

**HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan to welcome**

**students back to school**

*Aug. 24, 2018* – Houston Independent School District Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan will welcome HISD students back to school on Monday, August 27. Dr. Lathan, HISD Board of Education Trustees and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner will tour different schools highlighting district initiatives for the 2018-2019 school year.

**Media is invited to cover the events listed below. *A press conference is scheduled at 10:30 a.m.***

**Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan’s first-day-of-school schedule:**

***Note to editors and reporters****: To set up early-morning live shots, please contact the HISD Press Office.*

**Magnet Hub Bus Stop**

**7 a.m.**

**Woodson PK-5 Academy**,10720 Southview St., 77047

Dr. Lathan will greet students arriving and departing at one of the new 46 magnet hub locations across the district.

**School Visits**

**7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m.**

**Woodson PK-5 Academy**,10720 Southview St., 77047

HISD is expanding free, full-day pre-kindergarten across the district for the 2018-19 school year. At Woodson PK-5, more than 250 students have already enrolled in the program. The school is in such high demand that it currently is wait-listing students. The program includes free transportation and free after-school care.

**9 a.m.-9:30 a.m.**

**Wesley Elementary School**, 800 Dillard St., 77091

Dr. Lathan and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner will meet Wesley students and administrators to celebrate their achievement of receiving a “Met Standard” rating for the 2017-2018 school year. Wesley receives support through the Achieve 180 program which brings together effective teachers, strong leadership, and an environment of high expectations to transform the learning environment at IR campuses.

**10 a.m.-11 a.m. - Hurricane Harvey anniversary press conference will be at 10:30 a.m.**

**Hilliard Elementary School**, 8115 East Houston Road, 77028

Dr. Lathan, Board of Education Trustees, elected officials and community members will celebrate the resilience the district has displayed since Hurricane Harvey one year ago. This will be the first day Hilliard students will return to their home campus, which was renovated after flood damage.

**11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**Garden Oaks Montessori PK 3-8**, 901 Sue Barnett Drive, 77018

Garden Oaks Montessori is the first school in HISD to offer family-style meals to students, which will be served in the classroom. This year, HISD students will receive free breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Dr. Lathan will eat lunch with students.

**1 p.m.-1:30 p.m.**

**Yates High School**, 3703 Sampson St., 77004

Yates is one of 13 HISD campuses set to debut a new school for the 2018-2019 school year – the largest number of building openings at one time in the district’s history. **Students** will start classes in a new $65 million facility that features specialized spaces for the school’s communications magnet program built under the 2012 Bond Program.

**2 p.m.-2:30 p.m.**

**Ortiz Middle School**, 6767 Telephone Road, 77061

International Baccalaureate (IB) World Schools provide students with unique academic opportunities while fostering critical thinking from an intercultural perspective. Currently, 13 HISD schools are authorized as IB Primary Years sites, and Ortiz MS was recently authorized to be an IB school.

**Patrol Car Ride Along**

**2:30 p.m.-3 p.m.**

**Ortiz Middle School**, 6767 Telephone Road, 77061

Safety is the number one priority in HISD. During a ride-along with HISD Police patrolling campuses, Lathan will witness first-hand the safety measures taken by the department to keep students safe.

*\*GoPro video will be recorded inside the patrol car and will be shared with media.*

***Note:***Interim Superintendent Lathan will do live social media updates throughout the day. Follow **@HISDSupe**, **@HoustonISD**, and **@HISDEspanol**, and join the conversation using the hashtag **#HISDWelcomeBack**. HISD employees and alumni are encouraged to wear their school colors, shirts or other “school spirit” attire, and post photos to social media on the first day of school with the hashtag **#IStandWithHISD**. The campus with the most online support will receive a Superintendent-sponsored homecoming tailgate for their school

Below is additional information on new district initiatives for the 2018-2019 school year.

**Magnet hub bus stops**

Students who attend magnet programs at HISD will now ride bus routes specifically dedicated to their schools. Previously, students attending magnet schools rode buses with routes that serviced several schools, resulting in a longer commute time. Magnet school students will be assigned to “hub locations” throughout the district where they will be picked up to be taken to their school and dropped off at the end of the school day.

