

May 2025

# SPECIAL EDITION REPORT

***2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN***





## DR. MARK SCOTT'S RETIREMENT



This 2023-2028 Strategic Plan Special Edition Report commemorates the last month of Dr. Mark Scott's tenure as Superintendent of the Houston County School District. Prior to becoming Superintendent in July 2014, Dr. Scott served as the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and as the Principal of Northside High School. Dr. Scott served as a teacher for 10 years before becoming an administrator. He began his career as an administrator in Baldwin County, serving as an Assistant Principal at Baldwin High School before becoming the Principal at Oak Hill Middle School.



Dr. Scott has been instrumental in leading the way for student achievement. Under his leadership, Houston County was named a Solution Tree Model Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Work® District, and six schools were recognized as Model PLC at Work® Schools. Thanks to his initiative called the Power of 18, high school students in Houston County can now earn up to 18 college credits without having to leave their high school. In recognition of the District's strong support of military students and their families, 14 schools have been recognized as Military Flagship Schools by the Georgia Department of Education. Additionally, when he became Superintendent, the graduation rate was 76.8%, and in 2024, it was 91.2%, the highest graduation rate in the school district's history.



During his career as Superintendent, Houston County has seen tremendous growth. Enrollment has increased by over 2,800 students since 2014, making Houston County School District the 12th largest district in Georgia. Dr. Scott led the District through the construction of four schools, five gymnasiums, a central bus facility, a tennis facility, an aquatic center, a stadium, and multiple classroom additions. Additionally, the District completed numerous projects such as roof replacements, HVAC replacements, school renovations, and parking improvements. Since 2014, the starting pay for teachers in Houston County increased by over \$14,000. In that same time, the District purchased 183 buses and increased the fund balance by \$40 million.

Dr. Scott has left a remarkable legacy of transformational, visionary, and caring leadership. Though he will be missed, we congratulate him on his retirement and wish him much happiness in the next chapter of his life.

### *Highlights of Awards & Recognitions:*

- 2020 GSSA Top 4 Finalist for Superintendent of the Year
- 2021 GAEL Vision Award
- 2022 GAESP Outstanding Leadership and Support for District 11
- 2023 Friend of G-CASE Award
- 2024 Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award



## SYSTEM ACCREDITATION

We are proud to announce that Houston County School District has earned systems accreditation from Cognia! We have been recognized for our steadfast commitment to providing a high-quality education for every one of our students and our promise to continue improving for them.

Cognia is a global, nonprofit improvement organization dedicated to helping institutions and other education providers grow learners, teachers, and leaders. Cognia offers accreditation and certification, assessment, and improvement services within a framework of continuous improvement. Serving 40,000 public and private institutions from early learning through high school in more than 90 countries, Cognia brings a global perspective to advancing teaching and learning. Learn more at [www.cognia.org](http://www.cognia.org).

As part of our Accreditation Engagement Review, Cognia assigns an Index of Education Quality™ (IEQ™) score based on a system's continuous improvement efforts. An IEQ score above 300 indicates the institution meets Cognia's expectations for accreditation that include one or more Areas of Improvement and may include one or more Noteworthy Practices. Houston County performed exceptionally well, and we are proud to share our school district's IEQ score compared to the network average, our two noteworthy practices that reflect significant strengths, and the identified area of improvement.

- **Houston County's IEQ Score**                      **338**
- **Cognia's IEQ Network Average**              **296**

In late August 2025, we will receive a final report with benchmark data based on scores from all schools and systems evaluated under the current standards.

- **Noteworthy Practices:**
  - Committing to a Districtwide Professional Learning Community
  - Promoting Leadership Development for Teachers, Aspiring Assistant Principals, and Aspiring Principals
- **Area of Improvement:**
  - Leveraging Technology Use to Enhance Learning

By completing the Accreditation Engagement Review, all schools in our District are now accredited for the next six years. For a detailed report on Houston County's Accreditation Engagement Review, please visit [www.hcbe.net/accreditation](http://www.hcbe.net/accreditation).

