

# Harris County Department of Education Blog Archive

January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016



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# 1. 2016

## 1.1 January



## What is Digital Leadership? Expert Eric Sheninger dispels fears, misconceptions (2016-01-04 11:54) - hcdetx



[1] What is digital leadership and why should we be concerned with it? As we embrace technology in our classrooms, fears and misconceptions abound. Social media and mobile devices are part of our everyday existence, so why the apprehension?

Effective digital leadership is defined by national presenter and author Eric Sheninger as “establishing direction, influencing others and initiating sustainable change through the access of information and establishing relationships in order to anticipate changes pivotal to school success in the future. It requires a dynamic combination of mindset, behaviors, and skills that are employed to

change and/or enhance school culture through the assistance of technology.”

[2]Eric Sheneringer is the Senior Fellow and Thought Leader on Digital Leadership with the International Center for Leadership in Education in Rexford, N.Y. His innovative leadership as principal at New Milford High School led to radical transformation of the school and student achievement. He says that leaders need to be the catalysts for change, and the seven pillars identified below provide a framework:

- Communication
- Public Relations
- Branding
- Student Engagement/Learning
- Professional Growth/Development
- Re-envisioning Learning Spaces and Environments
- Opportunity

By addressing each pillar, Sheneringer says leaders can begin changing and transforming their respective schools into ones that prepare learners with essential digital age skills while engaging a variety of stakeholders.

Most importantly, Sheneringer says digital leadership begins with identifying obstacles to change and specific solutions to overcome them in order to transform schools in the digital age.

Eric Sheneringer presents on January 19 at HCDE. To hear more about his seven pillars and digital leadership, [3]register for the workshop.

Resource: [4]Pillars of Digital Leadership, Eric Sheneringer, International Center for Leadership in Education

### **About the Blogger:**

Andrea Segraves served in the public school system for 14 years as a teacher and an administrator before being named the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Center for HCDE. She is a boy-mom who spends her extra time at the ball fields and reading educational literature.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/eric\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/eric_ps.jpg)

2. <http://ericsheneringer.com/esheneringer>

3. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10259>

4. [http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Blog/LeadingintheDigitalAge\\_11.14.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Blog/LeadingintheDigitalAge_11.14.pdf)

## **Learn, Play, Recharge: Early childhood conference for grades PK-2 features Dr. Jean Feldman (2016-01-11 15:37) - hcdetx**



[1] The leap into 2016 provides an opportunity to invite you to our 30th annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference on Saturday, January 30 with conference keynote Dr. Jean Feldman. Dr. Jean provides synergy for the morning through song, rhyme, movement and hands-on projects.

The best-selling author and 40-year educator of 40 years shares these free activities through her website. Her site also provides a living example of her energy-charged presentation.

Along with Dr. Jean, the conference includes featured speaker Carl Anderson, national leading expert on teaching writing to K-12 students. Many of the sessions also focus on grades 1-2 learning. The day includes 60-plus presenter breakout sessions. We showcase a plethora of exhibitors with new resources for your classroom. [2]Register for the conference.

Historically, teachers travel to the conference with their teams, but you have ample opportunity to make new friends by coming solo. Parking is free at the Kingdom Builders' Center in southeast Houston.

School Bell welcomes you back to the classroom in 2016. We look forward to sharing innovative ideas and hearing back from you!

**About the Blogger:**

Andrea Segraves served in the public school system for 14 years as a teacher and an administrator before being named the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Center for HCDE. She is a boy-mom who spends her extra time at the ball fields and reading educational literature.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/photo-dr\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/photo-dr_ps.jpg)
2. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=5113>

## Volunteer during MLK Week: Connect to your community (2016-01-18 15:44)

- hcdetx



[1] Like many of you, we're off today to recognize the late Martin Luther King, Jr. Some folks are using the day as a chance to pay respect to his legacy by volunteering in their communities. If you'd like to do something to improve your neighborhood, you can find volunteer opportunities at [2]<http://www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay>.

|

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/mlk\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/mlk_ps.jpg)

2. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/MLKDay>

## Blended Learning in Today's Classroom: What it is and isn't (2016-01-25 13:10)

- hcdetx



[1] If you look up blended learning, you'll find many definitions. However, there is one thing that blended learning is not: replacing teachers with technology. Blended learning focuses on replacing a portion of the traditional face-to-face instruction with a technology-rich learning environment that allows more personalized learning for each student. With the help of technology, teachers are able to optimize learning for each individual student.

As adults, we know the overwhelming importance of technology in our lives. Blended learning provides real-life learning opportunities and helps prepare students for the technology-rich workplace and post-secondary education they will soon be a part of. The benefits of blended learning include allowing for multiple learning styles, student engagement, maximization of time for students to work at their own pace, more student data availability and money-savings. Blended learning also acclimates students to the skills needed to make use of technology in their day-to-day lives.

A benchmark study conducted in 2015 by Fuel Education (FuelEd) provides some insight on why schools believe in the importance of blended learning. Out of 91 total educators surveyed, 79 percent say the primary factor for implementing a blended program is to provide an alternative for students who are not succeeding in the traditional brick-and-mortar learning environment.

Other factors the study reveals include:

- Providing students with access to courses not available at their schools
- Giving students more flexibility for when and where they can access courses
- Providing personalized learning experiences
- Desire to retain students and improve graduation rates

While many examples of successful blended learning are available, some staff find the preparation time too consuming. Also, supporting the technology may be prone to failure.

However, a successful program can be implemented with a common goal and the support of fellow teachers and administration. Other things to consider when starting a blended learning program include:

- Funding and resources available
- Training and professional development for teachers
- Choice and quality of curriculum
- Needs of students

With motivated educators, proper student training on use and etiquette of the resources and online safety, both teachers and students can soar with a successful blended learning program.

