



HISD DEFINED AUTONOMY

REGROUNDING IN WHY

- For more than a decade, HISD has had a highly decentralized system made up of autonomous schools.
- This system of autonomy without accountability or close oversight has made HISD a district that performs well below the national average in reading and math and below other large urban districts.
- At the time of this writing, HISD has 123 D- and F-rated campuses.
- At the same time, the District has some of the best magnet schools in the nation, most likely assisted by a system of autonomy.
- It is a tale of two districts.

REGROUNDING IN WHY

- If HISD is to meet its exit criteria, it will have to raise accountability and manage the instruction and operations of its low performing (C-, D-, and F-rated) schools.
- Greater autonomy has to be earned, and rigorous criteria have to be met to receive higher levels of autonomy.
- The District cannot sacrifice high quality instruction and strong academic performance in an attempt to provide greater autonomy to schools.
- Greater effectiveness and operational autonomy must go hand in hand.

The problem we are trying to solve: how to allow for flexibility and innovation at high performing campuses while significantly improving low performing schools and maintaining rigorous expectations for all schools in one system.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL SCHOOLS





The District is still one system with interconnected processes and infrastructure. Regardless of the level of defined autonomy, all HISD schools must abide by the following rules and parameters:

- Board policy and state and federal law
- District school calendar
- District-assigned start and end times, or as approved by district
- District-wide orientation and professional development days
- District-wide assessments
- District oversight and compliance requirements
- Focus on instruction
 - Instruction must cover 100% of TEKS in core courses
 - Lesson Objectives required
 - Campus leadership team members complete 6 spot observations per week
- All other directives from the Division Superintendent or the Superintendent

SCHOOL TYPES AND RATINGS

ACCOUNT RATING	MAGNET SCHOOLS	SUS SCHOOLS	SWS SCHOOLS	SWP SCHOOLS	NON-MAGNET
A	22	14	5	3	13
B	27	4	8	15	31
C	24	3	12	9	28
D	19	0	10	9	46
F	27	0	14	13	31
Not Rated	0	0	0	0	6
TOTAL	119	21	49	49	155

DEFINED AUTONOMY FRAMEWORK

HISD DEFINED AUTONOMY	
LEVEL 4 	Separate and Unique Magnets (SUS)
LEVEL 3 	A & B-rated Schools
LEVEL 2 	C and D-rated Schools (non-NES)
LEVEL 1 	NES Schools
SPECIAL CATEGORY	Special Programs

**Cunningham Elementary School
A / B School
Level 3 Autonomy**

**This is the highest level of autonomy for
our non-magnet, neighborhood school.**

DEFINED AUTONOMY

AUTONOMY LEVEL	TYPE	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
LEVEL 4	Separate and Unique Magnet Schools	21
LEVEL 3	A and B-rated schools	57
LEVEL 2	C and D-rated schools that are not NES	41
LEVEL 1	NES Schools	130
Special Category	Alternative; Special Education Placement Schools; Early Childhood Centers	18
TOTAL		267

LEVEL 4 AUTONOMIES

LEVEL 4 AUTONOMY <i>Separate and Unique Schools (SUS)</i>	
AREA	DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full autonomy over the program or programs for which the school earned the Separate and Unique designation
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May use any curriculum that does not violate Board policy or TEA regulations
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to current budget process for non-NES schools• May purchase services unless otherwise restricted by Board policy, regulations, and law• May not exceed budget
Instructional Delivery Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May implement a lesson delivery model that aligns with school program (e.g., project-based learning, small group instruction, inquiry-based)• Spot observation forms will be adjusted to account for different instructional delivery models• DOL is optional
District Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The district will release some of the district's professional development days for principals to lead campus-based professional development
Master Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May create the master schedule in a way that supports the school's program
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to current staffing model in non-NES schools• May staff the school the way the leadership team sees fit except must remain within budget

LEVEL 4 AUTONOMIES

LEVEL 4 AUTONOMY <i>Separate and Unique Schools (SUS)</i>	
AREA	DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new Teacher Evaluation System will account for schools with high achievement and specialized programming
Teacher Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will participate in the pay-for-performance compensation system in the 25-26 school year
Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals included in the LEAD evaluation system The evaluation will account for schools with high achievement and/or specialized programming. Principals can select growth or achievement
Principal Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals are compensated using the principal pay-for-performance compensation plan Principals may opt out of pay-for-performance compensation system for the traditional salary schedule
Engagement with Vendors and/or Purchased Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals have discretion over their campus budgets to purchase additional instructional resources Can engage with vendors or purchased services to provide student services, tutoring, or enrichment outside of core instructional time, meaning during elective or ancillary time or before/after school With permission, schools may select vendors to provide program-specific professional development (e.g. World Languages, Montessori, International Baccalaureate, Project-based Learning, etc.)
Testing Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals may request adjustments to testing calendars to align with college schedules

