



Houston County Schools Strategic Plan and Continuous Improvement Plan 2022–2027

Houston County Schools · Office of the Superintendent · Updated for the 2026–2027 School Year

2022 - 2027

Sharing the Vision, Shaping the Future



**Growth and
Achievement**



**School Climate
and Culture**



**Stakeholder
Engagement**



**Professional
Improvement**

PRIORITY AREAS FOR SUCCESS AND IMPROVEMENT

2026–2027: Row the Boat, Drown the Noise

Introduction

Houston County Schools is proud to share our Strategic Plan and Continuous Improvement Plan for 2022–2027. This plan guides the decisions we make every day on behalf of the students and families we serve.

Over the past few years, our schools have made real progress. Our district report card score climbed from 87 in 2022 to a 92 (A) in 2024–2025, and in 2025–2026 we ranked first in math and second in ELA among Alabama's 67 county school systems. We are proud of these results, and we know there is still work to do.

Our plan is built around four priority areas: Growth and Achievement, School Climate and Culture, Stakeholder Engagement, and Professional Improvement. For each one, you will find our objective, the initiatives we are pursuing, the strategies our schools use, and how we measure progress. Our technology plan and our targeted initiatives for 2025–2027 support all four areas.

Leadership and Governance

Our district is led by Superintendent Brandy White, supported by a dedicated team of directors and coordinators and guided by our seven-member Board of Education.

District Leadership Team

Name	Role
Brandy White	Superintendent
Dusty McKinley	Director, Federal Programs
Cas Haddock	Director, Student Services
Judy Thomas	Director, Human Resources
Jason Blissett	Director, Elementary Curriculum
Josh Robertson	Director, Secondary Curriculum
Dr. Misty Freeman	Director, Secondary Special Education
Jillian Chapman	Director, Elementary Special Education
Brandi Paramore	Director, Assessment and Accountability
Heather Turvin	Director, Career and Technical Education
Alex Hagan	Director, Technology
Kerry Bedsole	Chief Financial Officer
Kristin Lemanski	Behavior Analyst
Jackie Kinney	Coordinator, District Reading Specialist
Anna Tew	Coordinator, PowerSchool
Georgia Allen	Coordinator, Mental Health

Board of Education

District	Board Member	Office
1	David Hollinger	
2	Scott Long	
3	Tara Singley	
4	Marty Collins	Vice-President
5	Donnie Gillian	
6	Mark Kelley	
7	Vince Wade	President

Schools Served

Houston County Schools serves students in 15 schools across the communities listed below.

Community	Schools
Ashford	Ashford Elementary School · Ashford Middle School · Ashford High School
Cottonwood	Cottonwood Elementary School · Cottonwood High School
Rehobeth	Rehobeth Primary School · Rehobeth Elementary School · Rehobeth Middle School · Rehobeth High School
Wicksburg	Wicksburg Elementary School · Wicksburg High School
Webb and Columbia	Webb Elementary School · Houston County High School
Countywide	Houston County Career Academy · Houston County Virtual Academy

Guiding Statements and Core Beliefs

Vision

Sharing the Vision, Shaping the Future.

Mission

We commit to a partnership with stakeholders to provide a safe, caring learning environment that encourages each student to achieve his or her full potential in all educational settings.

Yearly Mottos

School Year	Motto
2026–2027	Row the Boat, Drown the Noise
2025–2026	Positive Mindset, No Excuses

Core Beliefs

- Students are our most valuable resource, each having unique abilities and talents.
- Stakeholders should work together to meet the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical needs of students.
- Students should be challenged with high expectations and rewarded for their effort and success.
- Cultivating strong relationships leads to significant success.

Student Performance

We earned a 92 (A) on the 2024–2025 state report card, with seven of our 14 graded schools earning an A. Overall achievement across the district has grown from 47.94 in 2022 to 58.45 in 2025. Rehobeth High and Houston County Virtual Academy, both graded C, remain a focus for improvement.

