on Status of Board of Managers

Dear Superintendent Miles, Board of Managers President Campo, and Board of Trustees President Hernandez:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide notification to the Houston Independent School District ("Houston ISD" or "district") of the transition timeline for the return of the district's governing board to elected control. As required by Texas Education Code (TEC) § 39A.208(c), before the second anniversary of the initial placement of the board of managers, I am required to determine, after receiving local feedback, whether sufficient progress has been made toward improving the academic or financial performance of the district. After that evaluation, state law then requires me to either extend the intervention for up to two additional years or announce the timeline for a return of elected trustees to the district's governing board.

As you are aware, the Texas Education Agency ("TEA" or "agency") initially installed a board of managers in the district on June 1, 2023, after the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the intervention triggered by the district in 2019 could move forward. In 2019, an intervention was necessary for multiple reasons: Wheatley High School had earned seven consecutive unacceptable academic ratings for the school years from 2011 through 2019, a Special Accreditation Investigation substantiated that a majority of the district's board of trustees blatantly violated the Texas Open Meetings Act and board members broke Texas procurement law, and a conservator had been appointed in the district for more than two school years. Despite a delay of three years caused by

legal proceedings, the systemic problems in Houston ISD were not addressed and continued to impact students most in need of our collective support.

The poor academic performance of the district's highest-need schools further supported the continued need for intervention in 2023. While Houston ISD operated—and continues to operate—many high performing schools, numerous district schools primarily serving high percentages of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were allowed to continually underperform. To identify just a few examples: not only did Wheatley High school fail to receive an acceptable academic accountability rating for seven consecutive years, but Kashmere High School similarly failed to receive an acceptable rating for eight consecutive years and Highland Heights Elementary School did not earn an acceptable rating for 11 consecutive years preceding the appointment of the board of managers.

Since June 2023, I have been observing the district's progress and receiving local feedback in numerous ways, including by meeting with and speaking to community stakeholders, monitoring student performance data, and maintaining awareness regarding the operations of the district. Additionally, upon the placement of the board of managers, TEA identified three performance-based exit criteria: (1) no multi-year academically unacceptable campuses; (2) special education operates in compliance with requirements; and (3) the board's procedures align with a focus on students that is consistent with high performing governing teams. During the last two years, I have been tracking the district's progress toward accomplishing those exit criteria and have considered the district's progress in making the decisions announced by this letter.

First, Houston ISD's administrative leadership, teachers, support staff, school board, and—most importantly—students should be commended for the tremendous year-over-year improvements in student academic performance during the first year of the state intervention. The academic growth exhibited by Houston ISD students during the 2023-2024 school year was the highest among all large school districts in the state of Texas. As of the date of this letter, student academic results for the second year of the intervention have not yet been published, but the district's internal metrics look promising and suggest the district's students will see continued academic growth in year 2 and beyond. I have also observed that the district has made significant improvements in many other areas during the preceding two years, including finance, operations, special education compliance, and school board governance.

Houston ISD has always been a district with some of the highest performing schools in the country, but it was also a district that allowed some of its schools to fail students for over a decade. With the changes made in the last two years, Houston ISD is well on its way to being a district where all of its schools provide students with the educational opportunities that will allow them to access the American Dream.

Under current district leadership, the future of the district is bright. However, even though the district has made significant progress toward meeting its exit criteria, the district has not yet met any of the three specific requirements. Accordingly, **I am hereby extending the authority of the board of managers for two additional years, until June 1, 2027**. On or around June 1, 2027, I will

announce the transition timeline for the return of elected trustees to the district's governing board, as is required by law.

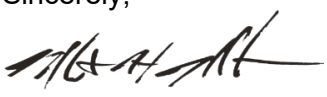
Ultimately, two years has not been enough time to fix district systems that were broken for decades. The extension of this intervention will allow the district to build on its progress and achieve lasting success for students once the board transitions back to elected leadership. I have confidence that the current trajectory of student performance and operational enhancements in the district will continue, and I have great faith in Superintendent Miles and his administration's ability to sustain the current rate of progress. Under the continued leadership of Superintendent Miles, I am optimistic that student achievement in Houston ISD will maintain an upward trajectory.

Lastly, I want to take an opportunity to express my deep and abiding gratitude for the nine Houstonians I appointed to serve on the board of managers two years ago. School board service is not for the faint of heart, and the members of the appointed board have shown remarkable leadership under fire during the last two years. Each member has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to improving student success, at great personal sacrifice, and I am incredibly appreciative of their service.

I especially want to thank Cassandra Bandy, Rolando Martinez, Audrey Momanaee, and Adam Rivon for their tireless service to the district's students. After two years of dedication, these board members will be transitioning off the Board of Managers effective June 1, 2025. I have nothing but praise to offer to these amazing individuals, and I want to extend my sincerest appreciation for their dedicated service to Houston ISD. I am extremely grateful for the exemplary servant leadership displayed by these departing board members over the grueling first two years of this intervention. To replace these board members, I hereby appoint Edgar Colón, Marty Goossen, Lauren Gore, and Marcos Rosales to the board of managers, effective June 1, 2025. To those departing board members—thank you for your service. To the incoming board members—welcome and thank you for volunteering to serve.

As Commissioner, I will continue to monitor the district's progress toward fulfilling the exit criteria and improving district systems, with the expectation that the district's administration and school board will continue their laser-focused efforts to improve student outcomes in Houston ISD. If you have questions about the contents of this letter, please contact Garrett Black, Director of Governance Interventions, at (512) 463-9146 or via email at Garrett.Black@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,



Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

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