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# When All Means **All**

Accelerating Districts and Propelling Charters  
Toward Citywide Education Reform

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## About CPRL

The Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) at Columbia University strives to revitalize public education systems while reinventing professional education. CPRL conducts high-impact research and consulting projects for clients in the education sector and provides rigorous coursework, skills training, and real-world experiential learning for its graduate students who attend programs at Columbia University and across the country.

Since its founding in 2011, CPRL has provided research and consulting support to state agencies, school districts, charter school organizations, foundations, and advocacy groups, completing 200 projects. More than two-thirds of CPRL's 550-plus alumni work in education and other public sector leadership and management roles.

## Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

In 2016, in response to persistent public education challenges in the Houston area, a group of local civic and business leaders coalesced around creating an organization that would, in the words of one of the founding board members, “hold the vision for the community and align people around that vision” for ensuring a quality public education for all students in the Houston area. The group’s initial focus was early childhood education with the objective of strengthening pre-K enrollment and, by extension, increasing the percentage of third graders reading at grade level. However, notwithstanding early success increasing pre-K enrollment, the group broadened its scope to fulfill a long-term objective for postsecondary readiness: seeing high school graduates better prepared to compete in and contribute to Houston’s growing economy. The group launched Good Reason Houston in 2018 with an objective of increasing the number of students in A- and B-rated K-12 schools by 25% (60,000 students) by 2025.<sup>1</sup> Good Reason Houston is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure that all Houston-area students have access to quality public education options.

**Good Reason Houston operates as a funder, an adviser, and a technical assistance provider. It pursues two distinct objectives, each of which has underlying strategic levers:**

Lever	Objective
Grow and Sustain Great Schools	
 <b>System Acceleration</b>	Build the capacity of the system to perpetuate quality and equity
 <b>School Transformation</b>	Dramatically improve the quality of low-performing schools
 <b>New School Creation</b>	Open new and/or expand access to school models that have evidence of success or meet the unique needs of marginalized students
Rally Houstonians for Change	
 <b>Community Empowerment</b>	Develop parent and community leaders and fuel pathways to organize around school quality
 <b>Policy and Advocacy</b>	Build and advocate for an agenda that holds leaders accountable to quality and equity

This report documents Good Reason Houston's impact on public education in the Houston area. We describe the work that Good Reason Houston has conducted under each of its five strategic levers. We document qualitative and quantitative impacts of the work and identify successes and opportunities for improvement.

Two research questions shape the study:

1. How is Good Reason Houston's work affecting public education practice in the Houston area?
2. How is Good Reason Houston's work affecting the public education environment in the Houston area?

The study revealed the following key findings about Good Reason Houston's work to date:

1. Through effective client engagement practices, Good Reason Houston has earned substantial trust across diverse partners: school systems, charter schools, policymakers, and community organizations.
2. Houston-area school systems have achieved notable successes in defining and implementing their priorities with support from Good Reason Houston.
3. Good Reason Houston has supported creation of nearly 10,000 new school seats at charter and district choice schools.<sup>2</sup>
4. Good Reason Houston has effectively fostered community empowerment in concentrated but meaningful ways that have affected district strategic planning, district policy, and state policy.

The study also indicated several recommendations for Good Reason Houston's work going forward:

1. As Good Reason Houston's system acceleration work gains momentum, it should be deliberate about how it will prepare for and complete successful handoffs to district staff.
2. Sustained success in new school creation may require reassessment of the charter schools' strategy in response to external challenges.
3. Good Reason Houston should assess opportunities to expand its impact for community empowerment and policy work.

The report begins with an overview of the Houston area's educational environment; a history of Good Reason Houston; and the study's methodology. The report describes the five levers that frame Good Reason Houston's objectives and its work streams and identifies the study's research questions. After summarizing Good Reason Houston's primary successes and opportunities for growth, the report analyzes Good Reason Houston's impact by work stream. The report also highlights organizational practices that have been instrumental to Good Reason Houston's success. The exhibits provide additional information about Houston-area school systems and detail about the nature of Good Reason Houston's engagement with them.

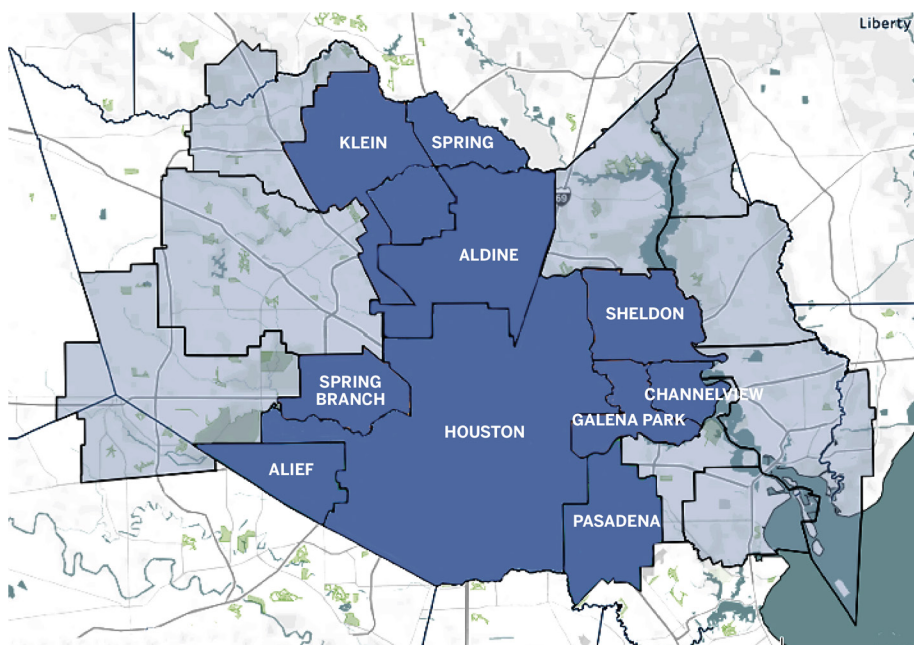
## Background

With more than 4.7 million residents, Harris County, which encompasses the Houston area, is the most populous county in Texas and the third most populous county in the United States. More than 20% of the residents are students in public K–12 schools, representing one of the largest concentrations of K–12 students in the United States. However, in contrast to other major urban centers, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, which have primarily one district for the urban center, Harris County has 19 independent school districts ("districts" or "ISDs") and 3 large charter management organizations (CMOs), each serving more than 10,000 students.

**In total, there are more than 900,000 public school students in the Houston area. Nearly half of high school students were not on track for college or career readiness in 2017.<sup>3</sup>**

In its four years of operation, Good Reason Houston has worked with 10 Houston-area ISDs, and 13 charter schools or charter school systems which together serve well over 500,000 students.<sup>4</sup> With more than 200,000 students, Houston ISD is the seventh-largest school system in the country. Four other ISDs (Aldine, Alief, Klein, and Pasadena) combine to serve another 200,000 students. Of Good Reason Houston's partner school systems, 10 have more than half of their students receiving free or reduced lunch; 6 have more than a third of their students enrolled in an English Language Learners program; and all are majority non-white.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 1: Map of Good Reason Houston Geographic Focus Area**

Good Reason Houston's geographic focus includes ISDs and charter districts that have a greater than 50% Economically Disadvantaged student population and that have at least one campus within Houston city limits. Good Reason Houston extends support to other districts in Harris County based on specific support requests that correspond with projects in Good Reason Houston's primary geographic focus area.

Public schools in the Houston area have historically had low proficiency rates on state assessments. In 2017, only 37% of third graders in the Houston area were reading at grade level, and only 40% of fourth graders were at grade level in mathematics.<sup>6</sup> For low-income students and students of color, these numbers were significantly lower. Only 27% of Black third graders and 26% of Black fourth graders met standards in reading and mathematics, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

In developing Good Reason Houston's strategy, leadership looked to state and national examples of city-based organizations that carry the standard for public education. These organizations have operated under a variety of labels since New Schools for New Orleans pioneered the "harbormaster" function in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Whether labeled harbormaster or "quarterback" or "ed cities," these organizations focus their work on improving the quality of public education in a specific urban environment. These city-based organizations share common objectives around improving PK–12 education but structure their work around varied theories of action. For example, Mind Trust in Indianapolis, a nationally recognized exemplar, has a leadership development emphasis that includes partnerships with schools, nonprofits, educators, students, and families to start and restart charter and district-run schools.<sup>8</sup> In Louisiana, New Schools for Baton Rouge (NSBR) has, by contrast, a charter school-centric approach with a priority on recruiting established, high-performing operators.<sup>9</sup>

Education Forward DC, in the nation's capital, operates primarily as a strategic funder. In that capacity, it has supported development of new schools and improvement or turnaround of existing district and charter schools. It has also supported the start-up of community-based not-for-profits whose success would strengthen Washington's public education environment.<sup>10</sup> To some degree, each organization's strategic choices reflect the different urban environments in which they operate.

Good Reason Houston's founders also looked to regional examples when planning their strategy. In Texas, leading regional organizations have championed education improvement through collective engagement strategies. For example, the Commit Partnership in Dallas employs a collective impact strategy to engage stakeholders at different levels and across industries with the aim of forging a collaborative educational ecosystem.<sup>11</sup> The Commit Partnership acts as a connector entity by uniting disparate groups behind shared goals in education, such as improving equitable access. In Austin, the E3 Alliance organizes stakeholders around data.<sup>12</sup> It collects and analyzes data to support strategic planning and implementation for improving school culture, the quality of instruction, the capacity of school leadership, and outcomes for students from marginalized backgrounds. Each organization prioritizes convening stakeholders to create new pathways for students based, in part, on the needs and histories of their respective communities.

Good Reason Houston has features of city-based organizations both nationally and in Texas. Like Ed Forward DC and the Mind Trust, Good Reason Houston acts as a funder and a technical assistance provider.

Like the Commit Partnership, Good Reason Houston seeks to convene groups around specific educational priorities such as pre-K enrollment. Like the E3 Alliance, Good Reason Houston uses data to inform and empower community engagement.

Even as Good Reason Houston's work is informed by and modeled on other city-based organizations, it operates in ways that reflect the particular opportunities, challenges, and needs of Houston's educational environment. In Indianapolis and Washington, partnering with the traditional school system means engaging with one district. In Houston, it means looking for opportunities to engage with more than a dozen. In Baton Rouge, there were no high-performing charter schools when NSBR started.<sup>13</sup> At Good Reason Houston's founding, by contrast, the city's landscape already included high-performing charter school operators serving more than 30,000 students.

**Good Reason Houston has engaged deeply with both ISDs and charter schools.**

Most city-based organizations espouse agnosticism about charter schools versus district schools; they believe in quality public schools regardless of the governance model.<sup>14</sup> In practice, however, most of these organizations have a charter school orientation. They are eager to collaborate with the local school system when opportunities arise, but they anchor their work in development, recruitment, and expansion of quality charter schools. By contrast, in a little over four years, Good Reason Houston has balanced its work between charters and ISDs. It has had substantial engagement with five ISDs and more than a half dozen charter operators, showing uncharacteristic balance between those systems even though tensions between the charter sector and traditional school districts are as deeply rooted in Houston as in any other city that has a robust charter sector.

Another distinguishing characteristic is the breadth of Good Reason Houston's engagements.

**Since 2018, in addition to extensive support both to ISDs and charter school networks, Good Reason Houston has supported new school developers, community organizers, turnaround schools, teacher pipelines, and leadership development.**

Good Reason Houston's engagements reflect the full range of work contemplated in its five strategic levers:

1. System Acceleration
2. School Transformation
3. School Creation
4. Community Empowerment
5. Policy and Advocacy

Together, these levers serve two broader objectives: 1) Growing and Sustaining Great Schools and 2) Rallying Houstonians for Change. Good Reason Houston's theory of change is that these five levers, working in concert, will help achieve the objective of 60,000 more students in A- or B-rated schools by 2025.<sup>15</sup>

CPRL conducted this study because Good Reason Houston's work appeared to warrant closer consideration. It has taken a distinctive approach to city-based education work and shown early evidence of success. The study aimed to conduct a more systematic assessment of its accomplishments to document what has worked; to identify keys to success that Good Reason Houston and others engaged in this type of work can carry forward; and to explore opportunities for Good Reason Houston to expand its impact in the future.

Figure 2: Good Reason Houston's Five Strategic Levers



### Good Reason Houston's 5 Levers

**System Acceleration.** System acceleration includes grants, direct services, and connections to third-party support for ISDs to strengthen their systems-level work. To date, this work has emphasized pre-K enrollment, district strategic planning, community engagement, and teacher pipelines, among other things.

**School Transformation.** School transformation includes grants, direct services, and connections to third-party supports to dramatically improve the quality of low-performing schools. To date, this work has included district-wide curriculum selection and implementation; Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) school turnaround implementation; and charter school instructional training and support.

**New School Creation.** New school creation includes grants, leadership training, planning support, and project management to create new charter school and district choice options. To date, this work has included supporting the development of new charter school

leaders, funding the expansion of mature networks, supporting the growth of promising small charter sites, and providing planning and project management support for the establishment of new district choice schools.

**Community Empowerment.** Community empowerment includes direct community engagement work and funding for the work of local community organizations. To date it has included funding for community organizations to do parent advocacy training; conducting surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions as part of district strategic planning; and analyzing community engagement data to inform district priorities.

**Policy and Advocacy.** Policy and advocacy includes communicating values and beliefs about educational priorities to inform policy decisions. To date, it has included direct support about education priorities and indirect support for advocacy, especially around school finance, accountability, and pre-K education.



# Methodology

To evaluate the impact of Good Reason Houston on public education in the Houston area, we asked and answered two overarching research questions, each with subquestions:

1. How is Good Reason Houston's work affecting public education practice in the Houston area?
  - To what extent is Good Reason Houston building district capacity to perpetuate school quality and equity?
  - What effect, if any, has Good Reason Houston had on the quality of low-performing schools?
  - How effectively is Good Reason Houston supporting the opening or expansion of school models that have evidence of success or meet the unique needs of marginalized students?
2. How is Good Reason Houston's work impacting the Houston area's public education environment?
  - To what extent is Good Reason Houston developing parent and community leadership to organize around school quality?
  - What effect, if any, has Good Reason Houston's work had on state and local education policy?

These research questions align with Good Reason Houston's strategic goals and theory of action.

The research team first worked to understand Good Reason Houston's organizational structure and programmatic activities by conducting informational interviews with staff and board members and by reviewing organizational documents. The documents included operational materials, such as the organizational chart and operating plans for particular lines of work. It also included external Good Reason Houston materials, such as grant agreements for grants to partner organizations. For reference, the research team reviewed publicly available materials from select city-based education organizations in Texas and across the country to understand the range of strategic and programmatic priorities these organizations pursue.

The research progressed from internal understanding to external evaluation. The research team interviewed individuals in leadership or senior administrative positions at partner ISDs, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), charter school networks, and community organizations to understand their respective experiences of working with Good Reason Houston and the impact of that work. (See Table 1: Interviews by Category). The research team also reviewed and evaluated Good Reason Houston-supported work products from partner organizations, including strategic plans for ISDs and training materials from community organizations.

