

Houston Independent School District
Board of Managers Application and Selection Process
Community Feedback

In 2017, the Houston ISD (HISD) Board of Trustees invited Texas Education Agency (TEA) representatives to a board meeting to discuss House Bill (HB) 1842. During that meeting, HISD board members requested that TEA representatives make themselves available for community inquiries regarding the potential implications of HB 1842. Over the past two years, at the invitation of community members, TEA representatives have attended more than 50 community meetings for the purpose of answering questions and listening to community concerns. During those meetings, TEA received extensive feedback on the Agency’s established Board of Managers (BOM) application and selection process. Concern was expressed early and often from the local community that Houston is unique, and that BOM processes appropriate in other areas of the state may not be sufficient in Houston due to, among other factors, its scale.

What follows is a summary of the themes that emerged from those listening sessions. It should be noted that not every idea shared in the community feedback is included below. Community feedback from one session frequently contradicted community feedback in another session -- and was often contradictory within the same session. Instead, the intention was to identify frequently repeated themes from the community feedback.

FEEDBACK OVERVIEW

Feedback indicated that the selection process should be based on an application process, emphasizing key characteristics related to the position, including diversity of the board, affinity for Houston ISD and its communities, and competency to serve effectively in the role. The process should outline the specific tasks that the board will undertake and provide a clear mandate and/or job description. Feedback also underscored that the selection process should be independent, organically embedded in the community, and transparent to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Additionally, there was a strong desire for the opportunity to provide community input on potential candidates. A majority of recommendations also emphasized the need for community involvement in collecting the needs, wants, and preferences of specific stakeholders (i.e., students, teachers, parents, community organizations, and the business community) and to put children’s education as the top priority.

BOARD OF MANAGERS SELECTION PROCESS: A COMPARISON

The following illustrates TEA’s standard Board of Managers application and selection process in comparison to the HISD process and reflects the additional measures included in response to the community’s feedback.

Standard Process	HISD Process
Community engagement sessions (1-2)	Community listening sessions (50+)
Community training session (1)	Community training sessions (10+)
Application	Application (extended criteria and specifics)

Community review (elected officials)	Community review (elected officials and community leaders)
Background and fingerprint check	Background and fingerprint check
Training on board governance	Training on board governance
N/A	Phone interview
N/A	Performance task
In-person panel interview	In-person panel interview
N/A	Additional detailed governance training
N/A	Second in-person panel interview
Training prior to being sworn in (~4 days)	Training prior to being sworn in (~8 days)
Appointment and Swear In	Appointment and Swear In

FEEDBACK: ORGANIZED CHRONOLOGICALLY WITH THE PROCESS

Prior to the application period:

- Process transparency is critical
- Aim to select nine (9) members
- Disclose candidates to help avoid conflicts of interest
- Prioritize demographic representative
- Involve the community in the selection process
- Provide a clear job description
- Establish clear composition criteria

During the application period:

- Provide training opportunities for applicants
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

During the selection process:

- Conduct background checks
- Provide training opportunities
- Conduct interviews that assess for knowledge and skill competency
- Collect letters of recommendation
- Include community representatives in the selection process

During the onboarding process:

- Conduct extensive training on effective governance behaviors
- Develop a community engagement plan