



July 28 PM - Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will go over some positive news in negative trends, school closure orders, when we can expect a vaccine, and Hurricane Hanna.

COVID19

First, some promising news. The Texas Medical Center (TMC) is reporting that the [weekly average of new cases had gone down](#) last week. This is mostly attributed to the [state-wide mask order](#) issued by Governor Greg Abbott on July 2nd. We typically see a two-week lag between when orders are issued and how they affect the average daily new cases and then an additional two weeks before we see the effect on hospitalizations. TMC is predicting that [new hospitalizations will go down](#) so long as this trend continues. The official [City and County dashboard](#) reflects a similar downward trajectory.

As of this morning, 9 of Texas' 15 largest counties had issued orders for local school buildings to remain closed through Labor Day. This morning, Ken Paxton, Attorney General for the State of Texas, [issued an opinion stating](#) that local health authorities cannot issue blanket orders closing schools without more specific cause for each building's closure. Attorney General Paxton stated that it is up to each school district and its Board of Trustees to make the determination of when to close and for how long.

What does this mean for Houston Independent School District and the 2020-2021 school year? It looks like not much will change. On July 15th, [HISD had announced that they will delay school](#) until September 8th, with virtual instruction only until October 19th. Unless the HISD board of trustees vote to change the school year (again), then it looks like the orders to close school and the Attorney General's opinion will not change much for our area. Tonight at 7 PM, HISD interim Superintendent Grenita Latham will host a Zoom town hall with KPRC Channel 2. You must [register in advance](#).

Yesterday, Jran and the Federation's Jewish Education Department hosted a Conversation Starter on Back to School. If you missed the webinar or would like to share with others who might be interested, you can access the recording [here](#).

Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, expects there to be a [COVID19 vaccine available in the third quarter of 2021](#). In the meantime, it will be important that we continue to practice social distancing, wearing a mask, and staying home when ill as we learn to live with this virus for another year.

Hurricane Season 2020

Hurricane [Hanna made landfall near South Padre Island](#) over the weekend and headed into Mexico. FEMA and President Donald Trump issued disaster declarations for South Texas and clean-up is under way. This gives us good idea of how FEMA and the State of Texas will respond to a natural disaster during the pandemic. Mobile testing sites were set up at shelters and medical personnel from the Texas National Guard have been deployed.

Today, we held our *JRAN Conversation Starter: Community Resiliency and Collaboration for Natural Disaster*. We will send a link of the recording in the next JRAN update for those that were unable to attend.

In Other News...

Play ball! Baseball season began with my new favorite pandemic thing: random things filling seats—and the [MLB did not disappoint](#). Cardboard cut outs are a thing this season and they range from the Mets' dogs, a White Sox fan who sent 100 cut outs of himself to fill the seats near the visitor's dugout, the Phillies Phanatic heckling visiting cardboard cut outs, a giant baby, and finally giant teddy bears mixed in with cut outs. If you want to see more clever cut outs this season, you can follow [@BallparkCutouts](#) on Twitter. You know I will be following them!

P.S. Don't forget to [tune in tonight for the Rockets game](#) (live from Disney World!) at 7 p.m.

Take care today and I hope you enjoy an upside-down baseball cap full of ice cream (at home),
Jackie

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