For groups that have been directly impacted by Good Reason Houston's work but that were not likely to have knowledge of the organization itself, the research team reviewed existing survey data and conducted independent focus groups. (See Table 2: Focus Groups by Category.) Specifically, the research team conducted a focus group with school leaders in Aldine ISD whose professional development Good Reason Houston had funded. Similarly, the research team conducted two focus groups with teachers at the two schools in Aldine ISD for which Good Reason Houston supported implementation of the ACE turnaround model. Finally, the research team conducted a focus group with families who participated in education advocacy training that Good Reason Houston funded. The focus groups supplemented the research team's review of results from preexisting teacher and community surveys about those projects.

The study considered outcomes-based data as available. With respect to school outcomes, the study considered pre-COVID-19 Texas school report card information<sup>16</sup> and 2021-'22 interim assessment information, specifically for the ACE turnaround schools. With respect to school creation and expansion, the study relied on data that the responsible school or district leader provided the research team regarding the number of children that the growth would enable the school to serve.<sup>17</sup> Just prior to publication of this report, the Texas Education Agency released 2022 school and district accountability information. When citing performance for individual schools, the letter grades are based on the 2022 results. More generally, Appendix D provides snapshots of independent school district and charter district results from 2022 as prepared by Good Reason Houston.

TABLE 1: Interviews by Category

Interview Category	Interviews Conducted
Texas Education Agency (TEA) administrators and policy makers	6
Technical assistance partners	6
ISD leadership and administration	17
Community partners	3
Peer city-based organizations	5
Charter school and CMO Leadership and administration	9
Good Reason Houston Board and funders	9
*Good Reason Houston staff	9

\*on background

TABLE 2: Focus Groups by Category

Focus Group Category	Number of Participants
Teachers (ACE transformation schools)	10
School leadership	6
Families	11

To respond to the research questions, the research team defined and applied thematic codes to all collected data. The team updated and reapplied the coding scheme as new themes emerged during data collection. In particular, the team analyzed how stakeholders perceived the quality and impact of Good Reason Houston’s activities that had engaged them directly. The research team then looked to correlate qualitative perceptions about impact with assessment of objective outcomes, such as the substantive components of finished strategic plans or changes in the number of quality seats available to students. From there, the research team generated a set of findings highlighting the key themes and insights that were likely to provide the most benefit to the field.

# Findings

The study's findings fall into two categories. The first category documents meaningful, positive impacts that Good Reason Houston has achieved. The second identifies effective practices that have been instrumental in attaining those results.

The research further indicated opportunities for growth. Some of these opportunities derived from reflection on areas in which Good Reason Houston has had limited success to date. Others emerged from unmet needs that the research identified and that Good Reason Houston may be positioned to help fulfill. The report presents these opportunities as recommendations for Good Reason Houston to consider.

## Meaningful Impact: Results

Since its founding, Good Reason Houston has achieved meaningful impact aligned to each of its strategic priorities:

1. **System Acceleration.** Good Reason Houston has meaningfully supported
  - strong pre-K enrollment growth in Aldine, Houston, and other partner ISDs.
  - development of district strategic plans for the Houston area's three largest ISDs that
    - i. are based on an understanding of school performance;
    - ii. are informed by community input and priorities;
    - iii. have an equity lens; and
    - iv. maintain a strong student outcomes focus.
  - research-based selection of curricula and support for districtwide implementation.
2. **School Transformation.** Good Reason Houston has facilitated successful implementation of the ACE turnaround model at two chronically underperforming elementary schools that are both B-rated schools as of 2022.

3. **New School Creation.** Good Reason Houston has meaningfully supported development of nearly 10,000 new school seats through grants and other technical assistance for charter school expansion or creation of new charter schools and district schools of choice.
4. **Community Empowerment.** Good Reason Houston has been instrumental in
  - funding two successful pilots to educate, empower, and engage parents to advocate on behalf of their children.
  - incorporating community engagement into district planning processes and making family engagement a district priority.
5. **Policy & Advocacy.** Good Reason Houston has been a reliable and trusted voice for
  - outcomes-based accountability and access to early childhood education, helping to maintain them as legislative priorities.
  - mobilizing community voices and action around education policy priorities.

## Key To Success: Trusted Partner

Good Reason Houston has been able to accomplish meaningful impact in the charter sector, with ISDs, and in the policy arena because it has gained the status of a trusted partner to district leaders, policy makers, community organizations, and schools. It has developed trust by consistently exhibiting these organizational qualities:

- **Outcomes oriented.** Good Reason Houston's consistent emphasis on outcomes rather than activities was evident across multiple strands of their work.
- **Boots on the ground.** School systems, in particular, value Good Reason Houston's readiness to work side by side with their staff to accomplish the task at hand.
- **Quality connector.** Stakeholders frequently cited Good Reason Houston's strength in vetting and connecting partners to high-quality third-party support.
- **Client centered.** Good Reason Houston's partners frequently cite Good Reason Houston's client-centered approach as a funder and a technical assistance provider.
- **Reliable.** Stakeholders say they can count on Good Reason Houston for quality advice and support when they need it.



## Looking Forward: Recommendations

Although Good Reason Houston has had success navigating disparate charter and ISD worlds effectively, the research pointed to several steps that may help it extend and expand its success across different work streams:

### Develop district capacity.

As Good Reason Houston's system acceleration work gains momentum, it should be deliberate about coordinating with districts to sustain initiatives over time.

### Reassess the new schools plan.

Good Reason Houston has a unique role to play in new school creation in Houston but must prepare for multiple challenges on the path forward including an adverse political climate for new charter schools. The challenges ahead indicate that Good Reason Houston may need to continue refining its plan for the next phase of new school creation.

### Expand community empowerment activities.

To date, the community-driven aspect of Good Reason Houston's parent engagement work has been limited in scale and clarity of overall direction. Good Reason Houston should explore opportunities to expand the impact of this work.

### Refine policy objectives and priorities.

Many stakeholders consider Good Reason Houston to be a reliable and important voice on public education, but almost all policy-savvy stakeholders held strong views about how the organization could strengthen its policy work. These stakeholders offered diverse, sometimes conflicting perspectives on what Good Reason Houston's policy objectives and activities should be, suggesting an opportunity to assess and clarify this strand of work.

The report elaborates on the research findings and recommendations in two parts. Consistent with Good Reason Houston's framing of its work, Part I focuses on activities directed toward Growing and Sustaining Great Schools. This part includes system acceleration, school transformation, and new school creation. Part II focuses on the work of Rallying Houstonians for Change. This part includes community empowerment and policy & advocacy. Throughout, the report identifies context and findings relevant to the recommendations for Good Reason Houston's work going forward.

## **Part I: Grow And Sustain Great Schools**

System Acceleration • School Transformation • School Creation

## Lever 1: System Acceleration

System acceleration has been a centerpiece of Good Reason Houston's work to date. In this body of work, Good Reason Houston develops district capacity and supports system-wide improvement. The most substantial of the district partnerships has been with Aldine ISD. Good Reason Houston has also engaged, to varying degrees, with Houston, Spring, Pasadena, and Alief ISDs. Good Reason Houston has recently formalized continued engagement with both Spring and Houston ISDs as their respective executive advisers under TEA's System of Great Schools (SGS) program.<sup>18</sup>

### Keys to Impact

- Strong pre-K enrollment growth in Aldine, Houston, and other partner ISDs
- Supported development of outcomes-oriented, community-informed strategic plans for three districts, including Houston ISD
- Supported selection and implementation of new, well-researched curricula for Aldine ISD and Houston ISD
- Helped four Houston-area ISDs design systems to receive funding from Texas' Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) program to offer merit-based pay increases to teachers. Two of these districts have received preliminary TEA approval. The other two are on track to submit applications by April 2023.

**Table 3: System Acceleration At A Glance**

Where	What	Good Reason Houston Roles	Impact
Aldine ISD Alief ISD Houston ISD Pasadena ISD Spring ISD Galena Park ISD Klein ISD Sheldon ISD Spring Branch ISD	Pre-K Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community outreach via citywide enrollment campaign</li> <li>- Funding (grants)</li> <li>- Staffing support (worked with Aldine to create an executive director of early learning)</li> </ul>	3.5% increase in pre-K enrollment from 2016 to 2020
Aldine ISD Houston ISD Spring ISD	Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community engagement</li> <li>- School performance analysis</li> <li>- Project management</li> <li>- Progress monitoring</li> </ul>	3 ISD-approved plans
Aldine ISD Houston ISD	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding (in kind)</li> <li>- Project management</li> <li>- TA connector</li> </ul>	Districtwide implementation of new, well-researched curricula
Aldine ISD Alief ISD Houston ISD Pasadena ISD	Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TA connector (connecting districts with support to design TIA systems)</li> </ul>	TIA system design for four districts; two have preliminary TEA approval; two on track to apply in April 2023
Alief ISD	COVID Response Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding</li> <li>- TA connector</li> </ul>	District-wide
Aldine ISD Alief ISD Pasadena ISD	Harris County Promise: postsecondary options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start-up funding</li> <li>- Partnership creation (established partnerships with three community colleges)</li> </ul>	8,700 eligible seniors 75% applied to partner colleges



## DISCUSSION

### Pre-K Enrollment

The Pre-K Matters campaign was Good Reason Houston's first major initiative. Good Reason Houston funded advertising and community outreach and supported organizational planning for districts to better manage pre-K recruitment and enrollment processes. The campaign has been ongoing and has served as an effective entry point for almost every district with which Good Reason Houston has partnered. For example, Good Reason Houston worked with Spring ISD for 3 years on pre-K enrollment before becoming the district's SGS executive adviser to work on broader system acceleration efforts.

District leaders expressed strong satisfaction with Good Reason Houston's support for pre-K enrollment. Leadership at all five districts interviewed and staff of several external organizations cited this work as a strength. Houston ISD leadership attributes the planned opening of 22 to 25 new pre-K classrooms in fall 2022 to demand, which its work with Good Reason Houston helped create.<sup>19</sup> In Aldine ISD, the district "exceeded [its] projections" for pre-K enrollment with Good Reason Houston's support before COVID-19.<sup>20</sup> Spring ISD conducted both broader and more targeted pre-K outreach to the community with Good Reason Houston's support.<sup>21</sup> The success of Aldine's pre-K enrollment effort was part of the impetus for the district to create a senior position focused on early education. Good Reason Houston supported the recruitment and hiring for the position.

The most common constructive feedback regarding Good Reason Houston's support for pre-K enrollment has been a desire to see the organization expand and allocate additional resources. One district leader qualified her praise for Good Reason Houston's support by saying that she wanted to see them play an even more active role: "A lot of times we had to do a lot of the work ourselves, or perhaps we'd lack communication on how they were wanting to see that work play out."<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, district partners view Good Reason Houston's pre-K recruitment and enrollment support as overwhelmingly positive.

### Strategic Planning

Good Reason Houston has helped ensure that district strategic priorities are community informed, and outcomes oriented. To date, Good Reason Houston has supported strategic planning for

Aldine ISD, Houston ISD, and Spring ISD. The Aldine planning work began in 2019. Strategic planning for Houston and Spring ISDs took place during the 2021-'22 school year, with the districts set to implement their respective plans beginning in fall 2022.<sup>23</sup>

Good Reason Houston's strategic planning engagements have several common characteristics across partner districts. First, Good Reason Houston has fostered strong community and stakeholder engagement. Aldine leadership recounts that one of Good Reason Houston's initial contribution to the planning process was to organize and analyze community survey responses that the district had collected but not yet reviewed. This feedback and Good Reason Houston's independent surveys provided impetus for, among other things, creating new school options as a strategic plan priority. Three new district choice schools are opening for the 2022-'23 school year.<sup>24</sup> Another impact was Aldine establishing, for the first time, a Family and Community Engagement office with Good Reason Houston's support. For Houston ISD, Good Reason Houston led stakeholder engagement and community outreach for feedback on district priorities. The process produced 50,000 parent and community survey responses, 6,000 staff survey responses, and participation by more than 700 community members in roundtable and listen-and-learn events.<sup>25</sup> Houston ISD had undergone a crisis of public confidence before the new administration, and the community engagement feedback helped prompt the new district leadership to make rebuilding community trust and ongoing community engagement the first pillar of the strategic plan.<sup>26</sup>

Good Reason Houston's strategic planning support has emphasized student outcomes. Good Reason Houston worked with Spring ISD's board to set outcomes-oriented goals based on current analysis of school performance and worked with Spring ISD leadership to create performance tiers and to identify action steps for improving school quality at each tier.<sup>27</sup> Good Reason Houston provided Houston ISD with data analysis that was "incredible" in its value for the planning process.<sup>28</sup> The Houston ISD Board adopted measurable outcomes-focused achievement goals for third-grade students and for college, career, and military readiness in high school.<sup>29</sup> Good Reason Houston's support was "critical" to that work.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Aldine's plan has five academic achievement goals that set ambitious, measurable expectations for student outcomes at first grade, third grade, eighth grade, and graduation.<sup>31</sup> A senior administrator at Aldine ISD noted that without Good Reason's assistance, it is unlikely that the district would have a working school performance framework by which to monitor and evaluate school performance

districtwide.<sup>32</sup> Aldine ISD staff use the framework on an ongoing basis to evaluate school progress and to inform resource allocation and program decisions, such as identifying effective teachers for ACE turnaround schools.

## Curriculum

Good Reason Houston has provided district-wide curriculum support to Aldine and Houston ISDs. The work in Aldine began with curriculum selection for which Good Reason Houston helped the districts evaluate options to make informed, research-based decisions. In Aldine, Good Reason Houston's support has extended to implementation. One technical assistance provider has delivered instructional practice support to teachers aligned to the new curricula. Another has provided instructional leadership training to school leaders.

There is modest qualitative evidence regarding impact to date for adoption of the new curricula. School leaders and instructional leads spoke positively about the quality of technical assistance for both instructional leadership and instructional practice and reported observing notable improvement in teachers' instructional practices.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, they also reported that teachers find the new math curriculum, Eureka Math, to be more rigorous and challenging to teach, and some struggle to implement it with integrity.<sup>34</sup> In addition, school leaders expressed concern about misalignment between learning standards in the curricula and on state assessments. With respect to the technical assistance itself, they found the two providers to be generally consistent in philosophy and instructional concepts but expressed the desire for closer alignment with respect to terminology and protocols.<sup>35</sup> School leaders reported that they did not have sufficient data to assess impact of the new curricula and accompanying implementation support on student outcomes.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the implementation has had limited scope. Because of provider capacity constraints, not all schools using the new curricula received the technical assistance. In sum, response to implementation support has been positive, but the scope of implementation has been somewhat limited, and it is too soon to determine the impact on learning outcomes.