We would like to thank our stakeholders for their ongoing support in fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Our success relies on the commitment of teachers, students, parents, administrators, and the community. We are especially grateful for our school board's exemplary leadership and dedication to our mission, vision, values, and goals.





## 2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



### GSBA Governance Team of the Year Runner-Up

The Houston County Board of Education (BOE) was selected as the runner-up for the Georgia School Boards Association's (GSBA) 2024 Governance Team of the Year Award. In 2018, GSBA introduced the Governance Team of the Year Award in recognition of the board that exemplifies commitment to enhancing student achievement and fostering public education trust and support within their community. This award underscores the importance of effective governance in educational success and community engagement. We are incredibly proud of our school board's dedication and leadership, which continues to positively impact our students and community.



### Graduation Achievement

In October 2023, Houston County School District (HCSD) kicked off an initiative called Operation Graduation: 90 is the Destination! Our goal was to achieve a graduation rate of 90% or above by focusing on three main priorities: attendance, grades, and withdrawals. We are proud of the 2024 graduation rate of 91.2%, the highest in our school district's history. The 2024 graduation rate was 3.63 points higher than the 2023 rate of 87.6%. In our pursuit of continuous improvement, we have already set a goal to achieve a 2025 graduation rate of 92%.



### 2024 College and Career Ready Performance Index

The HCSD 2024 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score was 84.4, which is above the State's score of 78.9. The CCRPI score is comprised of four components: content mastery, progress, closing gaps, and readiness. These components include data from sources such as Georgia Milestones scores, student attendance, participation in accelerated programs and fine arts, CTAE pathway completion, and graduation rates. Student growth is also reported. The infographic highlights our performance, exceeding State averages across all grade bands. For a detailed CCRPI report, visit the Georgia Department of Education's CCRPI website.



**Houston County School District 84.4**  
**State of Georgia 78.9**

	Houston	Georgia
Elementary	87.1	82.1
Middle	81.5	74.9
High	82.9	77.4



## 2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS

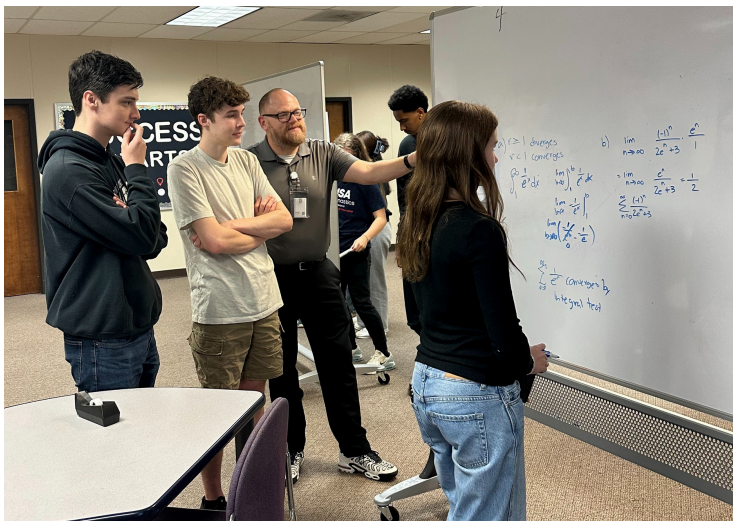
### Literacy and Math Leaders

State School Superintendent Richard Woods visited the Houston County School District on November 5, 2024, to recognize outstanding achievements in literacy and mathematics. Superintendent Woods presented 20 award banners to 19 schools, honoring them as Literacy Leaders and Math Leaders for their students' strong performance and growth. This recognition highlights the schools' commitment to academic excellence in the areas of literacy and math.