Resources:

[2]<http://online.getfueled.com/Benchmark-Survey-2016.html>

[3]<http://www.edutopia.org/blended-learning-resources>

### **About the Blogger:**

Lynnice Hockaday is a technology analyst for the Teacher and Learning Center at HCDE. For the past 20 years, Lynnice has been an educator, curriculum specialist, technology coach and online instructor, and loves helping students and teachers reach outside the classroom walls by engaging and collaborating worldwide through online learning. Lynnice stays very busy outside of work with three active kids and enjoys hiking and biking in her spare time.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/ipad\\_apple\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/ipad_apple_ps.jpg)

2. <http://online.getfueled.com/Benchmark-Survey-2016.html>

3. <http://www.edutopia.org/blended-learning-resources>

## 1.2 February



## Tactics to Prevent Bullying: Teach your students to vent (2016-02-01 11:44)

- hcdetx



[1] Bullying is both psychological and physical. As teachers, our plates are full during the school day. So how can we safeguard our classrooms and ensure the safety of our students? One of the ways is to empower our students against bullying.

Bullying prevention expert and presenter Fabian Ramirez was victimized by a bully in middle school and uses that experience to talk to students about how to deal with bullies. His videos and lesson plans are directed to empower both students and teachers.[2]He offers training to help schools become bully-free zones.

Fabian says what you don't talk out, you act out. Most bullies are dealing with internal issues that they project on others.

In fact, he says studies from the Secret Service show that **71 percent of school shooters were bullied, threatened, attacked or injured themselves.** Most were loners and got picked on during school.

"When people don't like themselves very much, they have to make up for it. The classic bully was actually a victim first." - Actor Tom Hiddleston

Venting, Fabian says, helps students unleash emotions. He urges students to vent and defines venting as releasing or transferring your emotions through words.

In a free lesson provided through his bullying prevention series called [3]EveryOne Matters, Fabian talks directly to students and empowers them with ways to vent:

1. **Analyze:** See where you are at and work through that with the person you are venting with. Sometimes it's really not that bad.
2. **Assume the best:** Have a follow-up conversation with the person who is acting like a bully. Maybe you heard it wrong. Sometimes people don't mean what they said.
3. **Don't take it personal:** It's about them and not you. Don't think something is wrong with you.
4. **Act upon your feelings:** Don't bottle up feelings. Find a release. Draw. Journal. Get into sports.
5. **Find one person to trust to talk to:** Don't try to find affirmation with multiple people. Trust that one person and share your negative emotions through words.

Learn more about Fabian as he presents February 5 at Harris County Department of Education. [4]Register for his workshop offered through our [5]Center for Safe and Secure Schools.

### About the Blogger:

Ecomet Burley, a 26-year administrator, is the new leader of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. Established in 1999, the Center provides school safety and security training for school districts in greater Harris County. Burley, the former superintendent of La Marque ISD, resides in Pearland with wife Frances, an elementary school principal. Education, Burley insists, is the primary and native language spoken in their home.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/bullying.jpg>

2. <http://www.safeandsecureschools.org/Lists/Upcomingevents/Attachments/81/Anti%20Bullying%20Rev%201-20-16.pdf>

3. <https://vimeo.com/104181513>

4. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10316>

5. <http://www.safeandsecureschools.org/Lists/Upcomingevents/Attachments/81/Anti%20Bullying%20Rev%201-20-16.pdf>

## Mathematical Mindset and Asking for Help: Are your students asking?

(2016-02-08 17:05) - hcdetx



“Raise your hand and I’ll come help you.” “Understand what I’m saying?” “Thumbs down if you don’t understand.”

As a math specialist and longtime math teacher, I know these are some common ways teachers check for understanding. Student reaction varies. Many times the same student asks for help. Some students never ask.

The science of students’ “help-seeking behaviors” is the focus on a study by author Sara Sparks, who shares new research on how students ask for help and the student mindset in *American Educator Magazine*.

Help-seeking behaviors can tell us about student perseverance, curiosity, growth, or fixed mindsets.

“Some students ask for help before they even start thinking about a problem, while others avoid seeking help even after struggling fruitlessly on their own,” said Sparks. “To get help successfully, a student has to understand the he or she has a problem; decide whether and who to ask for help; do so clearly; and process the help that’s given.”

The complexity of help-seeking behaviors grows as students mature.

“Help-seeking is both academic and social in nature,” says Sarah Kiefer of the University of South Florida, “and adolescents are looking at their classrooms as an academic and social minefield.”

Kiefer says teens can look for “expedient” help like copying a classmate’s homework in order to just get it done versus asking for help to really understand it.

"If you can take away the mindset that I don't want to look like a loser and promote a growth mindset, that's huge," says Kiefer.

Although the term "help-seeking" suggests a deficit, students need to think of the process as managing resources to solve a problem, says Stuart Karabenick of the University of Michigan. His study found that when teachers gave short answers in response to complex questions, students were less likely to ask for help over time.

Starting early with students in elementary school, he says, helps them understand the protocol for asking for help: when, how and of whom.

"Make it explicit, let them practice it," says Karabenick. "It can be very, very effective to make it transparent that this is a normal part of learning."

One of the major skills teachers need to develop is to spot students who aren't asking for help and figure out which unspoken message is on a student's mind, he says:

I'm afraid to ask.  
I don't know how to ask.  
I don't know what I don't know.  
I don't need help.

We all need help now and then. However, there's a distinction between asking for detailed help and getting help with building our problem-solving skills.