## Trusted Partner Highlight Outcomes Oriented

Strategic planning is just one area in which Good Reason Houston's outcomes-based orientation emerged as an organizational strength. This focus was evident across multiple levers, including system acceleration, new school creation, and policy. One founding board member noted that at Good Reason Houston's predecessor organization, "we focused on activities instead of outcomes," whereas Good Reason Houston has determined that "the first thing you need to do is make sure you have good schools for everybody."<sup>37</sup> Twenty-five percent of stakeholder interviewees spontaneously referenced Good Reason Houston's strength in holding themselves and others accountable for outcomes. One policymaker characterized them as a "thought leader" in this area.<sup>38</sup> Charter school operators recognize that if they receive funding and support from Good Reason Houston, it is because they are "mission aligned to what Good Reason Houston is working on, in terms of improving Houston education outcomes."<sup>39</sup> Another stakeholder credited Good Reason Houston's policy work during a legislative session, saying that it "really did step up and lead around accountability [for educational outcomes]."<sup>40</sup> One district leader summed it up, calling it "our accountability partner"<sup>41</sup> for ensuring that the district stays focused on results.

## Human Capital and Teacher Incentive Allotment

Good Reason Houston has provided design support, funding, and systems development around human capital. This work has, among other things, bolstered district participation in established teacher pipeline efforts such as Teach For America (TFA). Good Reason Houston made a three-year commitment to Aldine ISD's engagement with TFA, helping to fund the certification process for 89 TFA members from 2019-20 through 2021-22.<sup>42</sup>

Good Reason Houston has also helped to design, project manage, and fund innovative teacher pipeline efforts. For example, after identifying the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as a particular challenge for native Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals seeking to earn full teacher certification, Good Reason Houston and Aldine ISD commissioned the design and pilot of a 10-week summer TOEFL preparation course targeted to that group.

According to Aldine ISD staff, 12 participants in the pilot subsequently passed the TOEFL, increasing the district's dual-language teaching capacity.<sup>43</sup> More recently, Good Reason Houston has supported the launch of Opportunity Culture at selected Aldine and Klein ISD sites. Opportunity Culture is designed to expand the impact of effective teachers through multi-classroom leadership opportunities.<sup>44</sup> In Aldine, Good Reason Houston has supported an innovative Opportunity Culture layer that aligns student-teacher residencies with Opportunity Culture so that student teachers work under the guidance of multi-classroom leaders already designated as highly effective in the classroom.

## Trusted Partner Highlight Boots on the ground

School systems, in particular, value Good Reason Houston's readiness to work side by side with district staff to accomplish the task at hand. Substantive strengths that districts identified include data analysis and project management. A recurring theme across the district capacity and school improvement conversations was the ability of Good Reason Houston's staff to engage directly and constructively in the work. Fourteen of 17 district administrators interviewed—including superintendents for all five of the ISDs researched—referred positively to the strength of Good Reason Houston's hands-on support. One recently hired administrator reported that without Good Reason Houston's support, "I would be on an island by myself."<sup>45</sup> The superintendent of a different district described how Good Reason Houston had been able to do the "heavy lifting" for the strategic planning process. Another noted, "they truly will say, 'what can I get off your plate?'"<sup>46</sup> Good Reason Houston's readiness and capacity to do the work has contributed significantly to their successes.



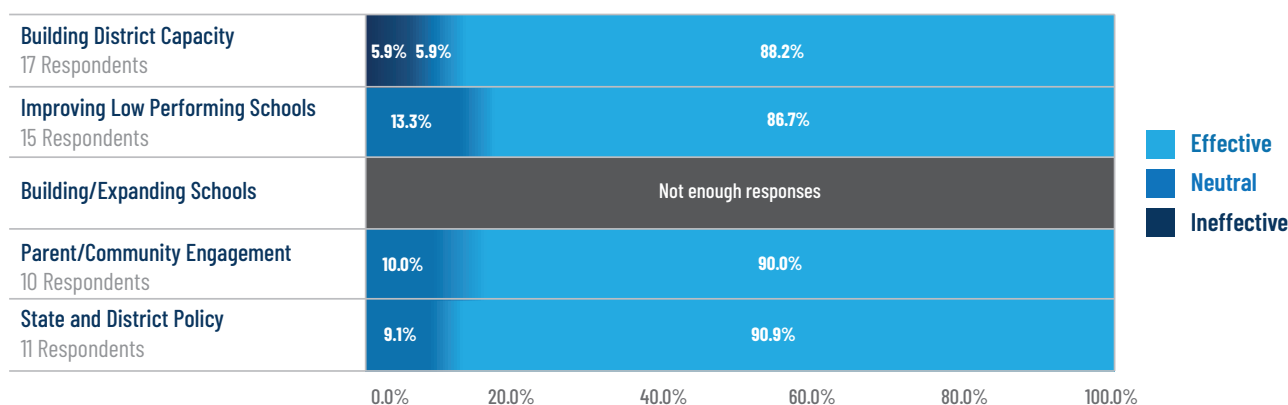
## College and Career Readiness

Good Reason Houston's college, career, and military readiness (CCMR) work has evolved over the last four years. Initially, it convened districts, colleges, college access nonprofits, and community-based organizations to coordinate on resources and practices designed to increase student access to financial aid. Good Reason Houston also represented the Houston region on statewide committees focused on financial aid matters. More recently, Good Reason Houston has focused on district planning, working with Aldine ISD's secondary schools office on a "Reimagining High Schools" strategic planning process as well as helping districts build data capacity and infrastructure to monitor postsecondary outcomes and to access state CCMR funding. Good Reason Houston's CCMR work has tested its mission alignment on at least one occasion. In January 2020, Good Reason Houston began partnering with Aldine, Alief, and Pasadena ISDs to pilot a region-wide initiative to support community college enrollment for underserved students. The pilot, labeled Harris County Promise, guaranteed students graduating from seven high-poverty schools the opportunity to complete community college debt-free. In concept, Pell Grants would combine with private funding to finance the program. Good Reason Houston leadership reported that the postsecondary program was "never totally on mission" with the organization's Pre-K to 12 focus and discontinued the initiative in 2021 due to the question of mission alignment combined with limited funder interest.<sup>47</sup> Stakeholder perceptions were that "there was a lack of [Good Reason Houston] commitment to this, and so it kind of fizzled out."<sup>48</sup> This experience suggests that Good Reason Houston could have evaluated the opportunity more rigorously before engaging and communicated more effectively with its partners about the decision to end the initiative.

## The ISD-Charter Divide: ISD Perspective

Districts feel positively about their work with Good Reason Houston despite having views on charter schools that range from indifferent to hostile. One district leader noted that "if we would have known up front [about Good Reason Houston's work with charter schools, it] wouldn't have been the partner that we would have selected."<sup>49</sup> Another expressed initial hesitancy about support that Good Reason Houston was offering: "Where were some of these nontraditional teaching prep programs coming from? Are they coming from the charter world?"<sup>50</sup> District leaders say that Good Reason Houston is genuine in its desire to "put kids in the best school environment possible, whether they're traditional, public, or charter" but still see its support for charters as a source of "friction" and "conflict" for districts.<sup>51</sup> Another senior administrator portrayed it, perhaps mistakenly, as an either-or situation, saying, "I don't want them to spend time with a charter school. I want them to help us create those same learning experiences that attract some students to a charter."<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, district leaders are willing to tolerate the charter school work, provided it does not affect them directly. The district leader who had expressed hesitancy about teacher pipeline support was subsequently "very grateful" for how Good Reason Houston engaged with and supported her district in responding to COVID-19, rating that work a 4.5 out of 5. Another stated that her district would "pull out of this [System of Great Schools] partnership" if required to approve even one charter school.<sup>53</sup> But without such a requirement, she would "absolutely" want to continue working with Good Reason Houston because the staff are "amazing."<sup>54</sup>

## Rating Good Reason Houston's work to date: ISD leadership responses



## System Acceleration: Looking Ahead

Good Reason Houston has partnered effectively with Houston-area districts to address multiple needs. They have helped districts expand pre-K enrollment, fostered development of rigorous, outcomes-oriented strategic plans, laid the groundwork for stronger community engagement with the districts, and helped districts plan for and access resources to human capital initiatives like the TIA. Just before publication of this report, TEA released 2022 school accountability data that included encouraging results for Good Reason Houston's partner districts.<sup>55</sup>

Some innovative talent development efforts such as the TOEFL preparation course may offer significant economies of scale going forward. The TOEFL training is a one-time cost per teacher. Part of the pilot cost was for development of the curriculum. Now that there is an established curriculum, multiple districts might offer this course to native Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals for a reduced per-teacher cost from the pilot. Other efforts will, however, require recurring funding with no apparent reduction in per-teacher costs. For example, Aldine leadership believes that the financial incentives that helped draw highly qualified teachers to the ACE turnaround work at Goodman and Worsham will need to be extended beyond the initial three-year commitment in order to sustain the incentive for teachers to remain in those schools which require extended

teaching hours and other commitments.<sup>56</sup> In addition, there will be no reduction or economies of scale with respect to teacher compensation for subsequent ACE turnarounds. Thus, increasing the funding for this work appears critical to building on its early promise.

More generally, Good Reason Houston aims to build district capacity to own the work that it is supporting. One district leader analogized the initial step in this direction as one from Good Reason Houston "driving the car" in 2021-'22 to where the district "is now in the driver's seat and utilizing Good Reason as a passenger that can grab the wheel every now and then."<sup>57</sup>

Eventually, each district superintendent will need to take the analogy one step further to drive the car on their own. Sustained impact will depend on districts having this internal capacity. This is an especially important consideration for not only the districts but also Good Reason Houston, which has numerous Houston-area ISDs that it would like to support. The readiness of partner districts to sustain work independently will affect Good Reason Houston's capacity to take on new partners. As Good Reason Houston's system acceleration work gains momentum, it should be deliberate about planning for the transition of some responsibilities back to district staff.

## Lever 2: School Transformation

School transformation encompasses Good Reason Houston’s work with existing schools. It includes engagement with both district-run and charter schools. At its broadest, it refers to in-kind support for district-wide implementation of new curricula and for development of instructional leadership. At its most concentrated, it focuses on the ACE transformations in Aldine ISD. In between, it has included in-kind instructional support to several charter schools.

**Keys to Impact**

- Successful implementation of the ACE turnaround model at two chronically underperforming elementary schools.

TABLE 4: School Transformation at a Glance

Where	What	Good Reason Houston role(s)	Impact
Aldine ISD <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Worsham Elementary</li><li>- Goodman Elementary</li></ul>	ACE Turnarounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project management</li><li>• TA connector</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Both schools increased student achievement and earned “B” ratings for 2022.<sup>58</sup></li><li>• 994 students</li></ul>
Aldine ISD Selected charter schools	School-based instructional coaching and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding (in kind)</li><li>• Project management</li><li>• TA connector</li></ul>	Approximately 380 school administrators



## DISCUSSION

### ACE Turnaround School Improvement

Good Reason Houston has focused its school transformation work on supporting the ACE turnarounds at two Aldine ISD elementary schools. The organization has funded technical assistance and provided both project management and advisory support to ACE turnarounds at Goodman Elementary and Worsham Elementary. Consistent with the five ACE pillars, the turnarounds have brought new leadership, a longer school day, increased teacher compensation, training for implementation of Aldine's new ELA and math curricula, and social and emotional learning (SEL) supports. Good Reason Houston has played roles of project manager, contractor, and quality assurance manager. It has coordinated and managed a curriculum audit, managed professional development sessions, and assisted with data collection and analysis.

Good Reason Houston's role as a connector to quality technical assistance resources has played a significant role in the ACE turnarounds. Good Reason Houston has recommended and funded technical assistance for curriculum selection, instructional leadership coaching, instructional practice, and SEL at Goodman and Worsham. More than 85% of survey respondents from Goodman and Worsham indicated that the support they had received from each of the three primary technical assistance providers had been "very effective."<sup>59</sup> In subsequent focus groups that the research team conducted, teachers indicated that they particularly valued the weekly opportunities to practice lessons with their instructional coaches before bringing them into their classroom. They perceived their coaches to be supportive and valued their positive relationships.<sup>60</sup> Recently released state accountability results indicate significant improvement for both schools.<sup>61</sup>

### About the ACE Turnaround Model

Dallas ISD successfully piloted the Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) school turnaround model in 2015 and has achieved notable success, drawing national attention for improving outcomes at chronically low-performing schools.<sup>62</sup> There are five core pillars to the ACE turnaround model: (1) strategic staffing, (2) instructional excellence, (3) extended day, (4) social and emotional learning, and (5) community and parent partnerships. The strategic staffing component includes identifying effective teachers district-wide and providing pay incentives for them to work an extended day at the ACE school. Strategic staffing combines with professional learning communities and increased teacher support to drive the instructional excellence pillar. The extended day provides time for extra instruction, social and emotional learning (SEL), and teachers' professional learning within the daily schedule. SEL can include elements such as restorative justice and morning circles that better address students' SEL needs. Based largely on Dallas ISD's example, TEA endorsed the model as an approved "campus turnaround" strategy for districts looking to respond to chronic underperformance at individual schools.<sup>63</sup> In 2019, the Texas legislature passed legislation that included TEA-administered TIAs that districts could apply for and use, among other things, to fund the teacher compensation pillar of ACE turnaround work.

### Trusted Partner Highlight Connector

The ACE turnarounds in Aldine ISD have benefited from effective technical assistance around instructional leadership, instructional practices, and SEL. More broadly, stakeholders frequently cited Good Reason Houston's strength in vetting and connecting partners to high-quality third-party support. For example, one charter school leader stated that without the governing board technical assistance provider that Good Reason Houston recommended and funded, "we wouldn't have been able to open our kindergarten and first grade in the fall ... I don't think our board would have even approved it without [that] help."<sup>64</sup> On the district side, in addition to Aldine, Good Reason Houston has connected Houston ISD with and helped fund a range of third-party supports, including for financial management, human capital, and special education. One senior HISD administrator noted that HISD "wouldn't have known about or had access to" the same level of experience and expertise without Good Reason Houston's guidance.<sup>65</sup> Another senior HISD administrator emphasized Good Reason Houston's importance as "a sourcer of talent."<sup>66</sup>

### Community Design Fellowship

Good Reason Houston launched the Community Design Fellowship in the 2020-21 school year with 12 founding fellows. The goal was to support experienced school leaders in developing new learning models. Following the fellowship, one fellow became the lead of an after-school program at three Aldine ISD schools; another became principal of a Houston ISD elementary school; a third became Director of Academics at YES Prep; and a fourth led a special education curriculum redesign for Spring Branch ISD. The fellows reported that the fellowship supported them in designing new programs. However, they also indicated the need for a more specific focus on improving learning environments in existing schools. Good Reason Houston launched a new fellowship, Good Reasons to Lead, in the 2021-22 school year that takes into account feedback from the Community Design fellows by making projects more school specific. Good Reasons to Lead currently has seven fellows from charter schools and local ISDs.