During the new school year, HISD Transportation Services will also implement Zonar, an upgraded GPS tracking system that will incorporate on-board video cameras and will allow for real-time bus activity tracking, and [Infofinder I](https://www.infofinderi.com/ifi/?cid=HI2LMFAOCOI), which allows families to find their designated bus stop and route number by entering their address online.

For the first few days of school, we will have extra HISD staff manning the magnet hub bus stops to provide assistance. A map of the current magnet hub locations can be found [here](http://blogs.houstonisd.org/news/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/07/Magnet-School-Hub-Locations-Map-ENG.pdf), and a magnet hub program FAQ can be found [here](https://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/Domain/7972/Magnet%20Hubs%20-%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20FINAL%208-6.pdf). Parents with questions about transportation are encouraged to call the 24/7 Business Operations Customer Care line at 713-556-9400.

**Free meals for all students and new socioeconomic “blue form”**

HISD Nutrition Services will provide free meals to all students, regardless of their economic status. All HISD schools are now qualified to operate under the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service Community Eligibility Provision, which allows HISD to provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner at no charge to all students, eliminating the need for free and reduced-price meal applications.

Instead of completing the free and reduced-price meal application, parents are asked to complete a socioeconomic information form distributed to parents during school registration, teacher meet-and-greets, back-to-school events, and other campus activities.

Information gathered from the socioeconomic form will be used to determine the amount of federal funding that is disbursed to schools. The data also will be used as a performance indicator for student achievement. Forms are not required for pre-K students. All parents should complete and return the blue form by Friday, Oct. 26.

HISD has provided free breakfast to all students since 2009. The district also offers a dinner program at 178 schools that serve dinner to students at no charge.

**Standardized start/dismissal times**

Students will begin the 2018-2019 school year with several changes, including new standardized start and dismissal times to better deliver efficient, reliable, and affordable transportation to our students. The district will operate with the following standardized start/dismissal times:

* 7:30 a.m.-2:50 p.m. for elementary schools and early childhood centers
* 8:30 a.m.-3:50 p.m. for PK-8, K-8, and middle schools
* 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. for high schools and 6-12 campuses

Parents should contact their child’s campus with any questions.

During the 2017-2018 school year, HISD managed 67 different school start times – the highest in the state – to transport nearly 36,000 students on almost 1,200 different routes each day. Standardizing school start times will optimize the district’s bus routes and ensure that students arrive to campus and depart on time, resulting in fewer interruptions to teaching, learning, and family schedules. The new start times will also extend the life of the district’s bus fleet and reduce maintenance and fuel costs.

**New or renovated schools opening**

More than a dozen schools will formally open to students for the start of the new school year – the largest number of building openings at any one time in HISD history. New schools set to open for the 2018-2019 school year include Askew Elementary School, Lawson Middle School, High School for Law and Justice, and Yates, Washington, and Energy Institute high schools.

Campuses that have completed renovations or additions and are set to open in August include Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy, Eastwood and Pilgrim academies, Garden Oaks and Wilson Montessori Schools, and Hilliard Elementary School. The temporary campus that will house Braeburn Elementary School will also open this fall. An additional five schools are slated to open in January 2019 when students return from winter break.

**Free flu shots for all students**

In partnership with in-school health service provider Healthy Schools, HISD will offer free flu vaccines to all students during the 2018-19 school year. A team of nurses and other staff from Healthy Schools will rotate to each campus for half-day clinics beginning in October through December.

Parents will be able to provide consent electronically or through a print copy of the [consent form](http://blogs.houstonisd.org/news/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/English_Houston_2018-Flu-Vaccine-Consent-Form.pdf), which will be available to parents in various languages. The forms will be provided to campuses, and parents can either complete the form and submit to the campus prior to clinics or have their child bring the completed form on the day of clinic.

For a complete guide to what’s new for the 2018-19 school year, visit [www.houstonisd.org/welcome](http://www.houstonisd.org/welcome).