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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More Detailed, Up-to-Date Information Helps Houston Educators Keep a Closer Eye on Students' Academic Performance

Largest School District in Texas Using Student Information System to Help Track Students, Dropouts

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA - NOVEMBER 29, 2007 —The Houston Independent School District (HISD) sent thousands of students' report cards home this month, notifying parents of their children's progress. Officials at HISD schools regularly monitor students to keep children focused on their studies and to reach out to those who need extra support. Report card time is an important opportunity for parents, students, and teachers to gather together and assess student achievement.

At the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, HISD rolled out Pearson's Chancery® SMS student information system (SIS), which helps educators keep better records of children's academic data and process report cards. HISD is in its second year with this new, robust student tracking system and despite some initial challenges last year, educators in Texas' largest school district can now track student information and performance better than before.

HISD teachers are now able to quickly access more detailed information about the district's 295 schools' student academic indicators such as attendance, discipline, special education services, courses and grades, and immunizations. "We needed a system that enhanced our teachers' ability to assess student needs and plan interventions to meet those needs," said HISD Chief Financial Officer, Melinda Garrett. "Chancery SMS has helped generate student data with greater detail and speed than was possible with our former system. For example, this year the SIS provided information to help us reach out to dropouts by allowing us to quickly identify students who had not returned to school at the beginning of the year, so we could convince them to return to class."

Launching a major, district-wide change in student information systems is not an easy task and both HISD and Pearson officials worked hard to manage issues during the implementation. Early last school year, some report cards were late and had errors, causing teachers and other users of the system to express frustration with the slow pace of record input and reports. But HISD and Pearson quickly responded and adapted

the system to run faster and better. Their immediate action resulted in relatively few challenges following these instances and produced much happier educators, who are able to more effectively access their student data.

Elisa Snow has been teaching at HISD for 15 years and is charged with the important job of providing specialized tutoring for children most at risk of failing at Moreno Elementary School. "With Chancery SMS, we're able to get data much more quickly than before and better determine which children need the most help. We can intervene faster and customize education based on individual needs," Ms. Snow said. "Chancery SMS also automates classroom posting of daily attendance, so we're able to have a count of absent children soon after school starts, allowing us to immediately call parents. Many times, the children had overslept and we were able to get them into school within a short period of time. It has definitely improved attendance."

With progress on the SATs exceeding the national average and record high scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), Houston students are excelling academically. School officials say the new Pearson SIS has helped them better track and support the district's 200,000 students. "With the exception of the initial difficulty transitioning to the system last year, Chancery SMS has helped us better meet the needs of our students," said Adriana Castro, principal of HISD's Moreno Elementary School. "Data drives instruction and Chancery SMS helped us get 'real-time' information in a user-friendly manner so we could regroup and assess student needs based on that data. The information is available at teacher's fingertips and accessing it has become second nature to them."

Using Chancery SMS, HISD is able to:

- **Open the student information system up to each teacher, on their desktop:** Teachers can post attendance and grades directly into the system and view test scores, attendance, and other student information relevant to instructional issues. They also can review yearly absences of their students to determine trends that may impact student performance, as well as have immediate access to parent contact numbers to communicate effectively about student progress. Administrators are able to monitor student test results online.
- **Report disciplinary issues:** Chancery SMS allows HISD to track the outcome of every disciplinary case, including information on the victims and witnesses, and report that information accurately.
- **Submit required student and school information to federal, state, and local agencies:** Chancery SMS reports critical HISD data, including student demographics and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information to the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and other agencies.

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