2024–2025 State Report Card

District Summary

Measure	2024–2025 Result
District score and grade	92 (A)
Change from 2023–2024	▲ 3 points
Schools earning an A / B / C	7 / 5 / 2
Graduation rate	93.1%
College and career readiness	95.7%
Chronic absence	5.3%

Elementary Schools

School	Score	Grade	Change	Achievement	Growth	ELA	Math	Chronic Absence
Rehobeth Primary	98	A	▲ 1	95.3	100.0	100.0	88.5	3.8%
Wicksburg Elementary	98	A	▲ 1	94.5	100.0	100.0	86.2	1.4%
Rehobeth Elementary	97	A	▲ 4	93.6	100.0	98.3	88.9	3.6%
Webb Elementary	97	A	▲ 2	93.7	100.0	78.9	69.7	1.3%
Ashford Elementary	95	A	▲ 3	87.6	100.0	94.6	80.7	1.6%
Cottonwood Elementary	93	A	▲ 1	84.0	100.0	85.7	82.3	5.0%

Middle Schools

School	Score	Grade	Change	Achievement	Growth	ELA	Math	Chronic Absence
Ashford Middle	88	B	▲ 2	75.2	100.0	83.7	66.7	11.2%
Rehobeth Middle	86	B	▼ 1	74.0	95.6	86.2	61.7	7.6%

High Schools

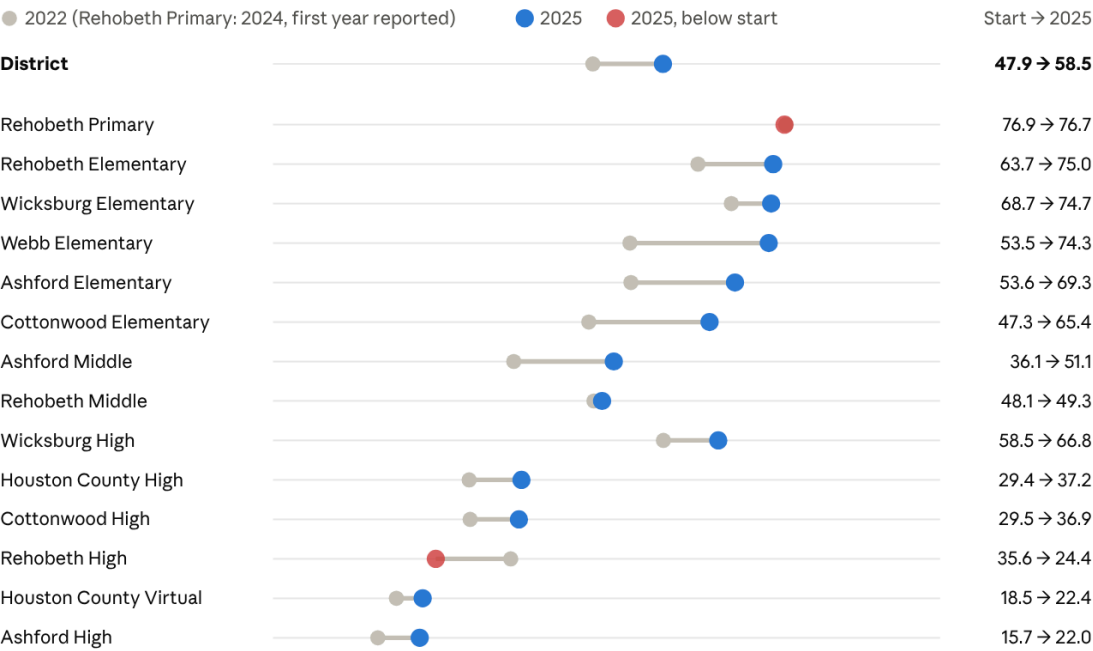
School	Score	Grade	Change	Achievement	Growth	ELA	Math	Grad Rate	CCR	Chronic Absence
Wicksburg High	97	A	▲ 2	87.4	100.0	91.7	83.2	98.5%	100.0%	4.4%
Houston County High	86	B	▼ 2	59.6	92.9	66.4	52.8	91.7%	94.4%	10.2%
Cottonwood High	86	B	▼ 3	59.4	84.4	67.5	51.4	100.0%	100.0%	9.7%
Ashford High	80	B	▼ 1	41.6	84.9	44.8	38.5	94.6%	95.7%	17.4%
Rehobeth High	78	C	▼ 4	44.5	77.4	47.2	41.9	89.8%	93.8%	5.0%
Houston County Virtual	70	C	▼ 1	35.6	55.9	44.5	26.8	89.0%	93.2%	0.9%

How to read these tables: Schools are listed from highest to lowest score. Achievement, Growth, ELA, and Math are report card indicator scores. ▲ and ▼ show the change in each school's overall score from 2023–2024. CCR is College and Career Readiness. For chronic absence, a lower number is better. English Learner progress was reported for the district (51.4) and Rehobeth Elementary (54.8).