I'd like to hear from you. How are you building the problem-solving thinkers of the next generation?

## **Resource**

"Studying the Ways Students Get Help with Classwork" by Sarah Sparks in American Educator, Winter 2014-15 (Vol. 38, #4, p. 28-29), [1]<http://www.aft.org/ae/winter2014-2015/sparks>

## **About the Blogger:**

Nicole Shanahan is the math specialist at HCDE. A self-professed Julia Roberts of presenters, she vows to weave a bit of entertainment into each of her math workshops. As teacher, mentor, trainer and coach, Nicole serves up workshops ala carte within districts or at HCDE headquarters at 6300 Irvington, Houston, TX. The mother-of-three clocks in more volunteer hours than the average bear can handle. She often writes about her cubs in her posts. Follow Nicole on Pinterest at: [2]Secondary Math | [3]Elementary Math

1. <http://www.aft.org/ae/winter2014-2015/sparks>

2. <https://www.pinterest.com/hcde/math-secondary/>
3. <https://www.pinterest.com/hcde/math-elementary/>

## Map Reading 101: Empower your students to make inferences

(2016-02-15 09:28) - hcdetx



[1] I thought I knew how to read a map. I mean, I went to college, twice. I've traveled across the United States and have been to Europe. Sitting at our Harris County Department of Education Social Studies Leadership meeting this morning, I was enlightened beyond measure. The advisors were given a map generously donated from the Texas General Land Office. We were asked to "read" the map for five minutes.

We used the map titled: [2]Significant Conflicts and Events from 1685-1916. Dr. Jeffrey Lash of the University of Houston-Clear Lake led educators in the room through an investigation of where conflicts happened. Why did they happen there? What could be learned from those conflicts? All observations were to be based on just the map. Of course, we brought our own knowledge to the



table.[3]

We drew conclusions, made inferences and connected our knowledge to the locations on the map. We saw learning taking place. We saw economic connections that were naked to the visible eye and drew on each other's thoughts. In the process, we learned more than we ever thought we could about Texas and its many geographical features.

Reading takes place not only in the pages of books we have in our classrooms, but also on maps, periodic tables and art canvases. Books aren't the only things we read. Think about it the next time you look at a map.

Source: [4][www.jeffreylash.com](http://www.jeffreylash.com)

**About the Blogger:** Kelly Tummy is curriculum director for English language arts and social studies in the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. During her 25-year career in education/administration, she has loyally served Harris County as an educator in Galena Park, Humble and most recently Crosby ISD. Tummy's workshops focus on inquiry-based instruction in the ELA classroom. Her passion for cross-curricular connections helps students and teachers see the elasticity in education.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/shutterstock\\_362668550.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/shutterstock_362668550.jpg)
2. <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth298399/>
3. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/metapth298399\\_s\\_2006-196-a\\_01.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/metapth298399_s_2006-196-a_01.jpg)
4. <http://www.jeffreylash.com/>





## **Restorative Justice: Approach to discipline repairs harm, improves attendance (2016-02-22 11:31) - hcdetx**



[1] Teachers and principals understand that one of the most difficult parts of their jobs is figuring out how to address student misbehavior.

While traditional or severe approaches to discipline such as suspension, expulsion and “zero tolerance” policies have persisted in many schools, studies show that these practices do not improve behavior or academics.

What’s worse, these studies also indicate that black, Latino and disabled students are disproportionately punished, resulting in an attendance crisis that prevents at-risk youth from catching up and graduating. Concerned educators and community members want to know: what can be done to improve discipline schoolwide?

The answer, for many, is [2]restorative justice. In contrast to punishment and suspension, this approach focuses on the needs of victims and offenders, as well as the community as a whole. Using the group discussion model, including talking or healing circles, restorative justice seeks to repair broken bonds between students, or between students and teachers.

In addition to reforming discipline, restorative practices have been shown to reduce suspensions and improve attendance—a boon for school districts. The benefits for individuals are immeasurable as they learn how to resolve conflicts and improve their lives. Rather than being simply abandoned, at-risk students are given a chance to address the problems that caused them to misbehave in the first place.

Harris County Department of Education’s [3]Center for Safe and Secure Schools will host a three-day restorative practices implementation training starting March 7. Central office personnel, campus principals, attendance clerks, truancy officers and all other members of school staff are

invited to participate in interactive training sessions to learn how to implement a restorative justice model in their schools. [4]Learn more about or [5]register for the training.

Resource: [6]<http://www.elifeanew.com/>

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/shutterstock\\_1883598\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/shutterstock_1883598_ps.jpg)
2. <http://www.elifeanew.com/>
3. <http://www.safeandsecureschools.org/default.aspx>
4. <http://www.safeandsecureschools.org/Lists/Upcomingevents/Attachments/87/Restorative%20Practices%20Flyer-2016%20Interactive.pdf>
5. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10382>
6. <http://www.elifeanew.com/>

## Kids Count: Let them be citizen scientists (2016-02-29 10:57) - hcdetx



Participating in citizen science projects is a wonderful way for students to see real-world science in action. There are hundreds of citizen science projects that allow students to help researchers collect and analyze data. For students, participation can make them feel connected to a community or a place far from home and can give them the satisfaction of knowing they have made a small but important contribution to real science.

Citizen science projects can range from long-term projects with classroom participation, to others that let students work independently on a mobile device. One of my favorite projects is [1]Penguin Watch, which allows students to monitor penguins in remote regions by looking at still images and counting the number of adults, chicks and eggs seen in the photos. This project requires

nothing more than an internet connection, and students of all ages can develop observation skills!