### Charter School Improvement

In addition to engaging with district schools around school transformation, Good Reason Houston has provided in-kind school improvement support to at least five charter schools.<sup>67</sup> One operator has a network of schools in Texas that are high performing (A or B rating) but whose two Houston schools had D and F ratings at the time Good Reason Houston provided the support.<sup>68</sup> The other three are newer single-site operators that had not yet received state report card grades at the time Good Reason Houston provided the support.<sup>69</sup> Each school had a 3-year engagement to develop instructional leadership and improve teaching practices.

Qualitatively, these supports have proved less successful than with district schools. Leaders at each of the operators indicated that the instructional support offered did not align with what they perceived as their schools' primary needs.<sup>70</sup> They accepted the support because it had some potential to be helpful and in the interest of developing their relationships with Good Reason Houston. Two schools have subsequently received additional grants for technical assistance that they felt were more closely aligned to their needs and were better serving their schools.<sup>71</sup>

Overall, Good Reason Houston's school transformation work has had a strongly positive initial impact based on both qualitative perceptions and preliminary educational outcomes. Overall, district administrators rated Good Reason Houston's work on school transformation a 4 out of 5 (Exhibit D). Notwithstanding the absence of state assessment data because of the COVID-19 pandemic, early evidence indicates that the ACE turnarounds are translating to significant gains for students. Before the turnarounds, the campuses had state accountability grades of D (Worsham Elementary) and C (Goodman), ranking them among the bottom five elementary schools in Aldine ISD.<sup>72</sup> Assessment data from 2020-'21 ranks both schools among the top 5 elementary schools in Aldine ISD in student growth.<sup>73</sup>

### School Transformation: Looking Ahead

There is evidence of substantial qualitative and quantitative success with ACE turnarounds; some qualitative evidence for school improvement in Aldine with the need for more robust implementation; and limited evidence of impact on charter schools. At the time of this report, Good Reason Houston had begun work with Houston ISD on implementation of ACE turnarounds for three schools for the 2022-23 school year. The strong early results at Goodman and Worsham suggest that Good Reason Houston is well positioned to expand on ACE turnaround work even as it refines its school transformation strategy to take into account the multi-year commitment and alignment of school leadership needed to make it work.

## Lever 3: New School Creation

Good Reason Houston increases access “to school models that have evidence of success or meet the unique needs of marginalized students”<sup>74</sup> by supporting the creation of quality public school choice options.

### Keys to Impact

Good Reason Houston has meaningfully supported development of nearly 10,000 new school seats<sup>75</sup> through grants and other technical assistance for charter school expansion or creation of new charter schools and district schools of choice.

**Table 5: New School Creation At A Glance**

Where	What	Current Grade	Good Reason Houston role(s)	Impact (new school seats)
<b>KIPP Houston</b> - KIPP Mosaic Primary - KIPP Mosaic Academy - KIPP East End High School	Campus expansion	B	- Funding	2,060
<b>YES Prep</b> - North Central Elementary - Southeast Elementary - North Forest Elementary	New school creation	B A B	- Funding	900
Reve Prep	Pre-K expansion planning and application	N/A	- Funding - Direct technical assistance - Strategic advisor	66
Beta Academy	Growth analysis; architect for planned growth	A	- Connector - Funding (growth planning) - Direct technical assistance - Strategic advisor	700
Etoile Academy	Growth planning	B	- Connector - Funding - Direct technical assistance - Strategic advisor	5,000
Aldine ISD - Young Women's Leadership - La Promesa - Impact Leadership	Choice schools—new school development	A B N/A	- Planning - Project management - School design support	1,140
TOTAL				9,866



## Discussion

Overall, Good Reason Houston's new school work has laid the groundwork for creating nearly 10,000 seats. Much of their impact to date has come through support for the continued growth of mature, high performing networks. Good Reason Houston has also provided substantial development support for the expansion of newer schools and for prospective charter school leaders developing distinctive and promising approaches to meeting the needs of underserved students and communities. In addition, Good Reason Houston is supporting Aldine ISD in establishing new district choice options.

### Trusted Partner Highlight Client Centered

Its partners frequently cite its client-centered approach as a funder and a technical assistance provider. One charter operator described the organization as “extraordinarily flexible” and remarked that “they feel like funders and partners at the same time.”<sup>76</sup> Eighty percent of ISD superintendents interviewed remarked on this quality as well. A superintendent whose district received Good Reason Houston support for the transition to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic said that Good Reason Houston staff are “very intentional about reaching out, without a solution; they’re just asking, what is it that I need? And I’m very grateful for that attitude.”<sup>77</sup> District leaders and administrators shared how the Good Reason Houston staff “care about us achieving our goals” rather than coming with a preset agenda. Said one senior administrator, “I’m proud to put Good Reason Houston’s name, as well, next to Aldine’s, because they are a true partner in the work.”<sup>78</sup>

## Mature Networks

Good Reason Houston has primarily engaged with mature networks as a funder. For example, they have made several grants to YES Prep. One grant provided seed funding for the kickoff of a major capital campaign and helped launch four YES Prep campuses (North Central Elementary, Southeast Elementary, North Forest Elementary, and Southside Elementary). Another smaller grant was important to YES Prep’s COVID-19 response. It facilitated rapid purchase of laptops and related IT equipment for the transition to remote learning in spring 2020.<sup>79</sup> Good Reason Houston has also funded KIPP, primarily through a capital campaign contribution that supported the opening of new schools in Houston and the training of principals who would lead Houston-area KIPP schools.<sup>80</sup> Leadership of both organizations noted that Good Reason Houston’s strong alignment with their own educational objectives and values combined with Good Reason Houston’s flexibility in adapting—and allowing their grantees to adapt—to circumstances made them an excellent partner.

## Small-site expansion

Another strand of Good Reason Houston’s school creation strategy has been support for small-site expansion. Good Reason Houston identified small charter school operators (those with one to three schools) whose models and outcomes show promise and provided them the support needed to expand successfully. For example, Good Reason Houston provided Beta Academy with funding to conduct a growth analysis, to hire an architect, and to engage a consultant to help refine the school’s Pathway to College program as part of a proposed expansion. Similarly, Good Reason Houston funded growth, including the hiring of a consultant, for Etoile Academy. The growth consultant facilitated development of Etoile’s 10-year plan, including metrics to help the board and leadership assess the school’s readiness to grow and processes to improve board efficiency that paved the way for a new campus. Etoile’s leader stated that the school “wouldn’t have been able to open our kindergarten and first grade in the fall [without Good Reason Houston’s support].”

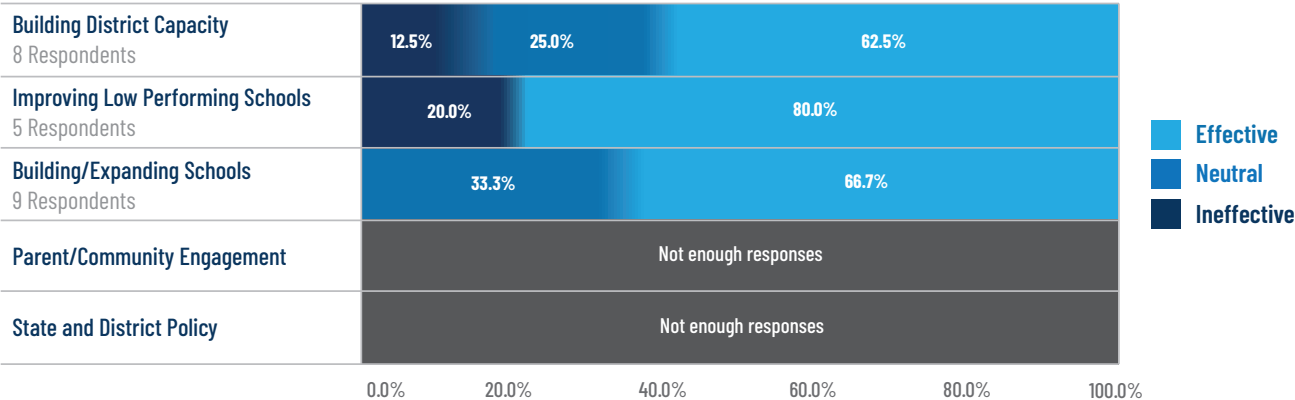
### District schools of choice

As part of its effort to provide families with more quality public school options, Good Reason Houston supports the development of new district choice schools. One of Good Reason Houston's most frequently cited efforts with Aldine's Office of Transformation was planning, funding, and project management for the launch of two choice schools: La Promesa and Young Women's Leadership Academy. Good Reason Houston provided additional funding—in effect, start-up grants—to these schools, which the district used for program planning and for professional development on classroom instruction. Good Reason Houston also helped the district understand what funding was still needed and helped Aldine reexamine how it funded the schools to ensure their success. At the time of this report, Good Reason Houston was providing planning support for another Aldine ISD choice school, the Impact Leadership Academy, preparing to open in fall 2022. Impact will be a boys' school ultimately serving grades 1 to 8. Although this work was less frequently mentioned, references to Good Reason's support for the Impact opening were almost uniformly positive.

### Developing new charter leaders

With respect to developing new charter school leaders, Good Reason Houston initiated its new schools strategy in 2020 with the Community Design Fellowship, a charter school design program. Good Reason Houston selected two fellows from six applicants. One of them completed the program and submitted a charter application to TEA in December 2021. The State Board of Education denied the application even though TEA had recommended to approve it.<sup>81</sup> Good Reason Houston is restarting this work through a partnership with the BES fellowship in Boston and expects the BES New School Launch Fellowship to run from August 2022 to July 2024, with fellows submitting charter applications to TEA in December 2023 for opening in the 2024-'25 school year.<sup>82</sup>

Good Reason Houston's work to date: charter partner responses



The ISD-Charter Divide: Charter School Perspective

Houston-area ISDs are dubious about charter schools, and charter school operators return that view with skepticism about ISD capacity for sustained change or improvement. Charter operators wonder “did [or will] anything actually happen” from Good Reason Houston’s system acceleration work?<sup>83</sup> They want to see Good Reason Houston’s investment of resources align more closely with demonstrated outcomes.<sup>84</sup> Even assuming that district transformation is possible, others suggest that it is just “building castles in the sand” because changes are likely to last only as long as the current superintendent and ISD board.<sup>85</sup> Yet charter operators do not begrudge Good Reason Houston’s support for districts. They may question it from a strategic and resource allocation perspective, but they don’t doubt the integrity of Good Reason Houston’s efforts with ISDs or its ongoing commitment to charter schools. In fact, because of its positive relationship with a charter operator and an ISD, Good Reason Houston played an intermediary role to help resolve a charter-ISD dispute that had potential to become “highly politicized, highly contentious.”<sup>86</sup> Therefore, Good Reason Houston’s system acceleration work does not appear to have damaged its charter credibility or limited its ability to support charter schools effectively.

New School Creation: Looking Ahead

Good Reason Houston has a unique role to play in new school creation and an opportunity to build on notable success, but it faces multiple challenges for implementing its new strategy. The development of new charter leaders has required substantial time and resources without yielding an approved school, and the political climate for new charter approvals is likely to remain challenging.<sup>87</sup> The Aldine partnership to create district schools of choice is promising, but especially given the initial (2022) state grades for Young Women’s Leadership and La Promesa. School improvement support for charter schools, another part of the updated strategy has, to date, received a lukewarm reception from charter school leaders. Good Reason Houston has successfully supported growth of both mature and emerging networks. For mature operators, there may be a ceiling to the capacity and readiness of mature high-performing operators to grow.<sup>88</sup> For emerging networks, the experience of other city-based organizations indicates that effective scaling up requires substantial resources and capacity for planning and implementation. The challenges ahead indicate that Good Reason Houston may need to continue refining its plan for the next phase of new school creation.

## **Part II: Rally Houstonians for Change**

Community Empowerment • Policy & Advocacy



## Lever 4: Community Empowerment

Good Reason Houston considers increasing parent and community voice to be a vital piece of its work and seeks to engage with partners who are driving conversations about school choice, developing parent leaders, and elevating parent voice.

### Keys to Impact

With respect to community empowerment, Good Reason Houston has been effective in:

- funding two successful pilots to educate, empower, and engage parents to advocate on behalf of their children.
- incorporating community engagement into district planning processes and making family engagement a district priority.

**Table 6: Community Empowerment At A Glance**

Where	What	Good Reason Houston role(s)	Impact
Latinos for Education	Familias Latinas por la Educación Fellowship pilot	- Funder - Advisor	40 families
Discovering U	Parent advocacy training	- Funder	Organizational development
Northern Third Ward	Parent engagement	- Funder	N/A
Aldine ISD Houston ISD	Strategic planning: community engagement	- Funder - Project management - Data analysis	Community engagement plan priority
Citywide	Independent survey	- Funder	

## Discussion

Good Reason Houston aims to “develop parent and community leaders and fuel pathways to organize around school quality.”<sup>89</sup> The work has included three programmatic grants; commissioning of an independent survey to understand families’ educational priorities; and community engagement process management and data analysis in connection with school district strategic planning.

Stakeholders gave Good Reason Houston the full spectrum of ratings (from 1 to 5) for its Community Empowerment work. (Exhibit D) The wide range may be a reflection of the strength of that work in concentrated areas combined with the lack of recognition Good Reason Houston receives for some work that it is supporting community partners to do.

## Parent Empowerment

In some cases, those most benefiting from Good Reason Houston’s support have never heard of the organization. For example, Latinos for Education credits Good Reason Houston with the existence of its Latinas Familiar por la Educación Fellowship, even though the fellowship participants had no direct interaction with Good Reason Houston. In 2020, Good Reason Houston approached Latinos for Education’s executive director with the concept of a family fellowship and offered to fund a pilot. Latinos for Education piloted the fellowship with 17 families in the Gulfton community, one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Houston, from fall 2020 through fall 2021. The fellowship supported families in leveraging the resources in their community so that they could voice their concerns to school board members and the superintendent of their district.<sup>90</sup> All involved considered the pilot to be highly successful, and based on Latinas Familiar’s success, its leadership secured funding from additional partners to extend and expand the fellowship.<sup>91</sup>

The work of the Latinas Familiar fellowship is promising. The program serves 40 families across two Houston communities and is expanding to the East End and Magnolia Park communities.<sup>92</sup> The program provides a structured space for Latino families to engage directly with district leadership around their educational needs and concerns.

**Latinos for Education leadership credits Good Reason Houston for initiating the concept: “In my 14-year career as an education leader, I don’t think I’ve seen something like that [even] in other cities.”<sup>93</sup>**

Good Reason Houston’s community empowerment work appears to be having a tangible impact on district policy. Following Latinas Familiar participants’ formal presentations requesting that board materials be available in Spanish and that board meetings include Spanish translation, Houston ISD adopted a policy to have on-site translators and to provide simultaneous translation at school board meetings beginning this year.<sup>94</sup> Families credit another Good Reason Houston–supported organization with helping them understand their rights and raising their expectations for district communication and engagement for decisions that affect their children.<sup>95</sup> Parents reported feeling more aware and confident in advocating for their children, especially around access to special education, extracurriculars, and school safety.<sup>96</sup>

Good Reason Houston’s funding of at least one community engagement effort was less successful. In 2020, Good Reason Houston made a grant to Northern Third Ward, a community advocacy organization. According to Good Reason Houston’s leadership, there was some lack of alignment in the expected deliverables for the grant, but the biggest challenge was lack of grantee capacity. Ultimately, according to Good Reason Houston leadership, there was mutual agreement to discontinue the grant.