Achievement Trends, 2022–2025

Overall achievement rose at most schools, 2022 to 2025

District rose from 47.94 to 58.45; 12 of 14 schools improved (unweighted achievement score)



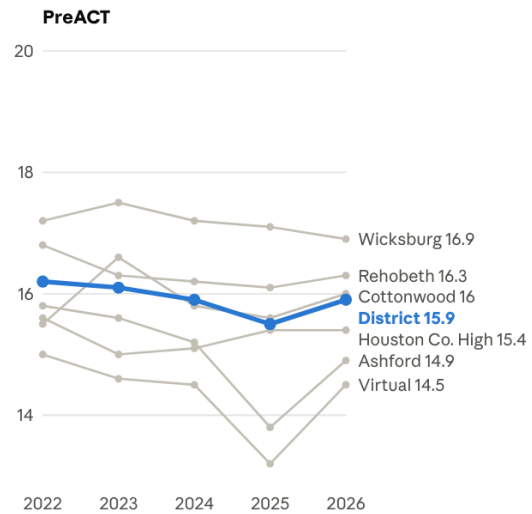
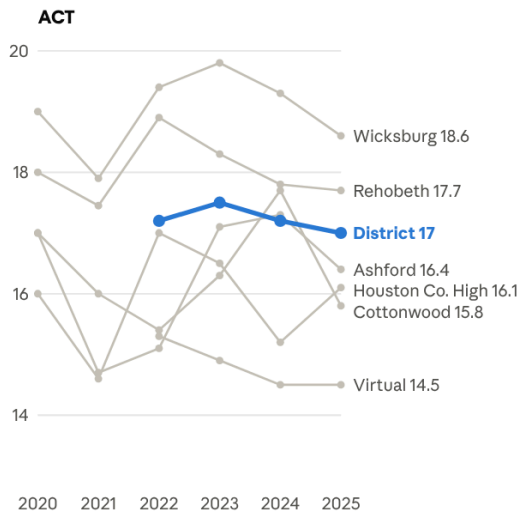
Source: Houston County Schools achievement data, 2022–2025

Elementary schools posted the largest gains; Webb Elementary rose nearly 21 points. Rehobeth High is the one school whose achievement fell meaningfully, from 35.6 to 24.4.

