

Elizabeth Santos

District I Trustee, Houston Independent School District

Elizabeth Alba Santos was elected to the Board of Education in December 2017. She believes children deserve outstanding teachers in every classroom, so she is focused on hiring and retaining great educators throughout the school district. This investment in educators includes offering not only competitive teacher salaries but opportunities for relevant and worthwhile professional development and shared decision-making. Her goals also include eliminating the culture of high-stakes standardized testing in schools and strengthening ethics rules for the HISD Board of Education.

Santos was born and raised in Houston, the daughter of Mexican immigrants. She attended neighborhood schools in HISD, including Janowski and Herrera elementary schools, and Burbank Middle School. She is a proud graduate of Sam Houston High School. Due in part to her positive experiences, Santos is committed to strengthening the community-schools model in HISD. She believes that building relationships between a community and its schools ensures their growth and sustainability. Santos seeks and welcomes input from school stakeholders, who have valuable insight into the strengths and needs of their community. She recognizes that student success also depends on factors that extend beyond the classroom, such as the need for basic health care and stability, so she will work to make every neighborhood school the heartbeat of its community with support services for students and their families. Santos earned an associate degree from Houston Community College and a bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Houston–Downtown. Recognizing the importance of building her community and giving back, Santos returned to Sam Houston as a teacher, where she served for seven years and was nominated multiple times for Teacher of the Year. Most recently, she taught at Northside High School, her mother's alma mater.

As a student, volunteer, youth counselor, and teacher, Santos has dedicated her life to underserved youth in her community. She is a community advocate and is actively involved in Community Voices for Public Education, Houston Area Progressives, the Texas Organizing Project, Boards, and Commissions Leadership Institute, the Mexican-American Emerging Leaders Organization, American Jewish Committee, and many others. Santos has served as an example to her students and hopes to create an empowered community that includes students who are self-advocates.