## Community Empowerment in District Planning

Good Reason Houston has amplified parent and community voices through strategic planning at Aldine and Houston ISDs and through lighter touch supports in Spring ISD. Aldine leadership recounts that one of Good Reason Houston's first contributions to their planning process was to organize and analyze community survey responses that the district had collected but had not reviewed. Aldine's leadership describes Good Reason Houston's work as "absolutely critical in that space."<sup>97</sup> This community input has provided impetus for, among other things, new district schools of a choice as a strategic plan priority. In 2022-'23, this Aldine priority is already manifesting in the development of three new district

choice schools with Good Reason Houston's support.<sup>98</sup> Another family engagement-related outcome of Aldine's strategic plan was the district establishing, for the first time, a Family and Community Engagement office with Good Reason Houston's support. When Good Reason Houston engaged with Houston ISD on strategic planning, the district had not solicited community input. Good Reason Houston helped design and manage Houston ISD's stakeholder engagement and community outreach process, which included 50,000 parent and community survey responses, 6,000 staff survey responses, and participation by more than 700 community members in roundtable and listen-and-learn events.<sup>99</sup>

Houston ISD leadership described the engagement process and accompanying data analysis support as "incredible" and "masterful." One community partner credits Good Reason Houston's engagement work during Houston ISD's strategic planning process as the catalyst for the district's commitment to more equitable placement of magnet schools.<sup>100</sup> Community trust and ongoing engagement became the first pillars of Houston ISD's strategic plan.

## Community Empowerment: Looking Ahead

Good Reason Houston's community empowerment work is effective in part because it puts others in the community out front. As one observer stated, "they've stayed out of the spotlight. . . . It's been about supporting that leader, building the capacity of that leader, and then kind of falling back and staying out of the way so that they don't accidentally get the camera on them; that's been some quality work."<sup>101</sup> The number of people Good Reason Houston has helped empower has been relatively small. As it continues to pursue this work, Good Reason Houston should look for ways to expand the number of parents it engages to advocate for quality schools.

## Lever 5: Policy

Good Reason Houston seeks to promote a policy agenda that holds leaders accountable to quality and equity at the state and local levels.

Keys to Impact

Good Reason Houston has been a reliable and trusted voice for

- maintaining priorities on outcomes-based accountability and on access to early childhood education.
- engaging families and community stakeholders on key policy issues.

Table 7: Policy And Advocacy at a Glance

Where	What	Good Reason Houston role(s)	Impact
State legislature	Legislation to dilute school accountability	Advocate to maintain outcomes-based accountability	Successful opposition
State legislature	HB3	Advocate for increased student funding and teacher compensation	Successful support
School districts	TIA	Support TIA application development	TEA approval; district access to TIA funds



## Discussion

Good Reason Houston's policy priorities are well aligned with its other work streams. In 2019, when the Texas Legislature contemplated reducing or diluting academic accountability standards in response to several natural disasters in the Houston area, Good Reason Houston led the charge for maintaining strong academic accountability standards.<sup>102</sup> As part of the early childhood coalition, Good Reason supported pre K–12 legislative efforts by signing joint letters, galvanizing parents, and submitting testimony.<sup>103</sup> In 2019, Good Reason Houston supported a public school finance bill that, among other things, provided a 20% increase in base per-pupil funding and established the TIA program to reward effective teachers. Good Reason Houston has subsequently supported several Houston-area ISDs in qualifying to access and use TIA funds to increase compensation for teachers at ACE turnaround schools as well as highly effective teachers at other district schools.

Policy makers and advocates view Good Reason Houston as an important and reliable voice on pre-K to 12 education issues. Other advocacy organizations report that they expect Good Reason Houston's perspective to carry weight with policymakers.<sup>104</sup> According to senior staff at a peer organization, Good Reason Houston's strength in building meaningful relationships, particularly with state-level actors, has yielded an "outsized influence" in the policy realm.<sup>105</sup> A senior policy person at a Houston civic organization said he "invariably" wants to be sure that his organization's education policy advice is "aligned with policies supported by Good Reason [Houston]." <sup>106</sup>

Even as they cited Good Reason Houston's policy and advocacy effectiveness, a number of stakeholders had advice for how the organization should strengthen or expand this work. Some stakeholders advised Good Reason Houston to increase the frequency and scope of touch points with policy makers at the state level as a way to give its work more traction.<sup>107</sup> Some advised Good Reason Houston to play a more active "convenor" role among city-based education organizations.<sup>108</sup> One says that narrowing the

focus of their state policy work to the Houston delegation would be a better means to influencing policy.<sup>109</sup> Another advised that local policy should be a higher priority and that a focus on school board elections would yield greater impact.<sup>110</sup> Finally, some have voiced skepticism about whether Good Reason Houston should devote any additional resources to policy work.<sup>111</sup> A majority of those expressing an opinion say that Good Reason Houston can expand its policy impact, but there was no consensus about how that should happen.

### Trusted Partner Highlight Reliable

One policymaker has Good Reason Houston in her "circle of trust" because it is reliable in its focus on what is best for children and in its readiness to respond to a need. They were able "instantly" to galvanize parents and families to engage when the legislature was considering diluting expectations for student learning.<sup>102</sup> Several district leaders expressed confidence in Good Reason Houston's reliability to be "our accountability partners to keep us moving [from week to week]." <sup>103</sup> One leader noted that Good Reason Houston played this role particularly effectively to help further work on strategic priorities even as the district was in crisis response mode during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>104</sup> A number of stakeholders also touched on Good Reason Houston's reliability in the context of referrals to third-party vendors. Almost all expressed a high degree of satisfaction with third parties that Good Reason Houston had recommended.

## The ISD-Charter Divide: Policy Perspective

To date, Good Reason Houston has taken policy positions that are not likely to increase friction between charter schools and ISDs. Education funding has been one strand of its policy work. Whether supporting increases in funding for pre-K programs, disadvantaged students, or effective teachers, Good Reason Houston has supported increases that have the potential to benefit both charters and ISD schools or, at a minimum, do not benefit one at the expense of the other. Good Reason Houston's other policy focus has been student outcomes. In this realm, Good Reason Houston advocates for the same level of outcomes-based accountability for all public schools, regardless of the governance model. Whatever ISDs and charters think of the substance of Good Reason Houston's policy advice, they would be hard-pressed to claim that it favors ISDs over charters or vice versa. Thus, Good Reason Houston appears to be conducting its policy and advocacy work in a way that maintains neutrality between ISDs and charters.

## Policy and Advocacy: Looking Ahead

Good Reason Houston has established itself as a credible and respected voice on state policy with the ability to influence state K–12 education policy. Based on stakeholder feedback, there are several ways that it might carry its policy work forward. This varied and sometimes conflicting advice offers fodder for Good Reason Houston to reassess its policy objectives and strategy going forward.

## Conclusion

Good Reason Houston has had a number of significant successes to date. It has accelerated district work through pre-K enrollment and strategic planning, among other things; helped transform outcomes at two ACE schools and launch three more scheduled to open in August 2022; supported creation of nearly 10,000 seats at district and charter schools of choice; fostered effective parent engagement; and had a meaningful impact on state policy in alignment with its organizational priorities. Notwithstanding its substantial successes, there remain opportunities to grow in the coming years. This growth may require Good Reason Houston to reevaluate and refine its strategies for community engagement, charter school support, and policy and advocacy.

Good Reason Houston has demonstrated a remarkable ability to navigate the charter-ISD divide effectively. It has not attempted to close the charter-district gap, but it has been exceptional in its ability to earn trust and operate effectively on both sides of that divide. Much of its success is attributable to the trusted partner practices that characterize Good Reason Houston's work. Its orientation to the needs of its partners has given it access to working with charters and ISDs. Its hand-on approach and ability to source talent—from its staff or through connections to others—have produced results for which partners on both sides are appreciative. Throughout, it has prioritized children's educational interests in a way that all of its partners, regardless of their differences, recognize and respect.

Looking ahead, Good Reason Houston will need to contend with several challenges to sustain its effectiveness. For system acceleration and school transformation work, Good Reason Houston may need to help partner districts and schools assume responsibility for internalizing and carrying work forward more independently. For new school creation, Good Reason Houston will need to navigate political and resource challenges in order to help charter school expansion continue. For community empowerment and policy and advocacy, the primary challenge may be for Good Reason Houston to choose the most effective new avenues for expanding its impact. Good Reason Houston's demonstrated effectiveness with diverse education stakeholders makes it well prepared to take on these challenges.

## Exhibit A

### Good Reason Houston: Organizational Timeline

Activity	Strand of Work
<b>2016-'17 School Year</b>	
Houston business and philanthropic representatives convened to address the education attainment and equity disparity in Houston	GRH founding
Education not-for-profit formed with early childhood focus	GRH founding
<b>2017-'18 School Year</b>	
Expanded vision for pre-K to career	GRH founding
Seed funding from Kinder Foundation and the Houston Endowment	GRH founding
Elizondo hired as CEO of Cradle2Career Houston	GRH founding
<b>2018-'19 School Year</b>	
Good Reason Houston name adopted	GRH founding
Established founding board	GRH founding
Full-time staff hired	GRH founding
<b>2019-'20 School Year</b>	
Approved mission, vision, and strategy	GRH founding
Launched first transformational partnership with Aldine ISD	System acceleration
Aldine strategic plan developed and approved	System acceleration
2nd Grant received from Kinder Foundation and the Houston Endowment	GRH operations
Grant to the School of Science and Technology (SST)	Charter development
Launch of ACE turnaround at Goodman and Worsham	School improvement



Activity	Strand of Work
26 new high-quality teachers recruited for Aldine ISD	System acceleration
Built a model for providing strategic direct supports, including deep data analysis, strategic planning, and aligned goal setting	System acceleration
Built network of high-quality external providers	System acceleration and school improvement
Built strong partnership with TEA to align work with System of Great Schools	System acceleration
2020-'21 School Year	
Grant to YES Prep to support opening two new schools	New schools
TEA System of Great Schools executive adviser approval	System acceleration
Blueprint for Change coalition launch	Rally Houstonians
First cohort of New School Launch Fellowship	New school development
Alief ISD COVID recovery task force started	System acceleration
Aldine ISD safe and healthy schools protocols support	System acceleration
COVID recovery grants to Aldine ISD and Beatrice Mayes Institute	System acceleration
Grant to KIPP Texas to expand three campuses	Charter development
18 new staff members hired	GRH growth
Start of Latinas Familiar por la Educación partnership	Family and community engagement
Texas House Bill 3 proposes to enable district access to strategic public finances	Policy
Selected as Spring ISD SGS Executive Advisor; supported strategic planning	System acceleration
Northern Third Ward grant	Family and community engagement
Launched Opportunity Culture in Aldine ISD and Klein ISD	System Acceleration
2021-'22 School Year	

Activity	Strand of Work
Support Houston ISD to develop and launch strategic plan	System acceleration
Launched early learning quality initiative in Aldine ISD	System acceleration
Grant to Rêve Preparatory charter school	Charter development
Northern Third Ward grant ended by mutual agreement	Family and community engagement
Grant to Beta Academy for provider work (chosen by GRH)	Charter development
Grant to Etoile Academy for charter expansion	Charter development
Developed Houston ISD school turnaround strategy to launch 3 ACE campuses and 21 transformation campuses	School transformation
Launched Opportunity Culture in Houston ISD	System acceleration
Charter strategy update	New schools creation
BES school leader development partnership established	New schools creation
Selected as executive adviser for Houston ISD System of Great Schools partnership	System acceleration

## Exhibit B

### Houston-Area School System Demographics

District Name	Student Body	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	Pacific Islander	White	Low Income	English Language Learners	Special Ed	Bilingual	Vocational Ed	Gifted
Aldine ISD	67,130	0.30%	1.00%	22.20%	73.40%	0.80%	0.20%	2.20%	87.90%	38.30%	8.80%	37.60%	32.40%	4.40%
Alief ISD	45,281	0.70%	10.90%	27.80%	56.60%	0.50%	0.20%	3.40%	83.80%	44.60%	8.70%	45.30%	25.30%	4.40%
Galena Park ISD	22,366	0.30%	0.60%	15.20%	79.30%	0.70%	-	4.00%	85.80%	36.00%	9.50%	35.50%	37.30%	7.10%
Harmony Charter	12,816	0.20%	17.00%	26.60%	43.60%	1.70%	0.10%	10.80%	68.30%	27.80%	7.20%	26.60%	22.70%	13.60%
Houston ISD	209,309	0.20%	4.20%	22.70%	62.40%	1.30%	0.10%	9.20%	79.30%	34.00%	7.90%	34.50%	21.40%	15.50%
KIPP Texas Charter	28,668	0.40%	1.80%	25.00%	70.40%	0.90%	0.10%	1.40%	86	37.60%	8.30%	36.90%	7.70%	-
Klein ISD	53,970	0.40%	8.30%	15.00%	42.30%	3.30%	0.10%	30.50%	45.60%	17.00%	10.60%	17.00%	29.60%	5.30%
Pasadena ISD	52,792	0.10%	3.00%	7.40%	83.30%	0.60%	0.10%	5.50%	78.80%	29.00%	11.40%	27.40%	20.50%	5.40%
Sheldon ISD	10,124	0.30%	0.50%	22.50%	70.00%	1.40%	-	5.20%	82.60%	31.70%	8.50%	33.90%	33.10%	5.20%
Spring ISD	35,284	1.70%	2.60%	38.40%	48.40%	1.90%	0.30%	6.80%	82.60%	28.00%	9.60%	27.80%	34.80%	6.40%
Spring Branch ISD	35,136	0.30%	6.50%	4.80%	59.30%	2.40%	-	26.60%	59.40%	36.70%	9.00%	37.90%	22.10%	9.90%
YES Prep Charter	12,074	0.50%	0.90%	9.10%	88.10%	0.20%	-	1.20%	88.5	30.90%	6.40%	29.30%	25.20%	-

## Exhibit C

### District Engagement Profiles

The following profiles provide additional detail about the work that Good Reason Houston has done with its primary system acceleration partners to date.

#### Aldine ISD

Aldine Independent School District (“Aldine ISD”) is an urban ISD serving 67,000 students in northern Harris County outside Houston, Texas.<sup>115</sup> Aldine ISD has 83 school campuses: nine high schools; five ninth-grade schools; 14 middle schools; 38 elementary schools; 12 early childhood, pre-K, and kindergarten schools; and five alternative campuses.<sup>116</sup> Aldine ISD offers 13 magnet choice schools that include an International Baccalaureate (“IB”) program, as well as specialized programs in mathematics, science, the fine and performing arts, and engineering.<sup>117</sup> Students may opt out of their assigned boundary school zone to attend a district-run magnet school.