ACT and PreACT

District ACT average has held near 17 since 2022

Average composite score by high school; district average in blue



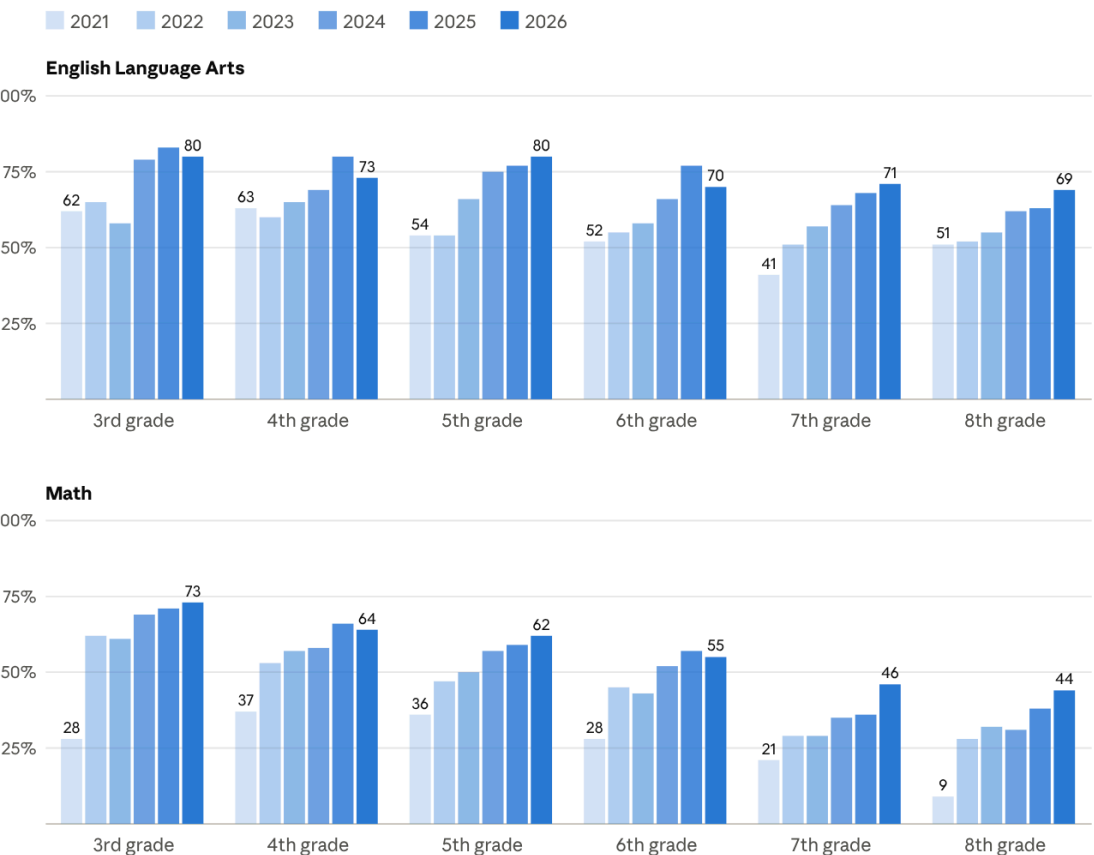
Source: Houston County Schools ACT and PreACT data

Wicksburg High and Rehobeth High consistently post the highest averages. The district PreACT average dipped to 15.5 in 2025 and recovered to 15.9 in 2026, which the AchieveACT initiative targets.

Grade-Level Proficiency, Grades 3–8

Proficiency rose in every grade, 3–8, from 2021 to 2026

Percent of students scoring proficient (raw data); first and latest years labeled



Source: Houston County Schools state assessment results, 2021–2026

Math shows the largest gains, with 8th grade rising from 9% to 44% proficient. Seventh- and eighth-grade math remain the lowest-performing grades, which is the focus of the Achieve3 middle school initiative.

Priority Areas for Success and Improvement

Everything we do as a district ties back to these four priority areas. Each one below includes our objective, our district initiatives, the strategies and activities happening in our schools, and the measures we use to track our progress.

Priority Areas at a Glance

Priority Area	Our Objective
1. Growth and Achievement	Provide a variety of learning opportunities and resources that promote student growth and achievement throughout the school year
2. School Climate and Culture	Provide learning opportunities in a safe, nurturing environment
3. Stakeholder Engagement	Increase engagement and communication among all stakeholders
4. Professional Improvement	Facilitate professional growth among faculty and staff so they can provide the best education for our students

Priority Area 1: Growth and Achievement

Objective: Provide a variety of learning opportunities and resources that promote student growth and achievement throughout the school year.

District initiatives

- Utilize high-quality core and supplemental curriculum
- Provide access to technology resources
- Expand opportunities for college and career preparation for secondary students
- Provide support to struggling students based on data
- Provide support to the growing English Learner (EL) population
- Utilize multiple data sources to drive instruction
- Increase student attendance
- Expand formative benchmarks through 11th grade

Strategies and activities

Instruction and curriculum

- Provide standards-based instruction with a variety of engaging, high-quality resources and curriculum
- Follow the Alabama Literacy and Numeracy guidelines
- Implement the district writing plan
- Incorporate ACT preparation into core classes
- Utilize instructional coaches

Data and intervention

- Implement a district formative assessment
- Hold district-led quarterly data meetings
- Identify struggling students through multiple data sources
- Utilize a multi-tiered system of supports
- Provide intervention through programs such as i-Ready, Math 180, MobyMax, Imagine Learning, and Gobblins