Another of my favorite citizen science projects is [2]Project BudBurst, where scientists monitor plants as seasons change. Students make observations on the timing of leaf, flower and fruit production and scientists can then use the data to learn more about how plants respond to changes in climate from a local, regional and national level. They even have a separate project for younger students (K-4) called [3]BudBurst Buddies, which is a wonderful resource for younger students to begin learning about plants and participate in real citizen science.

I was so impressed with Project BudBurst that I nominated the director, Dr. Sandra Henderson, for a White House Champions of Change Award in 2013. When she was accepted as one of the final recipients, I was fortunate to be able to travel to the White House to see her receive the award in person.

Another favorite project is Managing Microbes in Space from [4]Orion's Quest. Middle and high school teachers can register their class for a project where students analyze video clips of nematodes in ground-based and space-based environments. The goal of the project is to determine if the virulence (strength of infection) of Salmonella is different in space because the human immune system becomes weaker. Several local schools are already involved in this project, and teachers can find out more about how to participate in this and other space research projects at [5][www.orionsquest.org](http://www.orionsquest.org).

To find more available citizen science projects and search by topic, activity or location, visit the [6]SciStarter website. Let your students do authentic science by tracking scallop populations, mapping outer space or documenting the presence of migratory birds. There's a great big world outside the classroom!

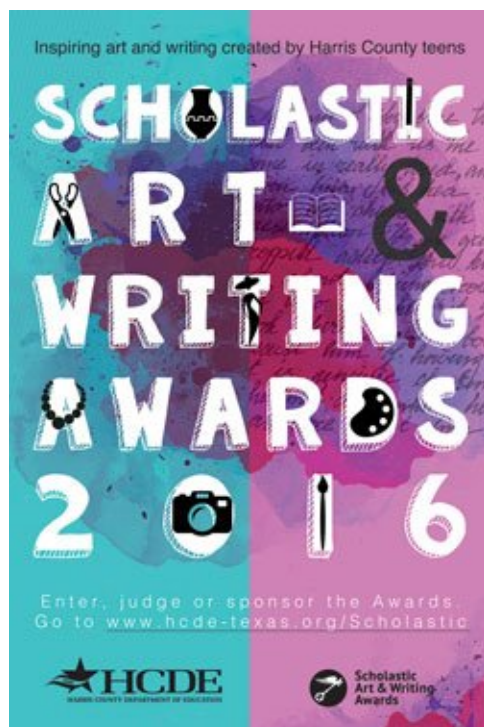
### **About the Blogger:**

Lisa Felske is curriculum director for science at Harris County Department of Education. Her areas of expertise include integrating science with other disciplines and student misconceptions in science. She enjoys being a Girl Scout leader, reading way past her bedtime, and using the Oxford comma.

1. <http://www.penguinwatch.org/>
2. <http://budburst.org/>
3. <http://budburstbuddies.org/>
4. <http://www.orionsquest.org/>
5. <http://www.orionsquest.org/>
6. <http://scistarter.com/>

## 1.3 March

## Express Yourself: Scholastic Art & Writing Awards gives teens artistic opportunities (2016-03-07 14:19) - hcdetx



[1] Sometimes you are so affected by life that you must stop and talk about it, paint it or write about it. Perhaps it's someone you met or a place you visited.

As the regional sponsor of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, Harris County Department of Education is proud to supply a venue for young artists and writers in grades 7-12. This year,

professional art and writing judges donated their time to judge 8,000 inspiring art and writing student entries. Moreover, [2]sponsors took on the charge to support students with recognition ceremonies and receptions.

At one of our ceremonies, we were fortunate to meet a young writer who really inspired us. We'd like to share the story of Hajar Mohammad.

Hajar and her mother Nisa gain strength from one another, but faith gets them through the hard times. The eighth grader who attends Krimmel Intermediate in Klein Independent School District has published two books and writes about her life through difficult life topics ranging from domestic violence to racism.

Her daughter Hajar is strong, insists Mother Nisa. She weathered her parents' divorce, along with the negative comments on her religious customs. From the whispering about the henna that covered her hand to the jibab veil that covers her head and face, it's not easy being Muslim in America.



[3]

"I'm really proud of her," said her mother. "What she writes inspires me."

When Hajar writes, she begins with an idea or feeling that grows. The hurt is tolerable when she talks it out through words.

"My mother is positive about situations," the 13-year-old said. "She says 'just give them the benefit of the doubt.'"

"Benefit of the Doubt" is the name of the poem which earned Hajar the Gold Key Award recognition through Scholastic Art & Writing. Now her work advances to New York City for judging, and we're wishing her the best.

The young writer could be full of spite. Yet she prefers to give back to others by volunteering as a Spanish tutor after school. She studies hard. Next year she'll be admitted into the gifted-and-talented program in high school.

"Hajar is a wonderful girl who has found her voice in writing," said Klein ISD teacher Antoinette Sherman, who sponsored her Scholastic Art & Writing entry. "Her poem expresses her individuality and underscores the value of writing as a powerful tool to build tolerance and acceptance."

At 13, we applaud Hajar for giving people the benefit of the doubt. We know that she is one

of our young Harris County students who is working to make the world a better place. Here's an excerpt from her award-winning poem:

### **Benefit of the Doubt by Hajar Mohammad**

At 5

My teacher gave me dirty looks

I wanted to crawl into a corner and hide. Maybe she was having a bad day.

At 7

Henna donned my hands.

They all laughed and stared.

Tears threatened to fall. Maybe they were laughing at someone else.

At 10

Going home from school. A man pointing.

Throwing insults.

Spitting.

I shook my head and looked away.

Maybe he didn't mean to.

