



SUPERINTENDENT

Midland Independent School District
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October 9, 2023

Upon my return to Midland ISD in January 2023, my entry looked different than a typical new superintendent's might have. Many times it takes a year for a new superintendent to learn the strengths and needs of the district. Having worked in Midland ISD for 14 years before, I have been able to transition in and work with the team to identify areas for immediate improvement and establish plans to address low student achievement in a systematic manner. In the first six months, we actively sought input from the heart of our district—our students, staff, parents, and community members. Through an extensive feedback process, including over 20,000 survey responses, 37 school visits, multiple workshops with 80 diverse stakeholders and 12,000 focus group comments, we listened attentively to your valuable insights. It was clear that we had to begin with student achievement and academic growth due to the decline in the number of campuses meeting standard on state accountability. In 2018 – 89% of our schools met standard. When A-F ratings were first launched in 2019, 50% of our schools met standard (A, B, or C), and in 2022, 79% of our schools met standard. We are still awaiting ratings and grading criteria for 2023; however, we do know how our student performance was, and we have been committed to improving instruction since day one of school.

The input received last spring and data received throughout the summer has been instrumental in shaping our strategic plan, which now serves as our comprehensive roadmap that holds us accountable for drastically improving the academic success of our students, schools and district. It outlines the key themes, goals, and initiatives that are both measurable and actionable, guiding our path forward. This plan began in August 2023, only seven months into my superintendency. The district has had a strategic plan over the years; however, what sets this plan apart are meaningful goals that hold us accountable for this work of drastically improving the academic success of our students, schools and district. The metrics have been developed to hold all areas accountable. These metrics are not just tied to the state assessment, but are tied to improving student outcomes, meeting or exceeding state average by 2026 and to be in the top quartile of our comparison group by 2033.

At Midland Independent School District, we are committed to excellence for all. In line with this commitment and building on the work previously done, we are excited to introduce our new strategic plan, which places a strong emphasis on student achievement, professional growth, effective communication, and community engagement.

- In Student Experience, we foster safe and innovative learning spaces, empowering students for post-graduation opportunities. With a strong emphasis on academic excellence, we are focused on goals that will continue to propel our students forward.
- With Grow & Develop Staff, we invest in professional growth, attracting high-impact educators for improved student outcomes. Our people matter, and investing in growth opportunities to enhance their experience is a top priority.

- Engage & Act underscores our commitment to clear communication and community partnership, shaping the future of education in Midland. We believe in transparency and accountability, and this is one way we will hold ourselves to the highest standards.

The purpose of this plan is clear: to improve educational outcomes and meet the needs of our students, staff, and community. It provides a definitive direction for our district, with goals that are concise, actionable, relevant, and attainable. Our new strategic plan empowers us to make impactful decisions, allocate resources effectively, and create an environment where every student can thrive. Additionally, we have formed a Strategic Plan Oversight Committee that will hear monthly reports from project owners as we implement the plan to facilitate the work, maintain a high sense of urgency around improvement, and provide support in doing the work that will move the district forward. Administration will review the metrics on an annual basis and evaluate the need to make adjustments and set the bar higher in areas where we grow more than the annual goal expected. The administration will present to the Board on progress implementing the plan on a quarterly basis.

Our strategic plan is a dynamic document that will change and evolve as we define strategies and actions that support our commitment to excellence for all MISD students. All students will graduate from MISD with more than a high school diploma. They will graduate with choices and opportunities. Midland ISD students will graduate prepared and ready for college or career.

We are excited to tackle this journey together, driven by the inputs and aspirations of our entire school community. Together, we will continue to shape the future of Midland ISD and unlock even greater possibilities for our students. We are moving with a sense of urgency. The senior leadership team is here to stay and is committed to the students and staff of Midland ISD. We are MISD Proud, and we appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Howard".

Stephanie D. Howard, Ed.D.
Superintendent