

**School Redesign Request for Information**  
**Submitted to the**  
**Louisiana Department of Education**

**1. PARTNER BACKGROUND**

- a. **Organization Name:** Harmony Public Schools
- b. **Summary of Harmony Public Schools Mission**

***Mission:** Prepare each student for higher education by providing a safe, caring, and collaborative atmosphere featuring a quality, student-centered educational program with a strong emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).*

Harmony Public Schools (HPS) is a high-performing, nonprofit charter management organization which has consistently demonstrated that all students, regardless of race or income level, can achieve outstanding academic results with a rigorous, high-quality program and the right social and emotional supports in place. Beginning with the launch of its first STEM-themed school in Houston in 2000, with 200 students, HPS have transformed the way of Texas students, especially traditionally underserved

populations, engage with math and science. Founding members of HPS believe that excelling in math and science prepares youth to succeed in college, workplace, and the 21st century. Today, HPS operate 48 K-12 schools and about 3,700 employees across Texas, serving a diverse student population of over 32,000. 52% of students are Hispanic/Latino, 20% are African American, and 62% receive free or reduced-price meals. HPS also serve a large English Language Learner (ELL) population of 24.5%, and Special Education (SPED) population of 6.6%.

HPS’s core values-high expectation, dedicated staff working together, character matter and STEM for all- are obvious classroom and school culture. Student outcomes at HPS are driven by a student-centered education model that recognizes each child as an individual with unique interests, needs, and abilities. A core element of HPS’s approach to personalized learning is the “Custom Day” program which addresses the need for more differentiation to accelerate the learning of all students in Math and English Language Arts. As part of this program, and depending on each student’s needs, two hours a day are spent on individualized learning through HPS Intervention Model, enrichment, or elective courses. These classes utilize a variety of instructional approaches to support competency-based progress through an individualized learning plan at a pace specific to each student’s needs and abilities.

“HPS Priority Schools” program identifies highest-risk schools generally based on state test results (i.e. STAAR in Texas) and NWEF MAP test and provides more intensive supports and services, such as additional visits from coaches and additional interventionists to support teachers in differentiating instruction, as well as incentives through a teacher bonus program. This program reduces achievement gaps by eliminating an important cause: the insufficient mastery of basic knowledge and skills required for further academic achievement. Dedicated teachers and staff ensure ‘whatever it takes’ to meet the needs of each student, working together with students and parents to create a community of success. HPS’s instructional approaches has been recognized and supported by the U.S. Department of Education and HPS awarded Race to the Top District (RTT-D) grant in 2013 (\$30M) and Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant in 2016 (\$26M).

**2. STUDENT AND SCHOOL OUTCOMES**

We would like to introduce our own “HPS Intervention Model” as a track record for all disadvantaged students. HPS Intervention Model is an ongoing assessment and tracking system for data-driven decisions, and dynamic small-group interventions. With this intervention model, we provide the time and structure within the school day for students to receive individualized support to master skills at their own pace. In addition to their main coursework, students receive an additional five hours per week of ELA and Math lab classes in which

technology-based learning programs are utilized to provide individualized learning experiences. Data clean-up stations in ELA and Math lab classrooms are visited by dynamic small groups, formed according to student assessment data to provide more focused instruction and support. Intense intervention is provided to students needing further guidance through pull-outs and extended intervention hours. Ongoing assessments inform educational decisions at all levels of instruction and intervention. The main components of HPS Intervention model are:

1. **Personalized Learning for All Students via Adaptive Learning Programs:** HPS’s Chromebook initiative and other learning programs provide opportunities for all students to learn at their own pace. Struggling students have a chance to fill their gaps from earlier grade levels. High achieving students are able to move forward and master concepts from upper grade levels.
2. **Intervention for All Students with Real-Time Assessment Data (Clean-Up Stations):** In each “plus 5” lab class, there is a clean-up table where teachers call small groups based on assessment data to provide feedback, reteach learning objectives, and focus on related state standards.
3. **Targeted Intervention for Students Needing Additional Support (Pull-outs):** Interventionists provide targeted intervention to students through pull-outs (in some cases, push-ins are preferred). During ELA and math labs, small student groups may be pulled-out of class by interventionists, for more targeted intervention. Small groups are formed based on assessment data.
4. **Extended Intervention Hours through after School Tutorials and Saturday School for Students Needing Additional Support:** Tutorial groups are formed based on assessment data, feedback from teachers and interventionists to provide extended hours of intervention to the students needing further support.