At 13

My hair is covered. They think I'm oppressed. They think I'm responsible for 9/11.

I wonder will I ever be accepted. Maybe they're just afraid...

[4]Read full poem...

**What can you do to support the regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards in 2017? We're counting on you to [5]enter, judge or sponsor Scholastic Art & Writing.**

### **About the Blogger:**

Harris County Department of Education's Communication team helps promote the efforts of HCDE's programs and services to the education community. Our close-knit, award-winning team works together on creative strategies to effectively support the organization. We're always looking to share great stories and on occasion contribute to the HCDE blog, School Bell.

Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us!

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Twitter: [7]<https://twitter.com/HCDetx>

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Pinterest: [9]<http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

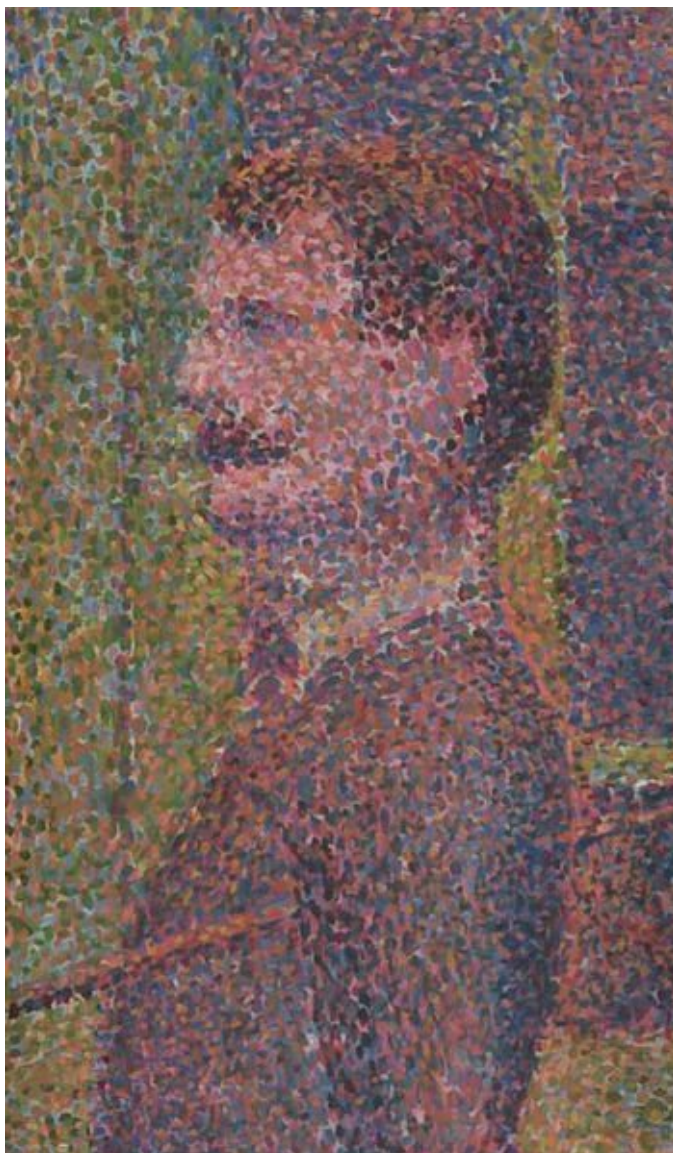
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5. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting>
6. <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEx>
7. <https://twitter.com/HCDEx>
8. <http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDExv>
9. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>



Impressionist Seurat's "La Parade de Cirque"

Study the science of art and study the art of science. Through his urging, Leonardo da Vinci encourages us to develop our senses and learn how to see, realizing that everything connects to everything else.

During the 15th century, art and science were not the seemingly separate entities that they are in the modern world. In today's classrooms we're in a quest to cover as much content as possible. Sometimes academic subjects like science are covered at a superficial level.

Many students see science as a body of facts, when that is far from the truth. I spent most of my teaching career as a science teacher in a school for the performing arts. My wonderful, talented students did not see science as something connected to their everyday world. Thinking science far

from interesting, they wanted to know its purpose.

To my students, science was a quantitative discipline, and they were interested in qualitative ideas.

What I yearn for all students to see are the patterns in science and the connections to ideas that they are interested in. I want them to know that knowledge alone is not useful unless it is connected and communicated to the world.

Students need to see that scientists and artists actually have a lot in common: both need to be open-minded, engage in open-ended inquiry and look for patterns and connections. Both artist and scientist need to be passionately curious.

“Nobel laureates in the sciences are seventeen times likelier than the average scientist to be a painter, twelve times as likely to be a poet, and four times as likely to be a musician.”  
–from Scientific American: “STEM to STEAM: Science and Art Go Hand-in-Hand”

Collaboration between artistic and scientific thought is powerful. Originality often develops from linking ideas whose connections were not previously suspected. Integrating science and art is not about making a three-dimensional model of an atom, it is about looking at the big picture.

Do students really understand periodicity of the elements? A better way to start the art-science connection would be to show art to students and let them find and understand the science that is in it.