- Provide tutors for struggling students

Technology

- Maintain the one-to-one Chromebook initiative
- Install interactive panels in classrooms
- Integrate curriculum into the Schoology learning management system
- Provide side-by-side classroom technology and program support
- Increase bandwidth for improved internet access

College, career, and attendance

- Increase AP, dual enrollment, military, and CTE opportunities
- Monitor chronic absenteeism and send attendance letters

Key measures: curriculum usage; student data and test scores; attendance; EL scores; multiple data sources; technology inventory and usage; course enrollment; graduates enrolled, enlisted, or employed; data meeting records.

Priority Area 2: School Climate and Culture

Objective: Provide learning opportunities in a safe, nurturing environment.

District initiatives

- Improve security and safety measures on each campus
- Address the educational, physical, social, and emotional needs of students and staff

Strategies and activities

Campus and transportation safety

- Provide School Resource Officers
- Install cameras throughout campuses
- Provide bus GPS trackers and bus cameras
- Use the Centegix crisis alert system
- Create an emergency plan and provide safety training
- Monitor student incident reports

Health and wellbeing

- Provide school nurses, medical equipment, and training
- Employ school counselors and a Mental Health Coordinator
- Partner with community mental health foundations
- Provide transitional support between grades, campuses, and post-secondary opportunities

Technology safety

- Implement a Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- Monitor Chromebooks in classrooms through GoGuardian
- Implement technology safety protocols

Key measures: safety drill documentation; counselor lessons and referrals; surveys; service clubs; peer helpers; transition activities; reduced Student Incident Reports (SIR); attendance and participation in supplemental support programs.

Priority Area 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Objective: Increase engagement and communication among all stakeholders.

District initiatives

- Provide informative district- and school-level meetings
- Utilize available media platforms alongside traditional methods to promote communication

Strategies and activities

Meetings and events

- Hold public board meetings spotlighting student success
- Post board meeting agendas on the website
- Hold quarterly school meetings at each campus
- Host open house at all schools
- Partner with community members for special events

Communication channels

- Use ParentSquare for district and school communication
- Use social media and local media to highlight events and accomplishments
- Use conferences, phone calls, emails, weekly folders, and newsletters
- Keep websites up to date with current information

Key measures: meeting notices and agendas; attendance logs; communication logs; surveys; media posts; PowerSchool and Schoology family use; community support; board minutes.

Priority Area 4: Professional Improvement

Objective: Facilitate professional growth among faculty and staff so they can provide the best education for the students of Houston County.

District initiatives

- Support employees with professional development opportunities
- Implement a mentor program for new teachers
- Use collaborative planning, PLCs, and coaching cycles to support instruction
- Use eleot and the Alabama Teacher Observation Tool (ATOT) for classroom observation and reflection
- Provide coaching for middle school math and ELA
- Place math coaches at three elementary schools

Strategies and activities

Training and development

- Provide district-level and school-level trainings
- Complete mandatory trainings
- Use needs assessment results to provide targeted PD
- Participate in TEAMS and the Alabama Principal Leadership System

Recruitment, mentoring, and retention

- Recruit high-quality educators and support staff
- Provide every new teacher with a mentor
- Keep staff retention high

Partnerships

- Partner with the Office of School Improvement, ARI, AMSTI, and OMI
- Partner with local universities

Key measures: surveys; intent-to-retain data; mentor and mentee documentation; PD documentation; ATOT and elect results; TEAMS contracts; instructional rounds; coaching cycles.

District Technology Plan

[Educational Technology Planning Document](#)

Our technology plan includes six goals. The first three protect our students' and staff's data, and the last three strengthen communication and classroom instruction.

Goals at a Glance

Goal	Area	Target Date
1. Cybersecurity Awareness and Training	Security and data protection	All staff trained by October 31, 2025
2. Cyber Incident Response Plan Improvements	Security and data protection	Updated plan published by May 2026
3. Data Governance Procedure Improvements	Security and data protection	Updated plan approved by May 2026
4. Enhance Communication Through ParentSquare	Communication and instruction	Ongoing
5. Seamless Integration of Educational Platforms	Communication and instruction	Ongoing
6. Empower Educators with Technology Training and Support	Communication and instruction	Ongoing

Security and Data Protection

Goal 1: Cybersecurity Awareness and Training

The district will continue district-wide cybersecurity awareness and phishing-prevention training through the Cybernut platform. Training emphasizes phishing identification, password management, and incident reporting, reinforced through interactive modules, short assessments, and monthly update campaigns.

