



## **LEADERSHIP ISD TO EXPAND PUBLIC EDUCATION ADVOCACY PROGRAMS TO HARRIS COUNTY**

*Leadership ISD – Harris County receives a combined \$1.5 million over three years from Houston Endowment and the Kinder Foundation; announces regional director*

HOUSTON – January 4, 2017 – Leadership ISD, the Dallas-based non-profit committed to building civic capacity by recruiting, informing, and empowering citizen leaders to positively influence educational excellence and equity for all students, today announced its expansion to Harris County thanks to generous grants of \$750,000 each from [Houston Endowment](#) and the [Kinder Foundation](#). Patra Brannon-Isaac has been named Leadership ISD – Harris County’s Regional Director. Brannon-Isaac joins Leadership ISD – Harris County from Houston Independent School District (HISD), where she served as the general manager for talent acquisition since September 2012.

Leadership ISD – Harris County will focus on increasing civic leadership and advocacy for students in greater Houston through an annual fellowship and civic development program. [Nominations](#) for the organization’s first Harris County cohort of 40-45 Fellows will be accepted beginning January 3, 2017, and applications will open on February 1, 2017. Fellows come from all walks of life – entrepreneurs, lawyers, bankers, managers, non-profit leaders, community volunteers, philanthropists, parents, and non-parents. Leadership ISD seeks citizen leaders who are interested in helping to transform our public schools for all students. Fellows selected for this competitive fellowship will convene in August 2017 and will be empowered to use data effectively, work collaboratively, lead with empathy, shift policy, and address racial, economic, and cultural disparities to promote better student outcomes. Alumni of the program activate their knowledge and training through pathways of advocacy and governance both regionally and statewide. This model goes beyond temporary interventions to cultivate deep civic capacity for sustainable engagement that creates real impact.

Of the program’s expansion to the Houston area, Leadership ISD Executive Director and Founder Patricia Arvanitis says, “There has never been a more urgent or critical need for informed and engaged advocates for public school students. Thanks to the generous philanthropy of Houston Endowment and the Kinder Foundation, and under the direction of Patra Brannon-Isaac, Leadership ISD is well equipped to begin developing advocates and building a better informed electorate who will make a lasting, positive mark on public education in Harris County.”

As Harris County Regional Director, Brannon-Isaac will draw on Leadership ISD’s six years of program momentum and experience in Dallas County to create a similar program that reflects the context of the

public education challenges in greater Houston. As general manager for talent acquisition at HISD, she led recruitment and onboarding initiatives to better support district staffing needs and established strategic district partnerships to build talent pipelines. Brannon-Isaac has served in both the public and private sectors and recognizes the critical need for broad community involvement to help address the challenges facing the public education system. She holds an MBA from Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Management and a bachelor of science in Finance from Iowa State University.

"We all care deeply about the students of greater Houston – and we know they are the future of our region," said Ann Stern, president and CEO of Houston Endowment. "Through informed civic engagement, Leadership ISD creates a powerful way for the broader community to support student success."

"Building civic capacity and leadership is essential to having great public schools," said Nancy Kinder, president of the Kinder Foundation. "We are excited to partner with the Houston Endowment to bring this successful program to the Greater Houston area."

*For a photo of Patra Brannon-Isaac, download [here](#).*

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#### **About Leadership ISD**

Leadership ISD's mission is to recruit, inform, and empower citizen leaders to positively influence the direction and outcomes of public education and actively support educational excellence and equity for all students. Visit [leadershipisd.org](http://leadershipisd.org).

#### **About Houston Endowment**

Houston Endowment is a private philanthropic institution that enhances the vibrancy of greater Houston and advances equity of opportunity for the people who live here. Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones established Houston Endowment in 1937 to help create a community where the opportunity to thrive is available to all. Visit [houstonendowment.org](http://houstonendowment.org).

#### **About the Kinder Foundation**

The Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder of Houston, Texas, provides transformational grants that impact urban green space, education, and quality of life. More at [kinderfoundation.org](http://kinderfoundation.org).