### Military Flagship School Awards

State School Superintendent Woods visited our District on March 19, 2025, to recognize four schools for the Military Flagship School Award. The schools celebrated were David Perdue Primary School, Pearl Stephens Elementary School, Quail Run Elementary School, and Perry High School. This brings our total to 14 schools districtwide. Georgia's Military Flagship School Award recognizes schools going above and beyond to provide a supportive environment for military students and families.



### Houston Accelerated Scholars Program

The Houston Accelerated Scholars Program (HASP) is having an exceptional inaugural year, providing our most advanced students with rigorous and engaging coursework. With over 85 students participating from across our District, HASP has quickly established itself as a vital part of our commitment to preparing students for future academic and professional success. The enthusiasm and dedication of our students and teachers have set a strong foundation for the program's future growth. We plan to expand the program next year to provide this exceptional learning experience to more of our high achieving students.



## GOAL 1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



- Houston County's 2024 Average SAT score was 1054, which was 24 points higher than the state average. We continue to excel in this performance.
- All five high schools in Houston County have been named 2025 Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Schools by State School Superintendent Woods. We are proud of our high schools for this accomplishment.
- The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) named Quail Run Elementary as a 2023-2024 Title I Distinguished School and C.B. Watson Primary School as a Title I Reward School. Title I Distinguished Schools are among the highest performing 5% of Title I schools based on the combined ELA and math content mastery scores from the statewide assessments of the most recent year, and Title I Reward Schools are among the greatest-improving 5% when comparing content mastery from the most recent two years of statewide assessments.
- HCSD piloted the Benchmark Advance Core Literacy Program in five elementary schools. The program aligns with both the Science of Reading and the Georgia Early Literacy Act, providing a robust foundation for literacy development. Using feedback from teachers, school administrators, and our public review process, we will adopt this resource for full implementation in the 2025-2026 school year.

## ACTION STEPS FOR GOAL 1

Goal 1 of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is focused on students' academic performance supported by curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Houston County teachers and leaders are dedicated to providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. We regularly examine our strengths and identify opportunities for growth. We continuously reflect on our results and take purposeful action to drive ongoing improvement. The following action steps connect to the performance results and initiatives highlighted above:

SG1-PO1-IA-AS7 - Implement learning strategies to support Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students, Students With Disabilities (SWD), and English Learners (EL) to access curriculum.

SG1-PO1-IA-AS12 - Provide explicit reading and math instruction to support academic growth and achievement of all learners.

SG1-PO1-IA-AS15 - Use best practices across all content areas to deliver instruction and foster engaging environments.

SG1-PO1-IC-AS1 - Analyze and use data to maximize student achievement, inform system and school level decision making, and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

SG1-PO2-IC-AS4 - Maximize participation in the Advanced Placement (AP) program.



## GOAL 2: STUDENT & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- Our Superintendent, Dr. Mark Scott, was the featured speaker at the Robins Regional Chamber's Eggs and Issues, as well as the Perry Chamber's State of the Community event. He shared our Strategic Plan Community Report and the District's accomplishments during his tenure as the Superintendent.
- The Lindsey Student Support Center hosted a variety of events throughout the year to support and engage our community. Examples include a health clinic day, cooking classes, a community garden initiative, and an ESOL GMAS Parent Information Night. These efforts reflect our commitment to providing comprehensive wraparound services that meet the needs of students and their families.
- GaDOE named 17 Houston County schools as 2023-2024 PBIS Distinguished Schools. This is the highest PBIS designation schools can achieve. Five schools received PBIS Operational Schools designations.
- Our Board of Education members visited all schools this year. They enjoy seeing firsthand the impact of their decisions on teachers and students.
- All schools conducted monthly eleot walkthroughs to assess student engagement. The results guide professional learning focused on the seven eleot learning environments.

## ACTION STEPS FOR GOAL 2

SG2-PO1-IA-AS1 - Increase opportunities for family engagement and wraparound services.

SG2-PO1-IA-AS11 - Increase the number of PBIS schools in the District designated as operational and distinguished.