Action steps

1. Require all district employees to complete Cybernut cybersecurity awareness training by October 31, 2025.
2. Implement quarterly refresher modules on current threat trends such as phishing, ransomware, and data handling.
3. Review Cybernut analytics quarterly to identify departments or schools needing additional support.
4. Continue integrating phishing simulation results into staff development sessions.

Measures of success: 100% staff completion of annual training; year-over-year reduction in simulated phishing click rates; documented improvement in reporting of suspicious activity.

Goal 2: Cyber Incident Response Plan Improvements

The district's Incident Response Plan (IRP) defines response roles, communication procedures, and recovery priorities. This year's updates focus on coordination among departments, expanded tabletop exercises, and refined stakeholder communication procedures (Section 1.5).

Action steps

1. Conduct two full incident response drills per school year (fall and spring) involving district IT, school administrators, and communications staff.
2. Update the contact table and vendor response procedures (Section 1.3) to reflect current personnel and third-party tools.
3. Expand internal and external stakeholder communication templates (Sections 1.5 and 2.5).
4. Integrate lessons learned from post-incident reviews (Section 4.1) into annual plan revisions.

Measures of success: two documented IRP exercises with after-action reports per school year; updated IRP published on the internal technology drive by May 2026; reduced response and recovery times during simulated incidents.

Goal 3: Data Governance Procedure Improvements

The district's Data Governance Plan covers all core systems: Google Admin, PowerSchool SIS, Schoology LMS, ClassLink (OneRoster), and Nextgen (Harris Solutions). This year's focus is refining procedures for access control, vendor data management, and data integrity, in line with FERPA, COPPA, and state data privacy requirements.

Action steps

1. Assign and document data stewards for each major platform.
2. Conduct quarterly user access audits for Google Admin, PowerSchool, and Nextgen.

3. Update vendor data-sharing procedures to include annual FERPA/COPPA compliance verification.
4. Revise data retention and disposal schedules to match current state guidance.
5. Add automated account deprovisioning through ClassLink and Google Admin.

Measures of success: updated Data Governance Plan completed and approved by May 2026; two documented access and vendor compliance reviews per school year; 100% adherence to district data retention and deprovisioning policies.

Communication and Instruction

Goal 4: Enhance Communication Through ParentSquare

The district is using ParentSquare to strengthen communication among parents, students, teachers, and administrators. A single, user-friendly platform supports a more connected and informed school community.

Goal 5: Seamless Integration of Educational Platforms

The district is integrating platforms including Schoology, PowerSchool, MobyMax, Renaissance, i-Ready, Savvas, and IXL into classrooms. Chromebooks and a robust network give students and educators smooth access to these resources.

Goal 6: Empower Educators with Technology Training and Support

The district will work with teachers and other stakeholders to integrate Chromebooks and educational platforms into daily instruction. Ongoing training and support will equip staff to use these tools fully, improving student engagement and outcomes.

Targeted Initiatives for 2025–2027

Three targeted initiatives are being introduced and implemented across the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 school years.

Initiative	Focus	Grade Band
Achieve3	Move middle school students to proficiency	Middle school
AchieveACT	Improve secondary ACT scores	High school
District Writing Plan	Strengthen writing at every school, with middle and high school work centered in the history classroom	All grades (grade-level plans created)

The complete Achieve3 and AchieveACT plans are available as separate documents.

Accomplishments and Looking Ahead

Houston County Schools ranked first in math among Alabama's 67 county school systems in both 2024–2025 and 2025–2026, and rose from fourth to second in ELA.

School Year	Math Rank (of 67 county systems)	ELA Rank (of 67 county systems)
2025–2026	#1	#2
2024–2025	#1	#4

With rising achievement, a clear set of priorities, and targeted initiatives underway, the future is bright for Houston County Schools.