



# PRESS RELEASE

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HISD Media Relations Department

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## HISD selects teachers for Apollo 20 school turnaround project

*June 11, 2010* – HISD has selected the first group of teachers that will be part of the innovative Apollo 20 school turnaround project that will be launched at nine schools in August. A total of 600 teachers were employed at the schools last school year. Today, 358 of those teachers were notified that they have been chosen for the bold school turnaround project. As of June 11, 80 teachers had already decided to retire, transfer to another school or resign. In some cases, teachers opted not to stay due to a personal conflict with the longer school year and longer school day schedules of the Apollo schools.

The remaining 162 teachers were notified that they still have jobs but will not be staying at the Apollo schools. Those teachers are being invited to apply for other teaching positions in the district. The HISD Human Resources Office will hold a job fair for them on June 23. Since May 24, HISD staff members have been conducting an exhaustive data-driven evaluation of the 600 teachers in the nine Apollo 20 schools.

Apollo 20 is a school turnaround strategy that focuses on five research-based tenets that begin with human capital, meaning an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school. The strategy also includes more time on task, data-driven instruction, high-dosage tutoring and high expectations.

The nine schools chosen for the launch of Apollo 20 in the 2010-11 school year are among the district's lower performing schools. There are four high schools (Jones, Kashmere, Lee and Sharpstown) and five middle schools (Attucks, Dowling, Fondren, Key and Ryan).

Eleven of HISD's lower performing elementary schools will be added to the program in the 2011-2012 school year, for a total of 20 schools. The five research-based tenets are based on the research of Dr. Roland Fryer, Jr., of the Education Innovation Laboratory (EdLabs) at Harvard University, who set out to find out what makes successful schools succeed. He found five common denominators on which HISD is basing the five tenets of the Apollo program. Dr. Fryer is partnering with the district on the Apollo 20 project.

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The **Houston Independent School District** is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States with 297 schools and more than 200,000 students. The 301-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with nearly 30,000 employees. As a result of tremendous academic gains in recent years, a record 205 HISD schools achieved Texas' top ratings of Exemplary or Recognized in 2009.

For more information, visit the HISD Web site at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org).

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