Aldine ISD has an elected school board of seven members, each serving a four-year term.<sup>118</sup> The Aldine ISD Board and leadership are in the third year of implementing a five-year strategic plan. The plan identifies five strategic priorities: student achievement, school culture, mission-driven leadership, organizational efficiency, and community engagement and outreach.<sup>119</sup>

As Aldine ISD’s Transformational District adviser, Good Reason Houston has supported the district in a number of areas, beginning with conducting analyses of school performance and community engagement data that informed the district’s development of its strategic plan. With respect to plan implementation, Good Reason Houston supported the design of the school performance framework, the planning and execution of the ACE turnaround work, the development of school administrators as instructional leaders; and securing Aldine’s participation in the state’s Teacher Incentive Allotment program and several complementary teacher pipeline development efforts; creation of an Office of Innovation that has taken on the design and opening of two district schools of choice, the development of a uniform enrollment system for all of the district’s schools of choice, and several professional development activities, among other things.

#### Alief ISD

Alief Independent School District (“Alief ISD”) is an urban ISD serving 41,000 students in southwestern Harris County, Texas, including a sizable portion of Houston, Texas. Alief ISD has 46 campuses: 24 elementary schools, 6 intermediate schools, 6 middle schools, and 10 high schools and programs. At a number of these campuses, Alief ISD also offers bilingual, English as a Second Language, or dual-language programming. Four high schools in Alief ISD are also high schools of choice, to which students can apply to participate in specialized programming.

Alief ISD has an elected school board of seven members, each serving a 4-year term. Alief adopts an annual District Improvement Plan instead of a multi-year strategic plan. For 2021-’22, the plan identified five goals: closing the achievement gap, college and career readiness, safe and orderly environment, highly qualified personnel, and positive stakeholder relationships. Alief’s plan emphasizes rigorous, meaningful, and individualized instruction; preparing students for college, careers, and the military; recruiting, developing, and retaining highly qualified staff; creating positive relationships with stakeholders; and promoting safety in schools, especially as it relates to the social, emotional, and physical needs of students and staff.

To date, Good Reason Houston has directly supported Alief in limited capacities. Alief initially engaged with Good Reason Houston through the Pre-K Matters campaign to expand prekindergarten enrollment. It also engaged with Good Reason Houston through the Houston Promise program to expand postsecondary opportunities for underserved students. Indirectly, Good Reason Houston has assisted Alief with its highly qualified personnel goal by connecting the district with a third-party consultant for help in preparing an application to the Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment program. Additionally, Good Reason Houston connected Alief with another third-party consultant to support transition planning related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Houston ISD

Houston Independent School District (“HISD”) is the largest school district in Texas and the eighth largest in the United States, serving 194,000 students. HISD comprises 274 schools, including 37 high schools, 39 middle schools, 160 elementary schools, 8 early childhood schools, and 30 combined grade or alternative schools.<sup>120</sup> The district also hosts several school choice programs in over 100 schools, including career and technical education, dual language, international baccalaureate, fine arts, and gifted and talented (“Vanguard”) programming.

HISD has an elected school board of nine members, each serving a 4-year term. In 2019, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) sought to take over the district, citing a “failure of governance” by the School Board and repeated low academic performance of Wheatley High School. The Board had allegedly violated state laws and been accused of corruption, and Wheatley had been rated either a D or an F for seven consecutive years.<sup>121</sup> To date, state courts have barred the TEA from moving forward with a district takeover plan.

The HISD Board and leadership recently approved a 5-year strategic plan. The plan identifies six priorities: building trust and reliability for our families and community (“trust and reliability”), providing equitable opportunities and resources at every school (“equitable opportunities”), offering great schools in every neighborhood (“great schools”), ensuring high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom (“high-quality teaching”), cultivating world-class talent throughout the district (“world-class talent”), and promoting effective services and supports for students with special needs (“effective special needs services”).<sup>122</sup>

Initially, Good Reason Houston supported HISD’s pre-K enrollment expansion as part of the Pre-K Matters campaign. In the last year, Good Reason Houston was heavily engaged in development of the district’s new strategic plan. Good Reason Houston has also connected HISD to third-party expertise for finances, human capital, professional development for teachers and school leaders, curriculum and instruction, and special education. Good Reason Houston has supported HISD’s planning and application to participate in the Teacher Incentive Allotment. Moreover, Good Reason Houston has supported the Chief Academic Officer and his office with improving Pre-K access and instruction and with expanding access to advanced placement courses across the district. In April 2022, HISD selected Good Reason Houston as its System of Great Schools partner, beginning a 5-year contract to support the district at all levels.

## Pasadena ISD

Pasadena Independent School District (“Pasadena ISD”) is an urban ISD serving approximately 53,000 students in Pasadena, Texas, which is located in southeastern Harris County outside of Houston, Texas. Pasadena ISD currently has a total of 74 campuses: 36 elementary schools, 21 middle and intermediate schools, and 12 high and alternative schools. Within ten of these campuses, Pasadena ISD also offers bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), and dual language programming. Additionally, the Early College High School program in all five of the comprehensive Pasadena ISD high schools provides students with the opportunity to take college courses along with their high school classes such that they may graduate with their high school diploma and an Associate’s degree from San Jacinto College.

Pasadena has an elected school board composed of seven members each, with each member serving a four-year term. The Pasadena Board and leadership are in the second year of implementing a five-year strategic plan. The plan identifies six goals in the areas of curriculum and instruction; college, career, & military readiness; human resources; community involvement; safety; and ancillary services. Pasadena’s plan emphasizes providing rigorous, meaningful, and individualized instruction; preparing students for college, careers, and the military; recruiting, developing, and retaining highly qualified staff; creating positive relationships with stakeholders; and promoting safety in schools, especially as it relates to the social, emotional, and physical needs of students and staff.

To date, Good Reason Houston has supported Pasadena in fairly limited capacities. Pasadena initially engaged with Good Reason Houston through the Pre-K Matters campaign to expand prekindergarten enrollment. It also engaged with Good Reason Houston through the Houston Promise program to expand postsecondary opportunities for underserved students. More explicitly related to the strategic plan, Good Reason Houston has assisted with Pasadena’s human resources goal by connecting the district with a third-party consultant, EdFuel, for the purpose of preparing the district to join the Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment program.



## Spring ISD

Spring Independent School District ("Spring ISD") is an urban ISD with 35,000 students in prekindergarten through the 12th grade. The district is 20 miles north of central Houston. Spring ISD has 41 campuses, including 26 schools from prekindergarten through fifth grade, seven middle schools (grades 6 to 8), and five high schools (grades 9 to 12). These include five schools of choice to which any Spring ISD students may apply. In the Spring Early College Academy, high school students can earn an associate's degree and a high school diploma concurrently.

Spring ISD has an elected school board of seven members, each serving a 4-year term. The Spring ISD Board and leadership have recently adopted a new strategic plan, with the first year of implementation scheduled for the 2022-'23 school year. The plan identifies six strategic priorities: student outcomes, equity, well-being, leadership, opportunities, and engagement. At the time of this report, the details of implementation were not available to the public.

Good Reason Houston began working with Spring ISD in support of the district's Pre-K Matters campaign. Through that campaign, Good Reason Houston helped Spring ISD increase pre-K enrollment. Good Reason Houston subsequently supported development of the new strategic plan and will support the plan's implementation in its capacity as the district's System of Great Schools executive adviser. In addition, Good Reason Houston has assisted Spring ISD with creating and implementing a progress monitoring system of school superintendents and their work in the district's schools.

## Exhibit D

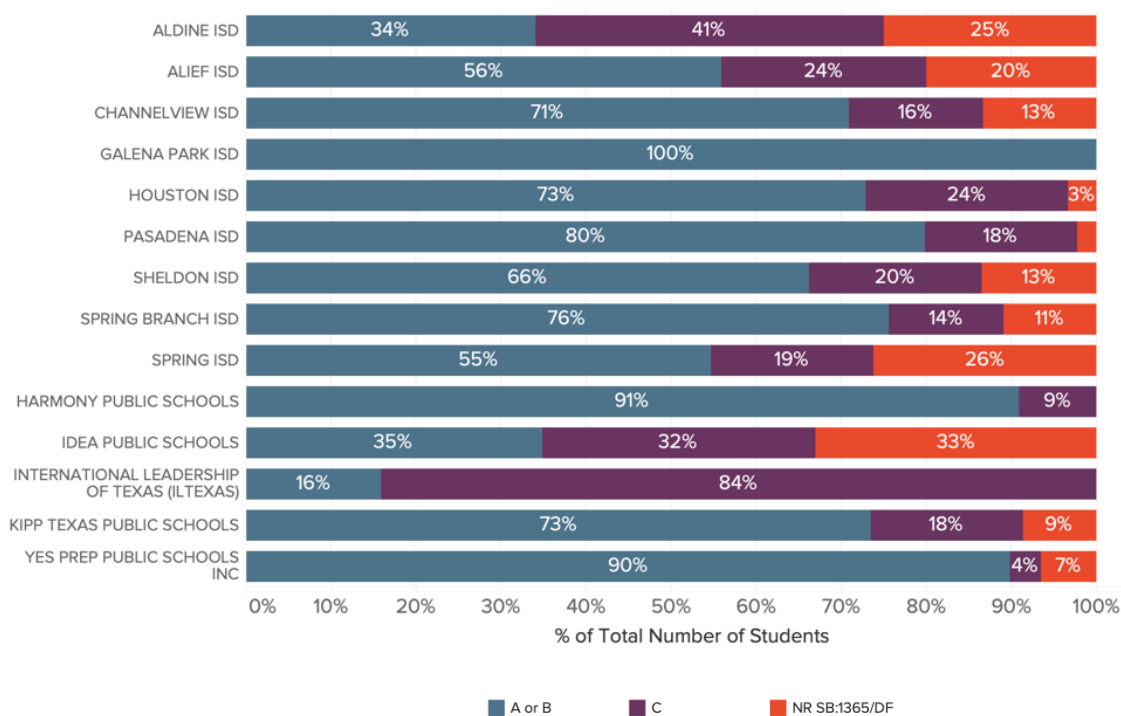
### 2022 Texas Education Agency Accountability Results for the Houston Area

Shortly before publication of this report, the Texas Education Agency released 2022 school accountability results for Houston-area schools and districts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these are the first state ratings since 2019. Good Reason Houston has conducted the following preliminary analysis of results for Houston-area schools and districts.

### Background

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) rates schools annually on an A through F scale. The system takes into account three domains: 1) Student Achievement, 2) School Progress (including academic growth and relative performance), and 3) Closing the Gaps. The overall rating weighs the better of Student Achievement or School Progress at 70%. The remaining 30% is based on the Closing the Gaps results. For 2022, TEA is assigning schools a rating of A, B, C, or Not Rated. “Not Rated” means that the school would have earned a D or F rating but for Texas legislation intended to recognize the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and school systems. The TEA Accountability Rating System allows districts to achieve a higher rating if year-over-year growth is high, even if student achievement is low. This approach is contributing to a significant increase in A- and B-rated schools in 2022.

### Results



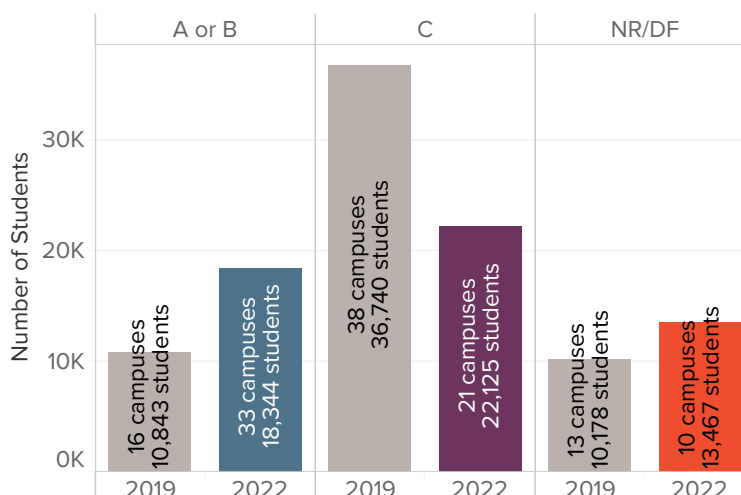
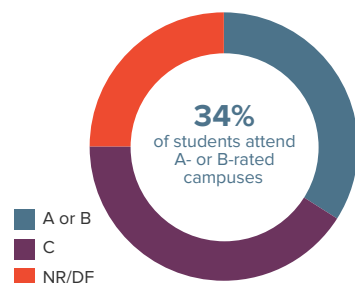
### Notes

- 341,000 students are currently learning in A- or B-rated schools, an increase of 91,000 compared to in 2019 (250,000 students).
- 157,000 students are currently learning in C or “unrated” campuses, a decrease of 108,000 compared to 2019 (265,000 students).

## ALDINE ISD Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**18,000 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 10,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

Aldine saw the greatest gains at the Elementary school level, with approximately 70% of students attending one of 27 A- or B-rated campuses.

While the number of "Not Rated" campuses declined, student enrollment in these campuses increased. This is largely due to low-performing middle and high schools.

Goodman and Worsham, two ACE campuses, saw increases in Student Achievement and earned B-ratings overall.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
ECKERT EL	80	25
HILL EL	88	22
ANDERSON ACADEMY	80	21
ORANGE GROVE EL	84	18
WORSHAM EL	83	14
LANE SCHOOL	77	14
OGDEN EL	69	13
HAMBRICK MIDDLE	78	12
FRANCIS EL	85	12
ESCAMILLA EL	84	12

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
MEAD MIDDLE	62	-13
STOVALL MIDDLE	66	-11
DAVIS H S ALDINE	67	-10
EISENHOWER H S	67	-10

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
ANDERSON ACADEMY	71	12
WORSHAM EL	72	10
GOODMAN EL	72	8
HILL EL	67	7
BLANSON CTE H S	93	3
CARMICHAEL EL	78	2

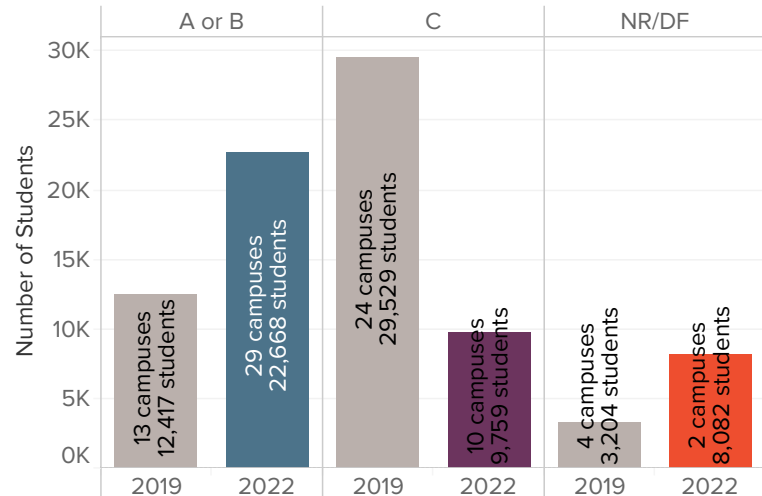
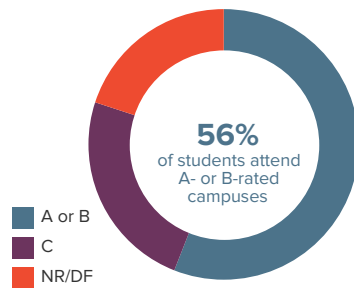
### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
JOHNSON EL	50	-20
BLACK EL	51	-19
OLESON EL	51	-19
SMITH EL	50	-19
BUSSEY EL	54	-17

## ALIEF ISD Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**23,000 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 12,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

Alief saw the greatest gains at the Elementary school level, with approximately 75% of students attending one of 18 A- or B-rated Elementary campuses.

