# OVERVIEW OF HOLDSWORTH'S DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY

Charles Butt, the founder of the Holdsworth Center, has been a strong advocate for public education for many years. He has been a student of education systems both nationally and abroad and has directed much of his personal philanthropy toward evidence-based practices that have been proven to positively impact student outcomes.

Charles has served as the CEO of H-E-B, the company founded in 1905 by his grandmother, since 1971. Under his leadership, H-E-B has grown into one of the largest retail chains in the country with more than 360 stores in the U.S. and Mexico, more than 90,000 employees called Partners and over $23 billion in annual sales. At the heart of the company’s success over the past 110 years has been a commitment expressed clearly on the name badges worn proudly by Partners across the company– Because People Matter.

The concept for the Holdsworth Center represents the intersection of Charles’ two great passions, education and the development of powerful leaders at all levels within an organization. At H-E-B, leaders must possess three key traits – a head for business, a passion for results and, most importantly, a heart for people. It is incumbent upon leaders to get to know their people and to help them to reach their fullest potential through intentional coaching, mentorship and developmental assignments and experiences. In fact, a leader’s success is largely dependent upon his or her ability to grow and develop others.

The idea that leadership can and must be taught over the course of a career is central to the creation of the Holdsworth Center and its programs. Equally important is the belief that leadership is a journey and not a destination independent of title or rank and the premise that quality, inspired leadership on every school campus will help to attract and retain the best and brightest talent into our classrooms.

**Overview of Holdsworth's Programs**

Beginning in the summer of 2017, the Holdsworth Center will launch with three integrated programs, each delivered in the same six school districts over a five year period of time. The first program to launch will be designed for the sitting superintendents of our seven partner districts, and key members of their leadership cabinets. At the core of this program are two key areas of focus—equipping superintendents and their teams with the vision and skills needed to design and lead strategic leadership development systems and delivering a transformational personal leadership experience.

Through the superintendents program, which has been designed by thought leaders from around the country, district teams will have the opportunity to visit and learn from high-performing organizations (Singapore, H-E-B, the US Army, etc.) and study the way they intentionally approach leadership development. From these experiences, participants will understand key principles that must be in place in order to implement a strategic approach to talent management, including: a clearly articulated and competency based definition of leadership excellence, consistently applied across roles; cultural norms and practices that promote continuous individual improvement such as consistent and frequent feedback loops; and robust, developmentally-oriented evaluation systems that are supported by personalized growth and development opportunities.

After this work with superintendents and their teams is underway, Holdsworth will dive deeper with each participating district, launching a two-year program designed for sitting principals and their teams. The content of the principals' program will mirror the personal leadership and teaming themes raised in the superintendents' program, but 'the work' that principals and their teams will tackle will be tailored towards a specific, school-level, student learning objective. In addition, leadership lessons will focus on the principal's role in developing future leaders through 1)the identification and fostering of teacher leadership, 2) the design of essential growth and development opportunities at the campus level, and 3) the fostering of a continuous improvement mindset and a culture of collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving at the campus and classroom levels. Each district will send successive cohorts of principals to Holdsworth, with the goal of serving the majority of principals over the course of the five-year partnership.

In addition to these two programs for sitting leaders and their teams, each district will work closely with a District Services Team from Holdsworth, who will provide support to the district as it assesses its current approach to leadership development, identifies key strengths and weaknesses, and designs and executes a plan to create a more strategic and systematic approach. The purpose of these Holdsworth district teams, initially, is to supplement the district's capabilities as it transitions from a reactive to a more proactive and aligned talent development organization. For this work to truly succeed, however, these teams must build the district's internal capacity to sustain the work independently over time. So, the teams must serve a dual-purpose—first supplementing, and then building, district capacity to design and manage a comprehensive talent management strategy.

**Value Proposition—to both districts and individual leaders:**

Holdsworth programs provide value to both individual leaders and the district as a whole. For individual leaders, the appeal of the Holdsworth experience includes:

* Exposure to world-class leaders and organizations, within and beyond the education sector
* An opportunity to step back from the daily demands of leadership in order to re-energize and expand your vision of what is possible
* The support of a cohort of like-minded peers who can encourage one another as they pursue excellence together
* A lifetime membership in an elite community of education leaders across the state of Texas, including resources and support throughout your career

For districts—both superintendents and school boards—partnering with Holdsworth provides several benefits:

* A critical mass of leaders throughout your system with shared experiences and a common vision of excellence—for personal leadership, talent development, organizational culture, and student success
* Enhanced district-level capacity to manage leadership talent and to lead change
* A strategic approach to leadership development embedded throughout the organization that will build a bench of future leaders & retain more of your best talent

**What's distinctive about Holdsworth?**

Taken together, this approach embodies a theory of change that is distinctive from most other approaches to educational leadership development across the country. We believe that this approach is distinctive—and thus can deliver different results—because it:

* focuses on building the capacity and alignment of the system, rather than exclusively focusing on finding and training promising individuals
* relies on long-term partnerships with school districts, acknowledging that, though securing stable, long-term leadership in school districts can be difficult, meaningful, sustainable change takes time
* starts 'at the top' of the organization, because system-wide work requires superintendent and district buy-in and leadership
* explicitly and consistently values leadership teams because impactful, sustainable work is rarely achieved by one person
* builds coherence and critical mass across leaders within the district by providing common experience and shared language around leadership excellence

Until a permanent site is identified and the academic campus which will become home to Holdsworth is complete, the program will rotate among conference centers located near the selected districts to give superintendents an opportunity to visit and learn from each other as well as world-class faculty from around the country.

For this first cohort of seven districts to begin the program in June 2017, there will be no cost for participation throughout the five years. Instead, the Superintendents and their teams will work with the staff and faculty to co-create and develop a world-class program that promotes long term, sustainable change and positively impacts the quality of education offered to Texas students.