



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HATTIE MAE WHITE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER
4400 WEST 18th STREET • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77092-8501

TERRY B. GRIER, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

S. Dallas Dance, Ph.D.
Chief School Officer for Middle Schools
Tel: 713-556-7102 • Fax: 713-556-7498

April 27, 2012

Dear Ryan MS Families:

As you know, over the past several years we have had numerous discussions with parents, students, elected officials, and community leaders about the future of Ryan MS. We have been concerned about the declining enrollment and the decrease in the number of courses and resources available to students. Last evening, we held a community meeting and shared the most current data, which shows a 68 percent decrease in enrollment over the past decade. In 2002, there were 830 students attending Ryan MS. Today, there are only 265 students. We have listened to all segments of the community and agree that "something must be done" to ensure that the students at Ryan MS have access to the highest quality education.

In HISD, a school's budget is based on the number of students enrolled. Because of its declining enrollment, Ryan MS has an operating budget of just over one million dollars, which is a decrease of 42 percent over the last five years. HISD has given Ryan MS an average of \$438,000 annually over the past five years in addition to the school's regular budget allocation at a time when the district is facing unprecedented budget cuts. However, the current situation is not financially feasible and is not providing Ryan MS students with the best education.

With declining enrollment and funding, the school has not had the ability to hire counselors, social workers, or even a full-time nurse. The school has not been able to offer electives, like world languages, music, or speech, and students have not had access to a variety of extracurricular activities that other HISD middle schools offer.

We have discussed a number of options, including those recommended by many stakeholders. After careful consideration, I am making a recommendation to the Superintendent that the Board of Education take action on May 10, 2012 to change the attendance boundaries of Ryan MS and zone current students into other HISD middle schools. These schools have sufficient space, adequate teachers, counselors, and support staffs, and a variety of elective and extracurricular options. Ryan MS students will now have access to an array of opportunities they have not had a chance to experience. This decision was made with one thing in mind: What is best for the students at Ryan MS, and I wholeheartedly agree with one community member who said, "It's about time."

We will hold a parent meeting on May 8, 2012 at Ryan MS to share the proposed boundary options. Over the next couple of months, we will continue to work with the school community to determine the most appropriate use of the building so that we can ensure the legacy of James D. Ryan is preserved for generations to come.

Thank you for your commitment to the students of Ryan MS.

Sincerely,



S. Dallas Dance, Ph.D.



**RYAN MIDDLE SCHOOL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
April 27, 2012**



1. Why is the district considering consolidating Ryan Middle School with other HISD middle schools?

In HISD, a school's budget is based on the number of students enrolled. In 2002, there were 830 students attending Ryan Middle School. Today, there are only 265 students, which is a 68 percent decrease. With declining enrollment and funding, the school has not had the ability to hire counselors, social workers, or even a full-time nurse. Also, the school has not been able to offer the kinds of electives, like world languages, music, or speech that other HISD middle schools offer and that should be available in a high quality education.

2. Why can't the district give the school more money?

HISD has given Ryan Middle School an average of \$438,000 annually over the past five years in addition to the school's regular budget allocation. This year, HISD is facing a \$53.2 million budget deficit so it is not possible for the district to continue to supplement the school's budget to a level that will provide students with the type of education they deserve.

3. What will happen to the current Ryan Middle School students?

We are in the process of adjusting the attendance boundaries so that the students currently attending Ryan Middle School will be zoned to other HISD middle school. We will hold a community meeting on May 8, 2012 at Ryan MS to share the proposed boundary options and obtain public input and feedback prior to the Board of Education vote on May 10, 2012.

4. Where will my child go to school next year?

All rising 6-8 grade families will receive a letter in the mail no later than May 25, 2012 giving them the official notification regarding where they will attend middle school. However, we will hold a community meeting on May 8, 2012 at Ryan MS to share the proposed boundary options and obtain public input and feedback prior to the Board of Education vote on May 10, 2012.

5. Will my child be able to attend a school other than where he/she is zoned?

HISD prides itself on being a district of choice. Therefore, if space is available, parents can enroll their student in any HISD school. The Office of School Choice is planning a school choice fair on Tuesday, May 15, 2012 from 5:30pm – 7:00pm specifically for Ryan Middle School families so they will understand all of their options. The school choice fair will be held at Ryan Middle School.

6. Will transportation be provided?

HISD policy states that students who are attending their zoned school of attendance and who reside two or more miles from their zoned school will receive transportation services. In addition, students who participate in the district's magnet program are eligible to receive transportation services.

7. Will my child still be zoned to Jack Yates for high school?

We are committed to maintaining Jack Yates High School's current attendance zone. While we are in the process of adjusting the attendance boundaries for Ryan Middle School, we anticipate that most, if not all of the students will continue to be zoned to Jack Yates High School.

8. If my child is in a specialized program (Gifted/Talented, Special Education), will he/she still be in that program at his/her new school?

All HISD schools provide specialized programs for all of its students. Therefore, if your child is currently receiving Gifted and Talented, Special Education, or English Language Learning services, those services will be continued at your child's new school.

9. What will happen to the Ryan Middle School staff?

All members of the Ryan Middle School staff who are under contract and who are returning to HISD for the 2012-2013 school year will have jobs at other HISD schools.

10. What will happen to the Ryan MS building?

Over the next couple of months we will be working closely with the Ryan MS community to determine the most appropriate use of the building. A task force will be created consisting of community and district representatives and they will make a recommendation for the Superintendent to present to the Board of Education. Any decisions concerning the school will take effect for the 2013-2014 school year. We want to ensure that the legacy of James D. Ryan is preserved for generations to come.

11. Will my child still receive tutoring or have to attend school one additional hour as required by the Apollo program?

Your child may continue to receive tutoring, if needed; depending on the school he or she attends. Several HISD schools offer tutoring during the school day for students who may need additional assistance in reading and/or math. An extended school day is only offered at the other Apollo middle schools (Attucks, Dowling, Fondren, and Key).