At the High School level, there was a decline in two comprehensive schools. In 2022, there are now two “Not Rated” campuses, both of which previously received a C-rating.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
SMITH EL	86	28
SNEED EL	84	21
CUMMINGS EL	87	18
HORN EL	87	17
BUSH EL	88	17
HICKS EL	88	16
KENNEDY EL	91	15
ALEXANDER EL	87	14
MARTIN EL	84	13
CHAMBERS EL	87	13

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
ELSIK H S	68	-11
HASTINGS H S	69	-9
TAYLOR H S	71	-7
BUDEWIG INT	81	-6
YOUNGBLOOD INT	80	-6

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
MAHANAY EL	88	14
SMITH EL	67	9
COLLINS EL	71	6
HOLMQUIST EL	77	6
PETROSKY EL	78	6
BUSH EL	71	6
MARTIN EL	72	5
HORN EL	69	5

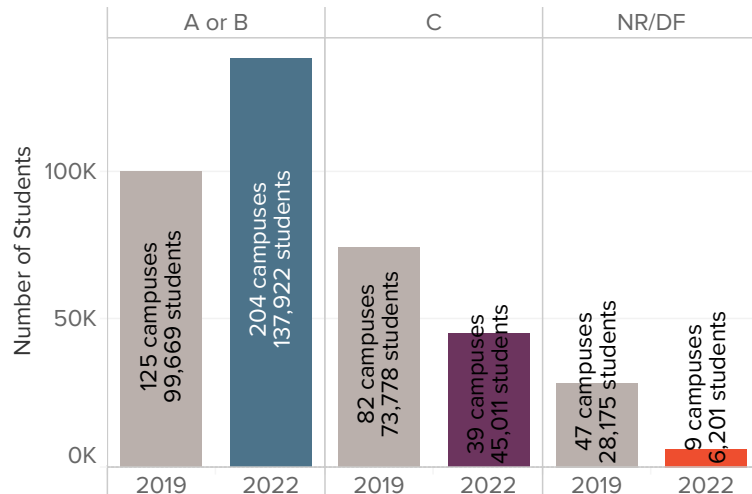
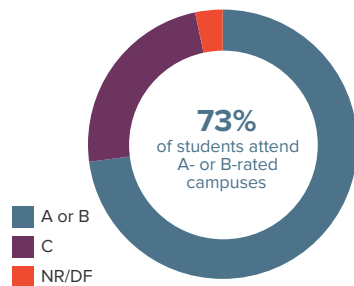
### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
BUDEWIG INT	64	-13
OWENS INT	57	-12
YOUENS EL	56	-11
ELSIK H S	67	-9
HASTINGS H S	68	-9

## HOUSTON ISD Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**138,000 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 100,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

Houston ISD saw gains in overall ratings across Elementary, Middle and High School.

Among 21 campuses that were rated an F in 2019, along with an “Improvement Required” designation by the TEA, 20 improved scores to a C-rating or better and one campus was closed.

However, it is important to note that the vast majority of schools that moved from an F-rating to an A-, B-, or C-rating continued to have low “Student Achievement” domain scores. While Academic Growth from 2021 was high, these schools will need to focus on boosting student achievement.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
OSBORNE EL	96	37
YOUNG EL	85	35
RUCKER EL	88	32
SEGUIN EL	90	31
WHIDBY EL	87	30
ROBINSON EL	87	30
FRANKLIN EL	92	30
EDISON MIDDLE	87	28
WESLEY EL	89	27
MARTINEZ C EL	86	27

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
WOODSON SCHOOL	68	-13
FOREST BROOK MIDD..	59	-11
BASTIAN EL	75	-10
FROST EL	72	-10
ELMORE EL	67	-9

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
T H ROGERS SCHOOL	96	36
OSBORNE EL	77	18
SEGUIN EL	71	15
FRANKLIN EL	75	15
ELLA J BAKER MONTES..	89	15
WESLEY EL	67	14
DAVILA EL	91	14
SHERMAN EL	71	13

### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

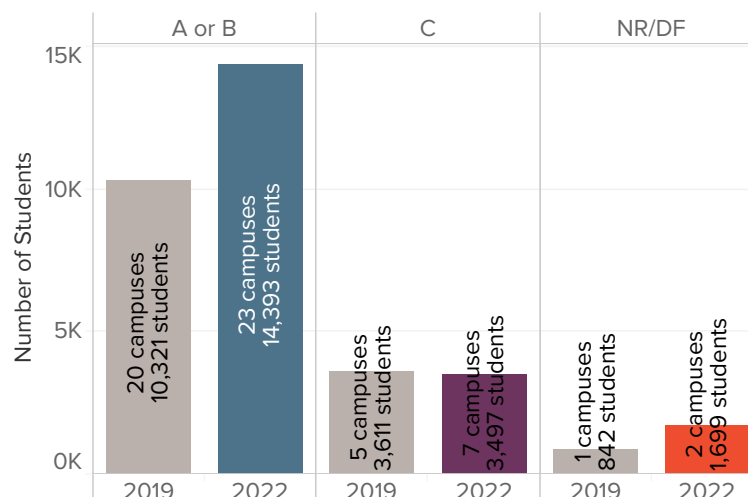
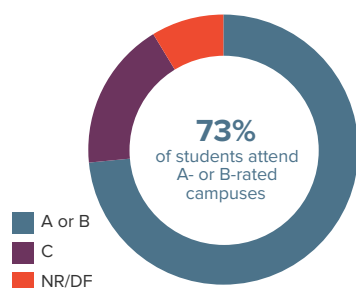
Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
FROST EL	52	-21
ENERGIZED FOR STEM ..	74	-19
SANCHEZ EL	72	-19
KASHMERE GARDENS ..	51	-16
SHADYDALE EL	56	-16



## KIPP HOUSTON Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**14,000 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 10,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

KIPP saw the greatest gains in at the high school level, with approximately 80% of students attending one of 5 A- or B-rated High School campuses.

While the number of C-rated campuses decreased, the total enrollment in these school increased slightly. The majority of C-rated campuses are Middle Schools.

Only one campus, KIPP Connect HS, saw an increase in Student Achievement since 2019.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
KIPP SPIRIT COLLEGE ..	89	9
KIPP CONNECT HOUS..	94	9
KIPP ZENITH ACADEMY	71	8
KIPP PEACE EL	84	5
KIPP DREAM PREP	83	5
KIPP SHARPSTOWN C..	91	3
KIPP NORTHEAST COL..	82	3
KIPP ACADEMY WEST ..	90	2
KIPP SUNNYSIDE H S	80	1
KIPP NEXUS MIDDLE	80	0

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
KIPP LIBERATION COLL..	71	-11
KIPP VOYAGE ACADE..	79	-9
KIPP 3D ACADEMY	85	-8
KIPP EXPLORE ACADE..	80	-7
KIPP POLARIS ACADE..	77	-7

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
KIPP CONNECT HOUST..	90	7

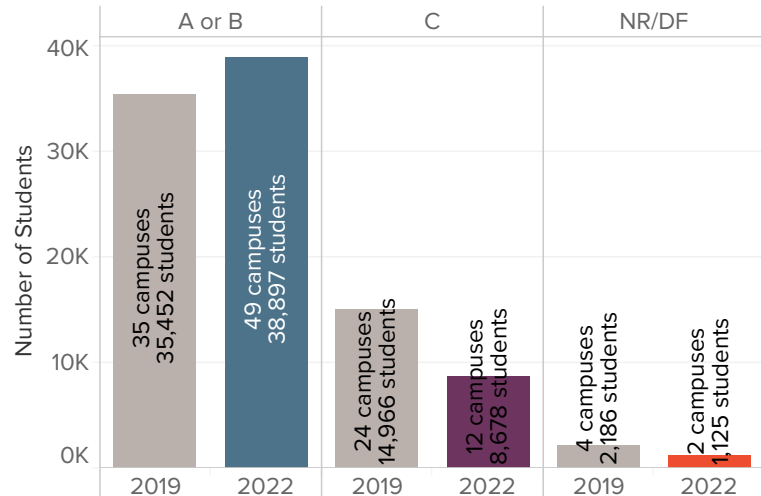
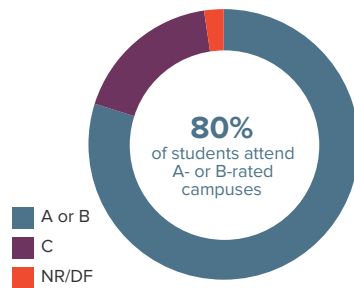
### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
KIPP LEGACY PREPARA..	52	-17
KIPP LIBERATION COLL..	60	-14
KIPP PEACE EL	57	-14
KIPP EXPLORE ACADE..	74	-12
KIPP VOYAGE ACADEM..	67	-12

## PASADENA ISD Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**39,000 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 34,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

Pasadena more than doubled the number of Elementary students attending A-or B-rated campuses. There are now 28 A- or B-rated campuses, up from 12 in 2019.

At the middle and high school levels, the number of C-rated schools increased from 2019.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
THOMAS HANCOCK EL	89	30
SPARKS EL	93	26
GARFIELD EL	88	21
L F SMITH EL	87	17
GOLDEN ACRES EL	86	16
GARDENS EL	86	16
MATTHYS EL	84	13
MCMASTERS EL	89	12
MAE SMYTHE EL	84	12
PARKS EL	82	11

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
SOUTH HOUSTON INT	81	-9
BURNETT EL	71	-8
STUCHBERY EL	67	-7
THOMPSON INT	82	-7
EARNESTEEN MILSTE..	78	-5

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Change
SPARKS EL	78	14
THOMAS HANCOCK EL	71	12
SOUTH BELT EL	86	7
SAN JACINTO INT	74	5
GARFIELD EL	69	4
GARDENS EL	70	3
L F SMITH EL	70	3
RED BLUFF EL	82	3
TURNER EL	80	3

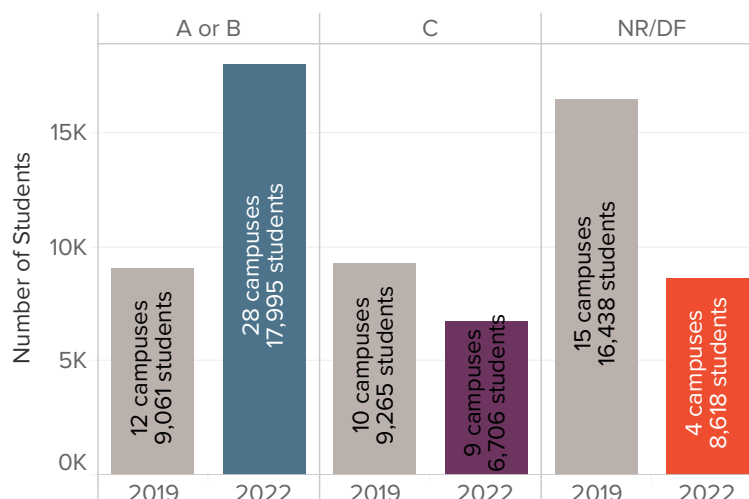
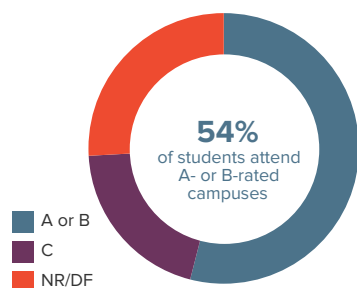
### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Change
EARNESTEEN MILSTE..	59	-17
BURNETT EL	58	-14
YOUNG EL	56	-14
SOUTH HOUSTON INT	67	-13
DE ZAVALA MIDDLE	57	-12

## SPRING ISD Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**18,000 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 9,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

Spring saw the greatest gains at the Elementary school level, with approximately 85% of students attending one of 23 A- or B-rated Elementary campuses.

At the High School level, scores declined since 2019. Approximately 80% of Spring's High School students attend a "Not Rated" campus.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
RALPH EICKENROHT EL	87	28
STELLE CLAUGHTON ..	76	26
HELEN MAJOR EL	81	22
EDWIN M WELLS MIDD..	76	21
ANDERSON EL	92	21
SALYERS EL	80	19
PEARL M HIRSCH EL	88	19
MILDRED JENKINS EL	86	19
HOYLAND EL	80	18
BAMMEL MIDDLE	72	18

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
SPRING H S	66	-10
NORTHGATE EL	78	-9
HERITAGE EL	84	-5
ANDY DEKANEY H S	65	-4
JOAN LINK EL	84	-4

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
HOYLAND EL	64	10
MILDRED JENKINS EL	65	8
RALPH EICKENROHT EL	65	7
DONNA LEWIS EL	72	7
GINGER MCNABB EL	85	6
EDWARD ROBERSON M..	92	4
ANDERSON EL	74	4
CARL WUNSCH SR H S	94	3
JOHN WINSHIP EL	75	1
DELORAS E THOMPSON..	65	1

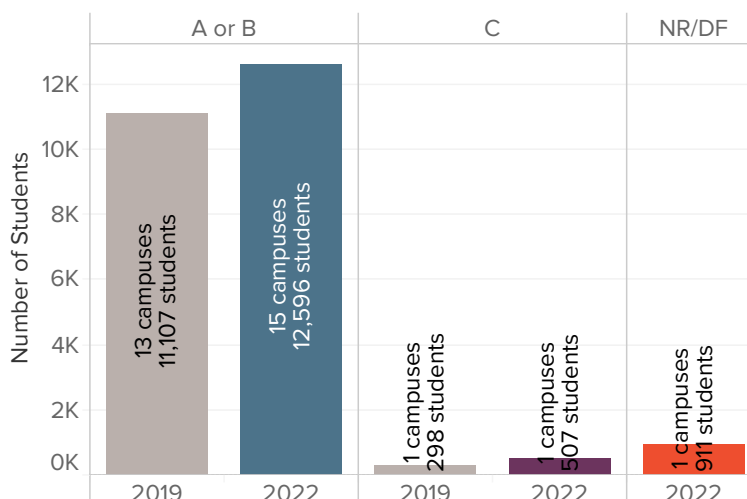
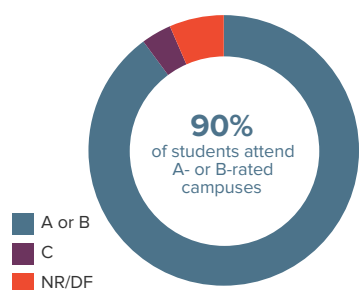
### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Change
JOAN LINK EL	56	-16
SPRING H S	64	-12
TWIN CREEKS MIDDLE	67	-8
PAT REYNOLDS EL	64	-8
NORTHGATE EL	72	-8
CLARK INT	50	-8

## YES PREP Accountability Ratings: 2022 Update

Prepared by Good Reason Houston

**12,500 students attend A- or B-rated campuses in 2022, compared to 11,000 in 2019**



### Key Highlights:

YES Prep opened a new middle school, YES Prep Hobby in 2019. The campus received a B-rating in 2022.