SG2-PO1-IB-AS2 - Implement monthly eleot walkthroughs to monitor and implement strategies for student engagement.

## GOAL 3: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS



- Matt Arthur Primary, our newest school, opened in Fall 2024. A Campus Dedication and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held September 25, 2024.
- Our Finance and Business Office was recognized at our March 2025 BOE Meeting for their FY24 audit demonstrating excellence in financial reporting.
- To enhance school safety, School Operations facilitated tabletop safety discussions with administrators and met with the District Safety Committee twice this year. The U.S. Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center also provided threat assessment training.
- Human Resources led a successful Teacher Recruitment Fair with a record turnout.

## ACTION STEPS FOR GOAL 3

SG3-PO1-IA - Plan, construct, and maintain safe schools, classrooms, and facilities.

SG3-PO1-IA-AS9 - Revise and review system safety plans with stakeholders.

SG3-PO1-IF-AS1 - Monitor compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

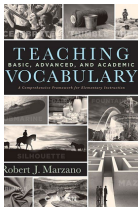
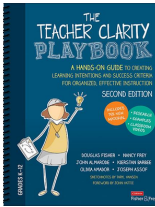
SG3-PO2-IA-AS3 - Conduct and participate in various face-to-face and virtual recruitment events.



## GOAL 4: LEARNING & GROWTH



MODEL  
PLC at WORK®  
SCHOOL



Houston County Schools



- Our student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) count was 30,939 in October 2024, compared to 30,826 in October 2023.
- As a Model PLC at Work District, we are proud that Matt Arthur Elementary School has been added to the list as a Solution Tree Model PLC at Work School. This brings our total to six Model PLC at Work Schools.
- Our Teaching and Learning department has created a laser focus on improved learning for students and educators. They led a districtwide book study on The Teacher Clarity Playbook by Fisher and Frey to help teachers and leaders learn strategies to strengthen Tier I classroom instruction by providing clarity around learning intentions and success criteria. To reinforce this learning, Fisher and Frey will be the keynote speakers at the districtwide Leadership Summit on May 28, 2025.
- In October and December 2024, our District and School Effectiveness department scheduled training for ESOL teachers on Marzano's Teaching Basic, Advanced, and Academic Vocabulary. The presenter shared strategies on six steps for direct vocabulary instruction designed to improve background knowledge and reading comprehension skills for English language learners and struggling readers.
- The Superintendent and Executive Cabinet held three rounds of School Improvement Planning (SIP) visits. During these visits, Cabinet members conducted classroom observations and provided principals with feedback on five main instructional areas: clarity of instruction, effective use of instructional frameworks, student engagement, authentic literacy, and raising the bar for student achievement.
- Teachers implemented the Canvas Learning Management System with students during the school year. This platform facilitated technology integration into instruction.
- District leaders provided high-quality professional learning to teacher candidates in Cohort 11 of the Houston County Leadership Development Program (HCLDP), designed for aspiring administrators, and to candidates in Cohort 3 of the Houston County Teacher Leadership Academy (HCTLA). Both cohorts end this school year.

## ACTION STEPS FOR GOAL 4

SG4-PO1-IA-AS1 - Provide ongoing training and support for school and district level personnel on effectively implementing processes with Professional Learning Communities (i.e., common assessments, essential standards, interventions, and enrichments).

SG4-PO1-IB-AS5 - Facilitate ongoing professional learning for school personnel on research-based models and instructional practices for all student groups.

SG4-PO1-IC-AS1 - Provide training and support for teachers on implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework (i.e., PBIS, RTI, progress monitoring, attendance protocols, etc.).

SG4-PO1-IC-AS5 - Provide training and support on the implementation of digital tools to facilitate collaboration and strengthen instruction.

SG4-PO1-ID-AS3 - Provide ongoing professional learning to school leaders and ATS clerks to improve accuracy of FTE reporting.