- A wonderful way to introduce atomic structure would be for students to look at a print from Alison Haugh called [2]Periodic Table. Instead of numbers and letters, each element on this table gets one white dot for each of its electrons. It is very easy to see the pattern and the periodic nature of the pattern when all of the quantitative data like atomic number and atomic mass are removed. Using art in this fashion is not just a way to visualize science; it is a way to make connections between quantitative and qualitative properties.
- In a similar way, science teachers can use impressionist paintings like Seurat's [3]"La Parade de Cirque" (1889) to illustrate what science means when we say that light behaves like a particle.
- [4]Artist Jim Campbell makes sculpture-video hybrids from grids of LED lights ([5][www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/jim-campbell](http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/jim-campbell)). Use some of his images to ask physics students: "Can you explain how this sculpture illustrates the dual nature of light?" Viewing his piece called "Light Topography Wave" could also help eighth-grade students better understand topographic maps.
- Mark Rothko's painting in [6]monochromes of yellow looks similar to the diffusion of reactants and formation of products for the chemical reaction between lead nitrate and potassium iodide:

[7]



Asking students to look for connections and then describing the connections they see will help teachers determine if students are “seeing the big picture” instead of learning discrete facts. With the increased focus on rigor, activities like these help students think at a deeper level. Making connections between disciplines allows students to do abstract, strategic thinking as well as extended thinking, the highest level of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge.

I have a Pinterest board, called [8]Spot the Science . I would welcome suggestions of other examples that teachers can use to help students see the interconnectedness of the world around them.

### References:

[9][www.americanscientist.org/issues/pub/seeing-between-the-pixels](http://www.americanscientist.org/issues/pub/seeing-between-the-pixels)

[10][blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/artists-and-scientists-more-alike-than-different](http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/artists-and-scientists-more-alike-than-different)

[11][blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/from-stem-to-steam-science-and-the-arts-go-hand-in-hand](http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/from-stem-to-steam-science-and-the-arts-go-hand-in-hand)

[12][www.artandphysics.com](http://www.artandphysics.com)

### About the Blogger:

Lisa Felske is curriculum director for science at Harris County Department of Education. Her areas of expertise include integrating science with other disciplines and student misconceptions in science. She enjoys being a Girl Scout leader, reading way past her bedtime, and using the Oxford comma.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/seuratt.jpg>

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4. <http://www.jimcampbell.tv/>

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## Kids and Online Guidelines? All screens are not created equal

(2016-03-28 10:51) - hcdetx



[1] The days of limiting screen time use by kids are fading. The idea that screens are hurtful to youth and will fry brain cells is being discounted. In truth, youth are using screens to tell stories, make music, manage money, build friendships and create worlds.

While research shows that youth are using screen devices for more than nine hours a day, the advice to limit that use is getting a 21st century makeover.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is revising suggested screen time for kids with the following issued statement: "In a world where 'screen time' is becoming simply 'time,' our policies must evolve or become obsolete."

Rather than recommending specific time limits the AAP has issued the following new guidelines:

1. Be the parent and be a role model. "The same parenting rules apply to your children's real and virtual environments. Play with them. Set limits; kids need and expect them. Be involved. Also, limit your own media use, and model online etiquette. Attentive parenting requires face time away from screens."
2. We learn from each other. "Neuroscience research shows that very young children learn best via two-way communication. Talk time between caregiver and child is critical for language development. Passive video presentations do not lead to language learning in infants and young toddlers."
3. Content matters. "The quality of content is more important than the platform or time spent with media. Prioritize how your child spends his time rather than just setting a timer."

4. Be engaged when your kids are using technology. "Family participation with media facilitates social interactions and learning. For infants and toddlers, co-viewing is essential."

5. It's OK for your teen to be online. "Online relationships are integral to adolescent development. Social media can support identity formation. Teach your teen appropriate behaviors that apply in both the real and online worlds. Ask teens to demonstrate what they are doing online to help you understand both content and context."

With an increase in the use of screen devices, it's also important for youth to be taught how to behave in the online space just like they are taught how to play nice on the playground.

Learning the skills of digital citizenship is necessary for the youth of the today.

James Steyer, the CEO of Common Sense Media, said it nicely: "Well, I think, first and foremost, every kid in this society needs to learn digital literacy and citizenship, the safe, smart, ethical use of digital devices. We all hear about cyber-bullying and privacy violations and really not-so-good stuff that happens on media and technology platforms."

With the prevalence of technology today, we should not keep it away from kids but rather allow them to naturally learn how to interact in the digital world they are growing up in. We will guide them in the social and technical skills they need. With guidance, they will use screen time to expand their creative energies and learn to regulate their online behavior.

### **About the Blogger:**

Lynnice Hockaday is a technology analyst for the Teacher and Learning Center at HCDE. For the past 20 years, Lynnice has been an educator, curriculum specialist, technology coach and online instructor, and loves helping students and teachers reach outside the classroom walls by engaging and collaborating worldwide through online learning. Lynnice stays very busy outside of work with three active kids and enjoys hiking and biking in her spare time.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/computer.jpg>

## 1.4 April



## Free is Good: iTeach iLearn webinar supplies teaching tools, resources

(2016-04-04 10:57) - hcdetx



[1] As every teacher well knows, finding cheap resources for the classroom is always a welcome surprise. In fact, the only thing better than “cheap” is “free!” In an effort to help teachers make the most of high-quality tools and resources for learning, Harris County Department of Education is proud to present a new, free webinar series called [2]iTeach iLearn. It puts Harris County educators in touch with amazing teachers and thought leaders in education.

Once a month, HCDE’s [3]iTeach iLearn webinar series features a new star in the field of education. The aim is to provide webinar participants with opportunities to interact with the presenter and acquire skills and resources that will make an immediate impact in the classroom.

Featured speakers present processes and best practices in education and teachers walk away from each presentation with a product that they can use to implement the strategies covered in the webinar.

Some webinars may be content-specific, but most will present general strategies that apply to all educators. The inaugural [4]iTeach iLearn webinar will take place at 12 p.m. on April 13. To learn more about this upcoming webinar, access our content flier at [5]<http://goo.gl/Yx4gWy> .