YES Prep opened its first two Elementary campuses in 2021, YES Prep Southeast and YES Prep North Central. They received an A and C-rating, respectively.

YES Prep Southside saw a significant decline in its overall score, dropping from a B-rating to a D-rating.

### Top Overall Score Change

Comparing the difference between overall TEA Accountability Overall Score 2019 vs. 2022. The overall score includes Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps.

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
YES PREP - NORTHLINE	84	11
YES PREP - WHITE OAK	86	3
YES PREP - NORTHWE..	85	3

### Bottom Overall Score Change

Campus	Overall Score 2022	Score Change
YES PREP - SOUTHSIDE	64	-19
YES PREP - SOUTHEAST	87	-6
YES PREP - NORTHSIDE	81	-5
YES PREP - EAST END	86	-3
YES PREP - WEST	87	-3

### Top Student Achievement Score Change

In addition to the overall score, each campus receives a score for Domain 1: Student Achievement. Domain 1 measures student mastery of grade-level and subject area knowledge and skills, as well as graduation rates and Career, College, and Military Readiness at the high school level.

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Chan..
YES PREP - BRAYS OAK..	86	4
YES PREP - 5TH WARD	85	2
YES PREP - NORTHWEST	78	1
YES PREP - WHITE OAK	76	1

### Bottom Student Achievement Score Change

Campus	Student Achievement Score 2022	Student Achievement Score Change
YES PREP - SOUTHSIDE	56	-19
YES PREP - EAST END	85	-5
YES PREP - NORTH CE..	88	-5
YES PREP - SOUTHEAST	88	-5
YES PREP - SOUTHWEST	88	-4

# Endnotes

- 1 Good Reason Houston. (Spring 2020). A blueprint for change. Retrieved June 12, 2022, from <https://goodreasonhouston.org/takeaction>
- 2 The term “new school seats” refers to spaces that did not previously exist for children in a school that is already high performing or – in the case of a new school -- shows promise of being high performing.
- 3 Texas Education Agency. 2018-19 school report cards by district. Retrieved June 12, 2022, from <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/src/2019/district.srch.html>
- 4 Exhibit A (Good Reason Houston: Organizational Timeline); Exhibit B (Houston-Area Demographics).
- 5 Texas Education Agency. Snapshot: download statistics. Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/snapshot/download.html>
- 6 Because of the effects of Hurricane Harvey (2018 and 2019) and COVID-19 (2020 and 2021), 2017 is the most recent year for which state data were available at the time of this research.
- 7 Texas Education Agency. STAAR aggregate data. Retrieved June 11, 2022, from <https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/taar/taar-aggregate-data>
- 8 The Mind Trust. Beliefs, mission & values. Retrieved July 1, 2022, from <https://www.themindtrust.org/mission>
- 9 New Schools for Baton Rouge leadership. May 11, 2022. Interview.
- 10 Education Forward DC leadership. May 12, 2022. Interview.
- 11 The Commit Partnership. What we do. Retrieved July 12, 2022, from <https://commitpartnership.org/what-we-do>
- 12 E3 Alliance. Who we are. Retrieved July 12, 2022, from <https://e3alliance.org/about-us>
- 13 New Schools for Baton Rouge leadership. May 11, 2022. Interview.
- 14 New Schools for Baton Rouge is a notable exception, with an almost exclusively charter-centric approach.
- 15 Good Reason Houston. (Spring 2020). A blueprint for change. Retrieved June 12, 2022, from <https://goodreasonhouston.org/takeaction>
- 16 Like many other states, Texas suspended state testing for the 2019-’20 and 2020-’21 school years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of the study, state assessment results were not available for the 2021-’22 school year.
- 17 With respect to school expansions, the study projects that schools will maintain their rating through their growth.
- 18 System of Great Schools is a 4-year program that provides district leaders with technical assistance, professional learning communities, and support in applying for grants and other financial resources. See Texas Education Agency. System of great schools. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/district-initiatives/system-of-great-schools>
- 19 Houston ISD senior leadership. April 18, 2022. Interview.
- 20 Aldine ISD senior leadership. April 12, 2022. Interview.
- 21 Spring ISD senior leadership. April 13, 2022. Interview.
- 22 ISD senior leadership. April 12, 2022. Interview.
- 23 At the time of this report, the Spring ISD plan had not yet been formally announced; therefore, the report does not discuss the particulars of that plan.
- 24 The schools are Young Women’s Leadership, La Promesa, and Impact Leadership. Good Reason Houston is supporting the planning for two of the schools. See *infra*, School Creation.
- 25 Houston ISD. Strategic five-year plan: community engagement. Retrieved June 12, 2022, from <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/193221>
- 26 Houston ISD. Strategic five-year plan: commitments. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/193220>
- 27 Good Reason Houston. Spring ISD & Good Reason Houston: Step-back (July 2022) [PowerPoint presentation, slides 3, 18-19].



- 28 Houston ISD senior administrator. April 18, 2022. Interview.
- 29 Houston ISD. Strategic five-year plan: board goals. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/193230>
- 30 Houston ISD senior administrator. April 1, 2022. Interview.
- 31 Aldine ISD. A new way forward: Aldine ISD's five-year strategic plan. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://aldineisd.org>.
- 32 Aldine ISD senior administrator. March 31, 2022. Interview.
- 33 Aldine ISD principals and instructional leads. April 28, 2022. Focus group.
- 34 Aldine ISD principals and instructional leads. April 28, 2022. Focus group.
- 35 Aldine ISD principals and instructional leads. April 28, 2022. Focus group. The selected curricula are TEA-endorsed, but the learning standards are not fully aligned to state assessments.
- 36 Aldine ISD principals and instructional leads. April 28, 2022. Focus group.
- 37 Good Reason Houston board member. March 31, 2022. Interview.
- 38 Policy maker, senior staff. June 7, 2022. Interview.
- 39 YES Prep Senior Leadership. April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 40 Community Partner. April 21, 2022. Interview.
- 41 Spring ISD Senior Leadership. April 13, 2022. Interview.
- 42 Aldine ISD, senior administrator. August 19, 2022. Interview.
- 43 Aldine ISD, senior administrator. August 19, 2022. Interview.
- 44 Opportunity Culture. Multi-classroom Leadership. Retrieved August 19, 2022, from <https://www.opportunityculture.org/multi-classroom-leadership/>.
- 45 Senior district administrator. April 1, 2022. Interview.
- 46 District senior administrator. March 31, 2022. Interview.
- 47 One district senior administrator reported finding private funding to continue the program. District senior administrator. April 18, 2022. Interview.
- 48 Aldine ISD senior leadership. April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 49 ISD senior leadership. April 13, 2022. Interview.
- 50 ISD senior leadership. May 22, 2022. Interview.
- 51 ISD senior leadership. May 22, 2022. Interview.
- 52 ISD senior leadership. April 18, 2022. Interview.
- 53 ISD senior leadership. April 13, 2022. Interview.
- 54 ISD senior leadership. April 13, 2022. Interview.
- 55 See Appendix D for 2022 TEA accountability results
- 56 Aldine ISD, senior administrator. August 19, 2022. Interview.
- 57 ISD senior leadership. April 18, 2022. Interview.
- 58 See Appendix D for 2022 TEA accountability results.
- 59 Good Reason Houston. Aldine mid-year ACE survey, 2021-22 (Feb. 2022). Respondents rated three technical assistance providers independently, with each receiving a "very effective" rating of 85% to 90%; 97% of respondents rated Good Reason Houston's work as "very effective" or "effective."
- 60 Aldine ISD. April 20 (Goodman Elementary) and April 21, 2022 (Worsham Elementary). ACE Teacher focus groups.
- 61 See Appendix D for 2022 TEA accountability results.
- 62 See, e.g., McNeel, B. (2018). Dallas hits on successful school turnaround model with ACE, but it comes at a steep price. Could a

wider expansion across Texas now be its best bet to survive? The 74. <https://www.the74million.org/article/dallas-hits-on-successful-school-turnaround-model-with-ace-but-it-comes-at-a-steep-price-could-a-wider-expansion-across-texas-now-be-its-best-bet-to-survive>

- 63 See Texas Education Agency. Campus turnaround plan: description of methods. Retrieved June 28, 2022, from [tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/acct\\_turnaroundplandescriptionofmethods\\_20.pdf](https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/acct_turnaroundplandescriptionofmethods_20.pdf)
- 64 Charter school leader. May 9, 2022. Interview.
- 65 HISD senior leadership. April 4, 2022. Interview.
- 66 HISD senior leadership. April 18, 2022. Interview.
- 67 This section addresses charter school technical assistance, specifically around school improvement. The report discusses Good Reason Houston's technical assistance related to creating new charter school students in the section on new school creation.
- 68 Texas Education Agency. 2018-19 school report card. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2018-'19 is the most recent year for which the state had assigned letter grades when Good Reason Houston engaged with the operator.
- 69 One of the single-site schools was founded by a fellow from the BES charter school leader development program. Good Reason Houston recently developed a partnership with BES for development of charter school leaders in Houston, but this school leader's BES training predates that partnership.
- 70 Charter school leaders. April 28, May 13, and June 9, 2022. Interviews.
- 71 Charter school leaders. May 13, and June 9, 2022. Interviews.
- 72 Texas Education Agency. 2018-19 school report cards. Retrieved August 31, 2022, from <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting/school-report-cards>.
- 73 Aldine ISD senior administrator. March 31, 2022. Interview. According to data provided by Good Reason Houston, the schools have gone from an average of 9 percentage points below Aldine's overall percentage of students meeting standards in 2018 to an average of 4 percentage points above the district's overall percentage in 2020-'21. Preliminary 2021-'22 results look promising with the schools exceeding the district average by 16 percentage points.
- 74 Good Reason Houston. (2022). Emerging school support [PowerPoint, slide 3]
- 75 The term "new school seats" refers to spaces that did not previously exist for children in a school that is already high performing or -- in the case of a new school -- shows promise of being high performing.
- 76 Charter school senior leadership. April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 77 ISD senior leadership. May 22, 2022. Interview.
- 78 Aldine ISD senior leadership. March 31, 2022. Interview.
- 79 YES Prep senior leadership. April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 80 KIPP senior leadership. April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 81 The school designer is currently working with Houston ISD to offer a version as a program within a district school.
- 82 Good Reason Houston. (March/April 2022). Emerging School Support [PowerPoint Presentation], slide 15.
- 83 CMO senior leadership. April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 84 CMO senior leadership. April 11 and 28, 2022. Interviews.
- 85 Former CMO senior leadership. April 5, 2022. Interview.
- 86 CMO senior leadership, April 11, 2022. Interview.
- 87 Former senior TEA administrator. May 25, 2022. Interview.
- 88 Good Reason Houston. (2022). Strategy evolution: charter [PowerPoint presentation, slide 11].
- 89 Good Reason Houston. (undated). Pitch Deck [PowerPoint presentation, slide 10].
- 90 Latinos for Education Leadership. April 26, 2022. Interview.
- 91 Latinos for Education Leadership. April 26, 2022. Interview.
- 92 Latinos for Education Leadership. April 26, 2022. Interview.

- 93 Latinos for Education Leadership. April 26, 2022. Interview.
- 94 Houston ISD. (2021, December 6). Board meetings: public participation. (HISD 101912). (Requiring, among other things, interpretation services in Spanish for all meetings.)
- 95 Discovering U program participants. May 20, 2022. Focus group.
- 96 Discovering U program participants. May 20, 2022. Focus group.
- 97 District Senior Leadership, Apr. 12, 2022. Interview.
- 98 The schools are Young Women's Leadership, La Promesa, and Impact Leadership. Good Reason Houston is supporting the planning for two of the schools. See *infra*, School Creation.
- 99 Houston ISD, Strategic Five-Year Plan, Community Engagement (accessed 6/12/22).
- 100 Houston GPS Leadership, May 2, 2022. Interview.
- 101 Former TEA Senior Administrator, May 12, 2022. Interview.
- 102 Senior policy staff, Texas Legislature. June 22, 2022. Interview.
- 103 Senior leadership, the Commit Partnership. April 21, 2022. Interview.
- 104 Commit Partnership senior leadership. April 21, 2022. Interview.
- 105 Commit Partnership senior leadership. April 21, 2022. Interview.
- 106 Greater Houston Partnership senior leadership. May 5, 2022.
- 107 Senior legislative staff. June 7, 2022. Interview.
- 108 Commit Partnership senior leadership. April 21, 2022. Interview.
- 109 Senior TEA administrator. May 16, 2022. Interview.
- 110 Former senior TEA administrator. May 25, 2022. Interview.
- 111 Ampersand Education senior staff. March 20, 2022. Interview.
- 112 Senior policy staff, Texas Legislature. June 22, 2022. Interview.
- 113 Senior ISD Leadership, April 13, 2022. Interview.
- 114 E.g., Senior ISD leadership, March 31, 2022. Interview.
- 115 Aldine ISD. Fast facts. Retrieved TK, 2022, from <https://www.aldineisd.org/about/accountability/fast-facts>
- 116 Aldine ISD. Fast facts. Retrieved TK, 2022, from <https://www.aldineisd.org/about/accountability/fast-facts>
- 117 Aldine ISD. Fast facts. Retrieved TK, 2022, from <https://www.aldineisd.org/about/accountability/fast-facts>
- 118 Aldine ISD. Fast facts. Retrieved TK, 2022, from <https://www.aldineisd.org/about/accountability/fast-facts>
- 119 Aldine ISD. The plan forward. Retrieved TK, 2022, from <https://strategicplan.aldineisd.org/strategic-priorities>
- 120 Houston ISD. Achievements. Retrieved TK, from <https://www.houstonisd.org/domain/7908>
- 121 Texas Education Agency. (2019, November 6). [Letter to Grenita Lathan and Diana Davila]. [https://static.texastribune.org/media/files/7a13bbe9d1022d4a8ce68efd9f43d74d/Houston%20ISD%2011-6-19.pdf?\\_ga=2.199524397.2048261035.1655126234-1304413188.1653588433](https://static.texastribune.org/media/files/7a13bbe9d1022d4a8ce68efd9f43d74d/Houston%20ISD%2011-6-19.pdf?_ga=2.199524397.2048261035.1655126234-1304413188.1653588433)
- 122 <https://www.houstonisd.org/domain/54716>