

DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

HAYS CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Hays CISD Advances Employee Housing Program to Help Attract and Retain Staff

Hays Consolidated Independent School District (Hays CISD) has entered into a master lease agreement with 501(c)(3) nonprofit [Public-Private Development Corporation](#) (PPDC), in partnership with [Upward Communities](#), allowing the district to offer teachers and staff access to a brand-new neighborhood designed specifically for Hays CISD employees. As Hays CISD continues to grow, access to attainable housing for teachers and staff is an important ingredient in the district's mission, helping support workforce stability, recruitment, and retention for years to come. The community will consist primarily of single-family rental homes offered at special, below-market rental rates for eligible district employees.

With the lease now signed, unanimous Board approval secured, support from district leadership, and more than 600 Hays staff households on the interest list, Hays CISD and the development team are moving forward together to unveil the conceptual designs, planned amenities, and neighborhood vision at www.hayscisd.net/hayshomes

"It's more important than ever for school districts to come up with creative ways to attract and retain the most talented teachers and staff in Texas," said Superintendent Dr. Eric Wright. "Just as schools, roads, and utilities are essential infrastructure for our growing community, attainable housing for educators and staff who serve the community are needed to accompany that growth. This neighborhood is specifically designed with our school district employees in mind, and it will serve as a critical tool in our district's ability – for decades to come – to appeal to prospective teachers, bus drivers, custodians, counselors – all of the more than 3,500 people who contribute to the success of our students each and every day."

The new 362-home community will be located on more than 100 acres in the City of Umland and is designed to provide Hays CISD employees with high-quality rental housing at rates well below the broader market. Projected rents are expected to start as low as \$795 per month for a one-bedroom home, with homes up to four bedrooms expected to remain below \$2,000 per month. These prices, coming in well below standard Central Texas rental-market rates, will help the district combat one of the area's most significant challenges in attracting top-tier employees – the cost of living.

"Research consistently shows that, among school-based factors, teacher quality is one of the most important drivers of student achievement. By expanding access to high-quality, attainable housing, we

are investing directly in the people who shape our classrooms, strengthen our schools, and support the long-term growth of our district,” said Chief Human Resources Officer Christina Courson. “This program makes a job with Hays CISD even more valuable by helping eligible employees reduce one of their largest monthly expenses. Rental savings of several hundred dollars a month, and in some cases more than \$1,000 a month, can make a meaningful difference for teachers and staff deciding where to build their careers.”

This public-private partnership provides Hays CISD with two primary benefits. First, it gives the district a long-term recruitment and retention tool by allowing eligible employees to access newly constructed rental housing at below-market rates without requiring any upfront capital contribution from the district or its taxpayers for construction and development. This is especially important as Hays CISD continues to experience significant growth east of I-35, where the need for schools, staff, and essential community infrastructure continues to increase. Second, the community will be built on land purchased from the district. That land sale, which was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees, is expected to close in June 2026 and generate approximately \$5 million for the district’s fund balance, supporting one of the district’s key budget priorities. The district has previously identified restoring its fund balance during the next several years as an important budget priority, with the goal of returning to pre-pandemic and pre-inflation levels relative to the district’s total operating budget (www.hayscisd.net/budgetcuts2026). In addition to generating proceeds from the land sale, the 55-year housing agreement is designed to provide Hays CISD with a long-term recruitment and retention advantage by giving employees access to high-quality, below-market rental housing through changing economic conditions and future school finance cycles.

“This is exciting,” said Dr. Wright. “The interest in the project among our current employees is off the charts. We already have more than 600 employee households who have joined our interest list. In Hays CISD, when we are faced with challenges like teacher and school staff shortages, as well as funding concerns; we don’t shy away. Instead, that’s when we get to work to create solutions for our parents, students, and the entire school district family. This program is an example of what we can do when we all work together and leverage the partnerships that are available to us.”

The yet unnamed Hays CISD master planned community, which is expected to have move-in ready homes for the 2027 – 2028 school year, was designed by [DPZ CoDesign](#) with the intent to provide top-tier quality for Hays CISD employees with a walkable community, tons of green space, indoor and outdoor amenities, and local retail nestled within the community. [Clark Wilson](#) was selected to be the builder for the homes, each with its own yard. [Vida Design](#) is the interior designer for the project.

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