If you have any questions our series or if you are open to sharing best practices and resources with other Harris County teachers and administrators, please contact David McGeary at [6][dmcgeary@hcde-texas.org](mailto:dmcgeary@hcde-texas.org).

### About the Blogger:

David McGeary, manager of innovation at HCDE, spends his days exploring the ways that old and new digital tools and resources can be used to enhance a student’s ability to learn new things, collaborate with learners anywhere and share new ideas with the world. When not hard at work, David enjoys playing classical guitar, practicing photography or doing anything his new wife tells him to do.

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2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0245/2015-16%20Fliers/iTeachiLearnFlyer.pdf>

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5. <http://goo.gl/Yx4gWy>
6. <mailto:dmcgeary@hcde-texas.org>

## How Does an Effective Classroom Look? Experts observe commonalities

(2016-04-11 13:32) - hcdetx



[1] While there's no magic formula for a successful classroom, experts observe common traits in classrooms of effective teachers. Through practical experience as a math teacher, I have cultivated my own list.

Effective teachers share these good habits or operations in their classrooms, say co-authors and veteran teachers Annette Breaux and Todd Whitaker. Together they authored several books, including *Seven Simple Secrets*, *50 Ways to Improve Student Behavior*, and *Making Good Teaching Great*.



[2]

Co-authors Annette Breaux and Todd Whitaker

- The classroom is organized. A place for everything and everything in its place. Lessons are inviting and exciting.
- The students do most of the talking and the doing, prompted by the teacher's questioning and guidance.
- Routines and procedures are evident. Students know exactly what is expected of them.

- There are no teacher warnings for student misbehavior. If a rule is broken, a consequence follows. If a procedure isn't followed, the teacher provides more practice.
- Lesson objectives are clear and measurable.
- There is constant teacher movement around the room. Behavior problems are almost nonexistent.
- There is little dependence on worksheet-type activities. Lessons are highly interactive, and students remain engaged in meaningful activities.
- Technology is used, thoughtfully, to enhance lessons and learning.
- There is constant positive reinforcement.
- Teacher enthusiasm is evident and contagious.

These observed best practices are excellent. I would like to add a few of my own pertaining directly to math classrooms, work stations and small group instruction:

- Math classroom rules and practices are introduced and understood by your students.
- Students are engaged, leaving no time to get into mischief.
- Group members change over the course of the school year.
- Students rotate through 4 stations, spending 15-20 minutes on each.
- Students are able to explain their thinking and are given an opportunity to do so (or held accountable).
- Students know to play fairly, take turns, work the entire time and clean up.

If you have more observations to add to the list, we'd like to hear from you. For more information about what effective teachers' classrooms look like, read Breaux and Whitaker's article: [3]<http://www.middleweb.com/16325/effective-teachers-classroom-looks-like>

### **About the Blogger:**

Nicole Shanahan is the math specialist at HCDE. A self-professed Julia Roberts of presenters, she vows to weave a bit of entertainment into each of her math workshops. As teacher, mentor, trainer and coach, Nicole serves up workshops ala carte within districts or at HCDE headquarters at 6300 Irvington, Houston, TX. The mother-of-three clocks in more volunteer hours than the average bear can handle. She often writes about her cubs in her posts. Follow Nicole on Pinterest at: [4]Secondary Math | [5]Elementary Math.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/kids-in-classroom.jpg>
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4. <https://www.pinterest.com/hcde/math-secondary/>
5. <https://www.pinterest.com/hcde/math-elementary/>

# The Power of Twitter: Be an educator who is part of the conversation

(2016-04-18 16:23) - hcdetx



[1] Twitter is exploding lately with educational chats and cutting-edge practitioners to follow, but where does a novice begin?

This social media tool is becoming a place for educators to follow current trends in education and become part of the conversation themselves. Twitter appeals to educators both young in the field and experienced in their craft.

Look at these three categories to see if you are following any of these contributors to the current education discussions happening at the break-neck speed of Twitter.

**The Craft of Teaching:** Eric Sheninger—a Texas educator who not only has his finger on the pulse of education in Texas, but is highlighted nationally in both Scholastic and USA Weekend publications (Twitter handle: @E\_Sheninger). Chris Lehman—a Heinemann author who started, along with other educators, @TheEdCollab who offers online PD from an incredible array of teachers. He's witty and passionate about strengthening the craft of teaching (Twitter handle: @iChrisLehman).

## **Blogs and Websites:**

**Mr. Schu Reads**—This blog, along with the individual, is simply staggering in the weight and heft of material tweeted. An elementary librarian from Illinois and now Scholastic ambassador, this Tweeter has incredible elementary publishing insight (@MrSchuReads). **Edutopia**—This is a favorite for many educators, for pre-service teachers and even those new to the profession. There

are blog posts that run the gamut from classroom management to teaching with electronic media (Twitter handle: @Edutopia).

### **Chats to Follow:**

**#EdTherapy Chat**—This chat refreshes the soul and culls different perspectives from across the country. Matt Mingle (Twitter handle: @mmingle1) is the co-founder of the chat, and it is the first Friday of each month. **#TeachWriting Chat**—an essential chat for every ELA professional. Dual moderators Ben Khulman, a middle school science/social studies teacher, and Lisa Hughes, an elementary special education teacher, stand confidently at the helm. This chat is the first and third Tuesday of each month (Twitter handles: @bkhul2you, @lisahughes196, @TeachWriting2). **#Wonderchat** is another chat that refreshes teaching for all disciplines. This chat falls on the first Monday of each month and has such a diverse contributing group, educators the world around can't help but be drawn into the wonder around them.

