

August 8, 2024

Houston ISD School Board
4400 W. 18th Street
Houston, TX 77092

Delivered Electronically

Dear Houston ISD School Board,

We write to express our support for the Houston ISD School Board placing on this November's ballot a school bond that will address the safety, health, and educational needs of students.

Most large, urban districts ask for bond approval every five years. However, this District has not asked voters to approve a school bond since 2012 that was aimed at high schools. The last time there was bond approval for elementary and middle schools was in 2007, nearly 20 years ago. Studies have shown that school building conditions can impact student academic outcomes. Poor facility quality can result in decreased student attendance, chronic absenteeism, and lower student achievement.

Our students deserve learning environments conducive to learning. Yet, we've seen the headlines exposing dilapidated school conditions. Students have to learn in scorching classrooms during hot season months or endure freezing conditions during the winter due to the failure of HVAC systems. Further, the Houston Chronicle reported that almost every HISD school campus failed to meet indoor quality standards including high levels of lead in drinking water, abnormal carbon dioxide levels and airborne contaminants. Equally concerning is the lack of critical, school campus safety infrastructure needed to ensure the safety and security of students, teachers, and school staff.

We also support the District's forward thinking proposal of expanding access to prekindergarten for our youngest learners and creating high quality career centers that increase students' options for postsecondary success. Early childhood learning opportunities have a critical impact on children's outcomes and go beyond preparedness for kindergarten setting that child up for academic success. At the other end of the academic spectrum, the construction of high quality, regional career centers will support the expansion of dual credit and industry-based certificates from higher education aligned with high demand, living wage jobs. Data shows there is a \$24,400 annual salary difference between those HISD working alumni who have an Associates or higher and those students who have no post-secondary education.¹

Houston ISD is long overdue for a significant investment in its students through investment in its school infrastructure. We urge the Houston ISD School Board to vote yes to placing a bond on this November's ballot. Houston ISD's students can't wait any longer.

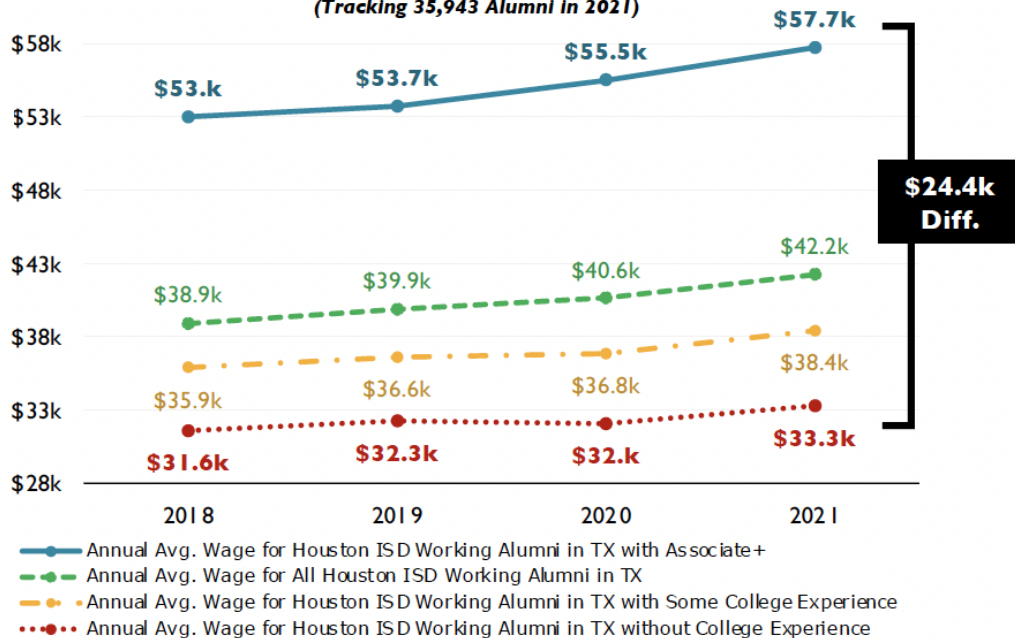
¹ See Appendix A

Cary Wright
Chief Executive Officer
Good Reason Houston

Appendix A

Houston ISD Graduates Ages 25-30 Working in Texas with Associate+ Earn ~\$24,400 More Than Those w/ No College

Avg. Real Salaries (Adj. for CPI) for Houston ISD Alumni Ages 25-30 Working in Texas (Tracking 35,943 Alumni in 2021)



2021 Distribution of Educational Attainment for Alumni Ages 25-30 Working in Texas *						
	Less Than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree
Houston ISD	9%	17%	47%	6%	18%	3%

*Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding
Source: US Census Bureau, 5-year ACS, 2012-2021. US Census Bureau, 5-year ACS PUMS, 2012-2021. TEA, Response to Public Information Request, 2018-2021. Living wage rate is equivalent to \$50k in 2018 dollars. CPI Data from St. Louis FED