



GOOD
REASON
HOUSTON

SPRING 2020



Every Child, Every Neighborhood: A Blueprint for Change





A SHARED VISION FOR HOUSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Houston is home to more than 500,000 public school students and more families from all over the country and around the world are moving to Houston each day. As the most diverse city in the nation, Houston is uniquely positioned to prove what is possible when an entire community comes together to demand an exceptional public education for every one of its children. The Houston of tomorrow depends on our ability to create a world-class public education system today.

This is not yet Houston's reality, but it can be. We can change our reality. We will. We must – and we must do it now. We must come together to demand that every child – **EVERY HOUSTON CHILD** – has access to the kind of public education that they need to seize the opportunities Houston offers them.

We will start by coming together to assert that there are fundamental educational rights we must ensure for every Houston child. **We believe each and every child deserves these fundamental things from their public school.**

EVERY CHILD DESERVES



Access to an exceptional public school that prepares them for all the academic and economic opportunities available to them in the Houston of tomorrow.



Quality public school choices and experiences in their neighborhood that offer families the ability to pick the best-fit school for their child, and that offer every student in Houston the kind of educational experiences – in and out of the classroom – that prepare them for the Houston of tomorrow.



A welcoming school environment that values their identity, culture, and heritage, ensures their physical safety, mental health, and advances their emotional and developmental well-being.



An exceptional teacher in every classroom.



The individual supports and learning opportunities they need to succeed.

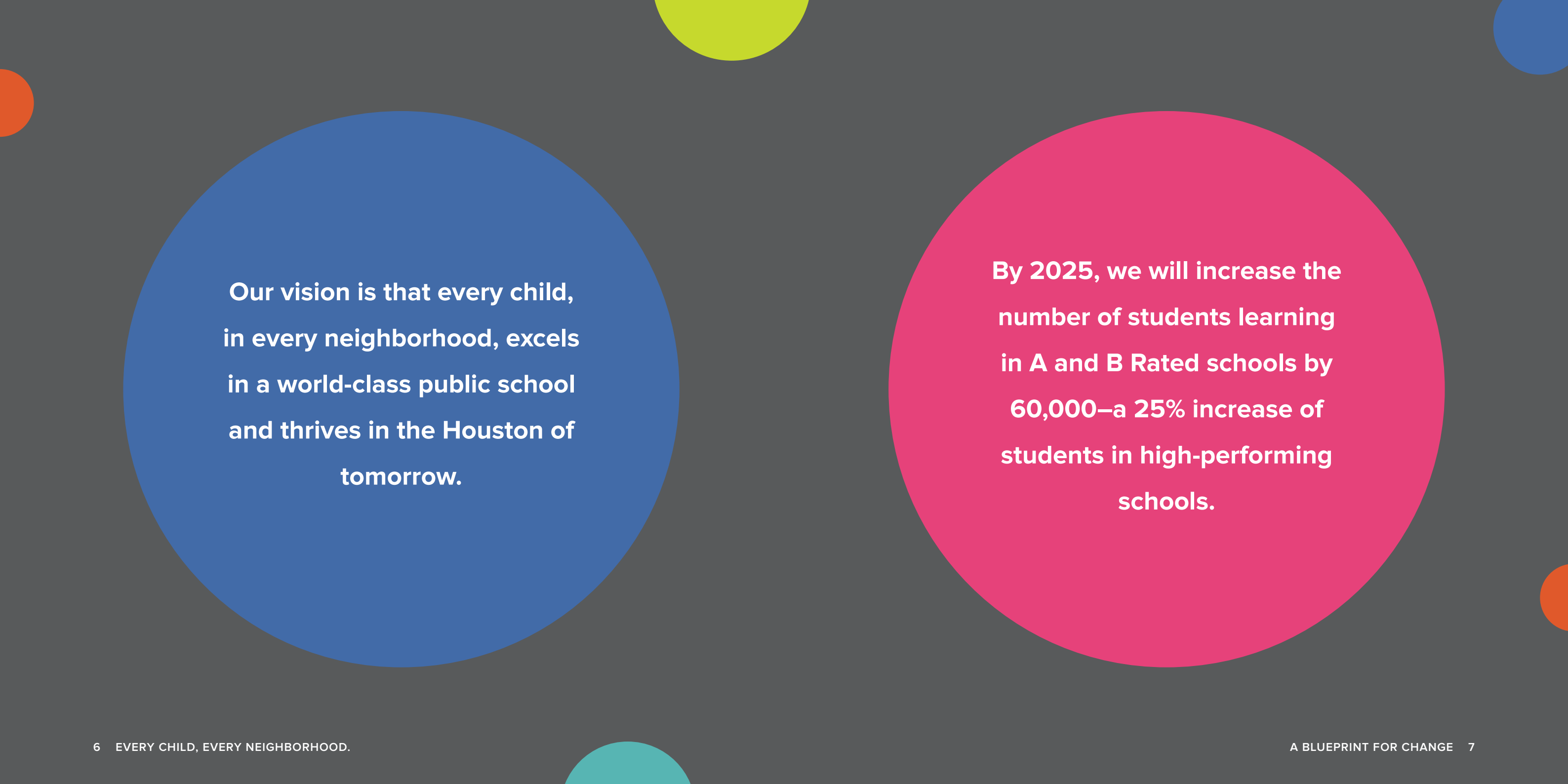


Access to early childhood education opportunities that prepare them for school from day one, and post-high school supports that ensure their success in the college or career of their choice.