LEVEL 3 AUTONOMIES

LEVEL 3 AUTONOMY <i>A and B-rated Schools</i>	
AREA	DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full autonomy over the program or programs for which the school earned its magnet designation if applicable
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May use any curriculum that does not violate Board policy or TEA regulations
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to current budget process for non-NES schools• May purchase services unless otherwise restricted by Board policy, regulations, and law• May not exceed budget
Instructional Delivery Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May implement a lesson delivery model that aligns with school program (e.g., project-based learning, small group instruction, inquiry-based)• Spot observation forms will be adjusted to account for different instructional delivery models• DOL is optional
District Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The district will release some of the district's professional development days for principals to lead campus-based professional development
Master Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May create the master schedule in a way that supports the school's program
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to current staffing model in non-NES schools• May staff the school the way the leadership team sees fit except must remain within budget

LEVEL 3 AUTONOMIES

LEVEL 3 AUTONOMY <i>A and B-rated Schools</i>	
AREA	DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new Teacher Evaluation System will account for schools with high achievement and specialized programming
Teacher Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will participate in the pay-for-performance compensation system in the 25-26 school year
Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals included in the LEAD evaluation system The evaluation will account for schools with high achievement and/or specialized programming. Principals can select growth or achievement
Principal Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals are compensated using the principal pay-for-performance compensation plan
Engagement with Vendors and/or Purchased Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals have discretion over their campus budgets to purchase additional instructional resources Can engage with vendors or purchased services to provide student services, tutoring, or enrichment outside of core instructional time, meaning during elective or ancillary time or before/after school With permission, schools may select vendors to provide program-specific professional development (e.g. World Languages, Montessori, International Baccalaureate, Project-based Learning, etc.)
Testing Calendars (for Early College & Dual Credit Programs only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals may request adjustments to testing calendars to align with college schedules

LEVEL 2 AUTONOMIES

LEVEL 2 AUTONOMY C and D-rated schools (non-NES)	
AREA	DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full autonomy over the program or programs for which the school earned the magnet program designation (if applicable)
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must select curriculum from list of district-vetted curriculum (some schools may be excluded from this parameter) The District may require supplemental curriculum or instruction for some or all students The campus must implement Demonstrations of Learning (DOLs) or exit tickets aligned with the vetted curriculum <p><i>Specialty programs (like Montessori and IB) should work directly with the Autonomy Support Team to request and determine an approach to curriculum implementation that aligns with the campus' unique instructional delivery model. (More information on the Autonomy Support Team can be found on page 16).</i></p>
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to current budget process for non-NES schools Must receive district approval to purchase services (must show correlation between purchased service and student or teacher outcomes) May not exceed budget
Master Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master schedule must align instructional minutes to selected curriculum The District may also require additional time for students who are not proficient in reading, math, and/or science
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to current staffing model in non-NES schools May staff the school the way the leadership team sees fit except must remain within budget

LEVEL 2 AUTONOMIES

LEVEL 2 AUTONOMY <i>C and D-rated schools (non-NES)</i>	
AREA	DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new Teacher Evaluation System will account for schools with high achievement and specialized programming
Teacher Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will participate in the pay-for-performance compensation system in the 25-26 school year
Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principals included in the LEAD evaluation system• The evaluation will account for schools with high achievement and/or specialized programming.
Principal Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principals are compensated using the principal pay-for-performance compensation plan
Engagement with Vendors and/or Purchased Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchased services and programs must be approved by Central Office• In rare cases, a campus may request program-specific professional development

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPLIANCE AND MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT GAP

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPLIANCE & MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT GAP	
Special Education Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If a school is below “Proficient” in any of the four areas of the district’s special education compliance rubric*, then that campus must outline specific steps in the School Action Plan to improve in those areas. Should there continue to be a lack of progress in these two areas, the District may direct the school to take specific steps and ensure a specific improvement plan is implemented. <p><i>*Special education compliance applies only to schools with more than 25 students who receive special education services.</i></p>
Minority Achievement Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If the White-Black and/or White-Hispanic achievement gap* on STAAR reading or math is greater than 30% [The District will decrease this expectation to 25% in three years, and 20% in six years], then that campus must outline specific steps in the School Action Plan to improve in those areas. Should there continue to be a lack of progress in these two areas, the District may direct the school to take specific steps and ensure a specific improvement plan is implemented. <p><i>*Minority achievement gap applies only to schools with at least 25 students in the student groups represented at the campus.</i></p>

A top-down view of several people's arms and hands reaching towards the center and stacking on top of each other in a circular formation. The hands are of various skin tones, and some have painted nails or jewelry like a beaded bracelet. The background is a blurred, textured grey surface.

Defined Autonomy Support Team