We would like to show recent years STAAR comparison data of the some HPS Priority Schools and one supported school, School of Science and Technology-Alamo, out of HPS. They implemented HPS Intervention Model that result in improved student outcomes as reflected by a “Met Standard” rating in the state’s current academic accountability rating system.

Campus	Index 1 (2016) State Target=60	Index 1 (2015) State Target=60	Index 1 (2014) State Target=55	Index 1 (2013) State Target=50	Change 2016-15
Harmony School of Innovation - Austin	67	56	New	New	11
Harmony Science Academy - Lubbock	73	64	61	59	9
Harmony Science Academy - Odessa	69	63	60	59	6
Harmony Science Academy - Houston	69	69	66	70	0
Harmony School of Endeavor - Houston	67	60	66	69	7
Harmony School of Innovation - Laredo	65	63	New	New	2
School of Science and Technology - Alamo	82	80	80	78	2
State	75	77	77	77	-2

### 3. EDUCATIONAL MODEL

**a. How will you differentiate your services to meet the unique needs of schools and districts in Louisiana?**

HPS operate seven districts and total of 48 campuses, serving a diverse student population of over 32,000 all around Texas. Almost each and every district/campus needs very unique and various needs in terms of education services also we should point out that some of the campuses have similar characteristics with low-performing schools of Louisiana. We are extremely confident that we can differentiate our services to meet the needs of schools/districts in Louisiana with our 16 years of experience using our educational models and services.

**b. What are the attributes of your ideal partner school or districts?**

HPS’s students are diverse and represent traditionally underserved populations - 52 % of its students are Hispanic, 20 % are African American and 62 % receive free-reduced lunch. HPS have made significant progress in standardizing and codifying its academic approach across the schools. These standards, high quality

materials and approaches give campus principals and teachers the tools they need to implement the “Harmony School Model” in a consistent manner and achieve strong academic results for all students. Over the last five years, HPS have focused on: (a) development of standard curriculum and assessment tools; (b) personalizing learning; (c) improving data system and ability of HPS ‘s central office and district’s offices to effectively target school supports. HPS’s strategic plan for the following years will be development of these focus areas by:

1. Clarifying, codifying, and fully implementation of unified approach to curriculum, assessment, and instruction to meet the needs of their diverse students while also preserving important classroom instructional flexibility.
2. Implementing, developing and refining of the Project Based Learning (PBL), TIF, Custom Day, Priority Schools programs (Priority programs are for highest-risk schools).
3. Developing HPS’s Dashboard to reach a powerful source of ‘real time’ academic data to guide instructional decision-making and intervention.
4. Diagnosing school needs and then customize support based on those needs.

***c. Describe your experience working with other third party providers to support coherent school and district improvement.***

HPS began investing in development efforts over the past several years, and has enjoyed a strong record of success with large grants. In addition to the accomplishments in development, HPS strive to build relationships with a diverse group of community stakeholders that benefit its students and build public support. HPS 4-8 grades students receive Chromebook to power blended Learning. Math students use ALEKS adaptive software and Study Island for ELA skills practice. Adaptive assessment from NWEA are used to develop dynamic groups based on student learning needs and common benchmark assessments across the network offer another set of data points to inform instruction. HPS work closely with many state, federal, non-profit and private institute and universities to promote education and to redesign schools with Learner-Centered STEM. “Harmony School Model” and its important elements can be school redesign model for many schools and districts which wants a shift to Learner-Centered STEM model in their school and districts. HPS’s PBL model, created with eight essential elements from the Buck Institute for Education Gold Standard PBL. HPS and Buck Institute worked collaboratively in several STEM conferences to share a practice-based model of STEM teaching and HPS STEM Student on the Stage (SOS) model. HPS provide back office support services (including but not limited to STEM curriculum, Database, personnel training, etc.) to nearly 15 charter schools in the following states; Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Washington, DC some of which have similar demographics with many Louisiana charter schools.

***d. What support from the state, district or school partners would enhance your success in Louisiana?***

We believe that each and every student can reach their potential with the help of their parents, teachers and administrators. The effectiveness of the HPS approach rests on the quality of teachers and principals at its schools. Louisiana’s Legislature enacted laws that required LEA’s to establish compensation systems that reward teachers for performance in the classroom and for meeting local needs, allowing LEAs to competitively recruit, reward, and retain more effective teachers, and providing a link between rigorous standards, accountability for student achievement, and professional growth. As part of Louisiana’s reform plan, we believe that the support from state agencies, districts and schools in terms of rewarding high performing teachers will be the greatest single factor in influencing student achievement.