Schools staffed by adults who have the highest expectations possible for all children and hold each other accountable for creating real opportunities for their students.

The fundamental academic skills we expect for our students is just the beginning of the commitment Houston must make to its 514,000 school aged children. Every Houston parent should send their child to school each day confident that they are learning the skills Texas requires, that colleges and universities prioritize, and that the workforce demands. But even more than that, parents must believe that when their child leaves a Houston public school they are ready for a productive, choice-filled future of limitless possibilities.



**Our vision is that every child,
in every neighborhood, excels
in a world-class public school
and thrives in the Houston of
tomorrow.**

**By 2025, we will increase the
number of students learning
in A and B Rated schools by
60,000—a 25% increase of
students in high-performing
schools.**

Every Child, Every Neighborhood:

The Blueprint for Change in Houston

Every Houston child deserves to attend an exceptional public school that prepares them to live, work, and thrive in the Houston of tomorrow. And, every neighborhood in Houston will be stronger if high-quality public schools create a foundation for strong healthy communities.

Good Reason Houston, in partnership with hundreds of local parents, community leaders, and educators, is championing The Every Child, Every Neighborhood Blueprint for Change. This plan outlines the steps we believe every Independent School District and Charter District must take to create school environments that put students first, develop and support exceptional educators, and create quality school options that will allow children to attend the school that's right for them – right in their own backyard.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE



**WE MUST DEMAND BOLD
COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP.**

Every school district needs a bold, courageous Superintendent who is unapologetically committed to improving student outcomes, eradicating inequity in their districts, and putting all options on the table to solve tough problems. They will build leadership teams and develop principals that will not accept failure as an option. Principals and their teams will never settle – continuous improvement on behalf of students must be the norm.



**PARENTS MUST BE A PART OF ALL
DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.**

School leaders must build multiple avenues for parent input in all levels of decision-making. Programmatic changes or school partnerships will be previewed with parents and include opportunities for parents to offer feedback and direction on their preferences for school redesign, improvement, and/or creation.



WE NEED MORE GREAT SCHOOLS.

School districts must seize opportunities to create the kinds of school options parents want, whether that means big changes to improve existing schools or working with successful or unique partners to create new schools. This starts by replicating or expanding exceptional public schools already serving Houston students. We must look to the rest of the state and the nation for unique models that will increase choice and opportunity for Houston families.



EDUCATION STARTS EARLY.

Our students will be more successful if they have access to high-quality Pre-Kindergarten education options that focus on early literacy. Every Houston student must be kindergarten ready from day one, and we need more exceptional early education educators to help us accomplish this goal.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE



THE MOST IMPORTANT EDUCATION RESOURCE IS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM TEACHER.

We need systems that identify teachers who know how to reach kids. We need to reward and elevate those teachers, and we need to give them incentives to teach in struggling schools in some of our most underserved neighborhoods. Districts must fully implement all state resources that allow them to invest in quality teaching. The pipeline must get bigger and stronger at every step of the way.

We must partner with the premier teacher preparation programs to get their graduates to Houston, and we must create unique pathways to teacher training that prepare teachers for the challenges and opportunities of Houston classrooms. Exceptional teachers must have the opportunity to grow professionally, and to lead effectively.



CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION SHALL BE FOCUSED ON GIVING ALL STUDENTS THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

All schools must adopt and implement best in class curriculum that is proven effective in helping students master fundamental academic skills. Teachers will be given the time, resources, and coaching to develop and deliver lessons that ensure students are not just receiving content but mastering it on grade level. Finally, individualized

instruction has to be the norm for all students so that children who fall behind can catch up, and children ready to move ahead have consistent opportunities to do so.



SCHOOLS MUST BE SAFE, WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS WHERE EVERY STUDENT AND ADULT SHARES A COMMON SET OF VALUES AND HAVE CLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES.

Schools will have the necessary staff, financial, and programmatic resources, including adequate mental health supports, mentoring and counseling services, and the integration of trauma-informed instructional skills. Professional development and planning time will allow teachers to collaborate and work together to build healthy cultures for students and staff.



SCHOOLS MUST AFFIRM THE HERITAGE AND IDENTITY AS WELL AS MEET THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF EACH AND EVERY CHILD.

Schools will prioritize the supports and resources to meet each child where they are. Our schools must not only recognize, but elevate the diverse cultures, languages, and identities of the students they serve. Practices that support student growth and cultivate their identity and interests must be the norm.



Houston cannot continue to allow inequity in its public schools. We can make a world class education reality for **EVERY CHILD** – we’ve already done it for some children. But we must do better for **ALL** students. Houston can demonstrate what is possible when a city comes together. Join Good Reason Houston and other local leaders to demand that Every Child in Every Neighborhood has access to a world-class public school.



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