

HICD Community,

This school year marks a monumental milestone for our schools, providing students in the Oklahoma City metro area with public, high-quality educational options for 25 years. Our schools have changed over the years, yet our mission to provide families with a quality public education option, compels us to improve the ways that we serve our students and the community at large. We invite you to celebrate this milestone and honor our past, as we host our Anniversary Gala on Saturday, April 6th, 2024. We eagerly look forward to celebrating this achievement with our community, and it is my hope to see many of you at this exciting event later this spring. Please check the district social media accounts and school communications to learn more about the Gala in the near future.

We proudly reflect on the many accomplishments our schools, students, and families have achieved for more than two decades, while understanding that our educational environment continues to evolve. After careful consideration, following community input and engagement, I am pleased to announce some exciting updates to our school district that will ensure our future students are provided the highest-quality educational experience.

District and School Branding Alignment

It is deeply important to us that our schools are aligned and that we share a clear and unique vision and identity in Oklahoma City's educational landscape. The following changes provide students and families at each of our schools with a common experience and drive our district vision – to ensure that students are successful at any post-secondary educational institution – from Pre-K until graduation. We will implement the following changes beginning July 1, 2024:

- The name of our district, Harding Independence Charter District, will change to Harding Charter Preparatory School District.
- All schools in our district will share a foundational element in their name: Harding Charter Preparatory. Our middle and elementary school sites will have an additional designation based on where they are located.
 - Our new elementary school will be known as Harding Charter Preparatory Elementary School at Kelley.
 - Independence Charter Middle School will be known as Harding Charter Preparatory Middle School at Independence.
- Our district colors have changed to honor our founding schools. Our schools will adopt the same branding colors of green, blue, and white, with the district adding gold to represent a standard of excellence.
- School mascots will be updated to reflect the district and school colors. Our elementary school will select their own mascot, allowing this new school community to come together and create their own identity.

Academic Programming Updates

Our district engaged with Bellwether Educational Partners in the spring of 2023 to develop a strategic growth plan. Through this process, our district crystalized core elements of our educational program, enabling us to make plans for our schools to ensure a consistent and high-quality educational experience for students of any age.

Middle School Academic Program Updates

- Reintroduction of a Robust Character Education Program: This program recalls an original staple of our middle school at its founding – Character Education. It will provide students with a comprehensive, vertically aligned, and required program centered around character education, community values, leadership skills, and ethical decision-making.
- Integration of Student Choice Electives: We are excited to integrate student choice into our middle school by providing new elective programs such as Drama, Debate, Band, Vocal Music, Visual Arts, Spanish, Student Council, and Computer Science aligning with offerings at the high school.
- Addition of House System: Designed to build a quality school culture, a house system fosters a sense of belonging, encourages teamwork, promotes positive behavior, and provides opportunities for student engagement beyond the classroom creating a more well-rounded school experience.
- Expansion of Personalized Learning Program: Our middle school has experienced academic growth and success with its current personalized learning program. Building on this success, we are expanding our current personalized learning program to reach more students, enhancing our curriculum and supporting student success in their academic core subjects.

High School Academic Programming Updates

- Updates to the Senior Capstone Program: Our current Senior Capstone course will move to junior year, enabling students to more fully and successfully prepare for the transition into college. In its updated format, this course enables students to thoroughly prepare for college entrance exams, research colleges and scholarships, develop quality college resumes, and hone their personal narrative skills - a fundamental part of many college applications.
- Expansion of Personalized Learning Program: Our high school has experienced academic growth and success with its current personalized learning program. Building on this success, we are expanding our current personalized learning program to reach more students, enhancing our curriculum, and supporting student success in their academic core subjects.

These changes reflect our commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in education. We believe that by updating our school and district branding, and the academic programming at our schools, we can better meet the needs of our diverse student population and prepare them for success in the 21st century.

Change can be challenging, yet we recognize that our schools were founded to provide students with every possible opportunity for a successful future at a post-secondary educational institution. We have conscientiously and intentionally looked at the needs of our schools and students and are confident that these changes will create a consistent mission, identity, and purpose among our stakeholders. We believe that every student in our schools is capable of success, and we are grateful for the continued partnership with so many teachers, students, parents, and community members over the years. Thank you for entrusting us with the enormous responsibility of educating children in Oklahoma City.

Sincerely,

Steven Stefanick
Superintendent