



Apollo 20 *ELEMENTARY PROGRAM*

Houston Independent School District

FACT SHEET

The Apollo 20 elementary program is a bold turnaround strategy outlined in HISD's Strategic Direction. It is designed to ensure that every student will have the rigorous instructional program required for college and career success. This is a partnership with EdLabs at Harvard University that incorporates best practices from successful public and charter schools across the nation.

HOW WERE THE APOLLO 20 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SELECTED?

The Apollo 20 schools were selected based on their performance on the 2009–2010 TAKS reading and math exams. The schools with the lowest average scores on those exams were given the highest priority for being included in the program. Two schools were automatically selected for the program because they had been rated “Academically Unacceptable.” An additional 9 schools were selected from the remaining lowest-ranked 18 elementary schools.

WHAT OTHER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS WERE USED IN THE SELECTION PROCESS?

Only schools that enroll third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders were included. Schools that use Alternative Education Accountability procedures were excluded. The “Texas Connections Academy” was excluded because it is an online school. Dogan and Scott elementary schools were excluded because they are being merged together next year. Certain other schools, such as schools that were rated “Exemplary” and schools that are charters not fully under HISD control, were also excluded. All other elementary schools were potentially eligible.

WHAT ARE THE 11 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS THAT WERE SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Blackshear Elementary School
- Davila Elementary School
- Frost Elementary School
- Highland Heights Elementary School
- Isaacs Elementary School
- Kelso Elementary School
- Robinson Elementary School
- Scarborough Elementary School
- Tinsley Elementary School
- Walnut Bend Elementary School
- Young Elementary School

WHAT ARE THE BEST PRACTICES THAT WILL BE USED IN THESE SCHOOLS?

The research conducted by Dr. Roland Fryer of EdLabs identified five tenets that have consistently been shown to improve student performance and close the racial achievement gap. These five tenets will be used in the 11 elementary schools.

1. Human Capital

- Effective principal and teachers in every school
- Professional development in the areas of reading and math for principals and teachers
- Performance bonuses and merit pay
- New appraisal system for principals and teachers

2. More Instructional Time

- Minimizing noninstructional time to carve out more time for instruction
- Increasing the amount of time for reading and math instruction for all students by 30 minutes each day. This adds up to an extra 90 hours of math and reading instruction per year.
- Focusing on small group instruction in reading and math to provide more individualized attention to each student

3. Use of Data to Drive Instruction

- Biweekly monitoring of student progress
- Use of formative assessments
- Use of running records
- Standards-based curriculum and assessments

4. High-dosage Tutoring

- In-school math tutoring for all fourth-graders, to help both struggling students and those who are ready to move ahead. Special math tutors who are college graduates will work with students in school every day, with a tutor-to-student ratio of one to three.
- In-school reading intervention for grades K–2 facilitated by a reading interventionist
- Saturday tutorials two times a month for students who are struggling in core academic areas

5. Culture of High Expectations for All

- 100 percent of students performing on or above grade level in all core subjects
 - 100 percent of students reading on or above grade level by the end of third grade
 - 98 percent attendance rate for all students and staff
 - School–parent contract
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