**About the Blogger:** Kelly Tummy is curriculum director for English language arts and social studies in the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. During her 25-year career in education/administration, she has loyally served Harris County as an educator in Galena Park, Humble and most recently Crosby ISD. Tummy's workshops focus on inquiry-based instruction in the ELA classroom. Her passion for cross-curricular connections helps students and teachers see the elasticity in education.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/twitter\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/twitter_ps.jpg)

**Afterschool Professionals Week: Celebrating the heart of afterschool**  
(2016-04-25 14:49) - hcdetx



An estimated 10.2 million children participate in afterschool programs across the nation each year. Today, afterschool programs are viewed as more than just childcare, as they provide enhanced education in STEM, literacy, arts, health and wellness and more.

April 25-29 is Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, which celebrates the heart of afterschool by recognizing those who work with youth during out-of-school hours. Join HCDE this week to thank the afterschool professionals who make a difference in the lives of Harris County children by:

- Creating hand-written cards from you and/or your child;
- Sending a 'thank you' email to your afterschool staff;
- Creating fun, handmade signs for your child's afterschool location; or
- Bringing treats for the staff at your afterschool program.

To learn more about out-of-school time services offered by HCDE's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids, visit [1]<http://www.afterschoolzone.org/>.



## About the Blogger:

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Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us!

Facebook: [2]<https://www.facebook.com/HCDEx>

Twitter: [3]<https://twitter.com/HCDEx>

YouTube: [4]<http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEx>

Pinterest: [5]<http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

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## 1.5 May

## Good Teaching: It means really knowing the wrong answers too

(2016-05-02 12:19) - hcdetx



According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science Project 2061, 37 percent of high school students believe that the number of hours of daylight received on Earth changes because of the varying distance between the Earth and the Sun. A wonderful [1]video series entitled “A Private Universe” produced by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics shows that Harvard graduates have similar misconceptions. Even more misconceptions from the general public can be seen at [2]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3TRUDKpoAs>.

What is pervasive in both videos are two very common misconceptions:

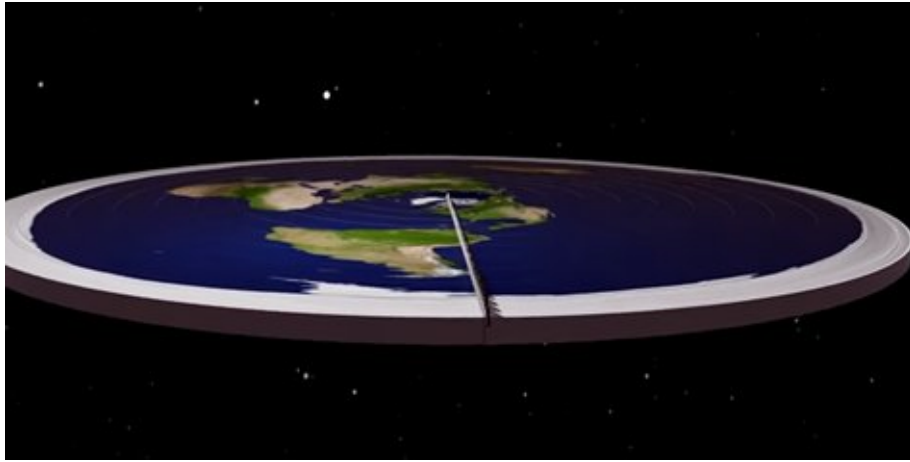
- 1) The shape of the orbit of the Earth around the Sun is an exaggerated ellipse (oval), and
- 2) The Earth is closer to the Sun in the summer.

It is not naïve or unreasonable to assume that the closer you are to something really hot, the hotter you will feel. This is why teachers have to address big ideas by starting with the misconceptions. If we don't understand flaws in student reasoning, it's impossible to undo a misconception and replace the idea with scientifically sound concepts.

### Understanding the seasons:

In order to correctly understand seasons, as teachers we must ensure that all students have a good grasp of the concept that the Earth is spherical. Elementary students are taught that the Earth is round. Without additional explanations and models, they may think the Earth is round *like a plate*.

[3]



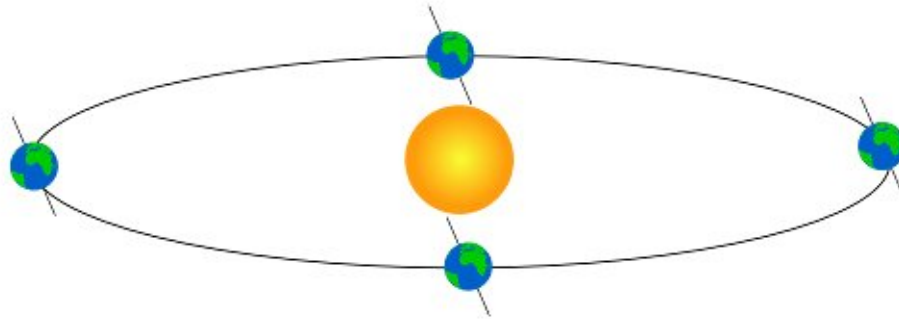
In the mind of a typical elementary student, this mental model makes perfect sense. Of course, it has no connection to what the teacher tries to convey. Even when presented with a three-dimensional model of the Earth, some students assume that even though the Earth may be spherical, they are standing on the flat part at the top.



[4] Luckily, even without a good grasp of gravity, as students get older, they are better able to accept the idea of a spherical Earth and that gravity keeps us at its surface. The same cannot be said for misconceptions about what causes seasons.

By far, the main reason students (and many adults) have a poor grasp of a working model of the seasons is because they have been exposed to images of the Earth's revolution around the Sun that can be misconstrued.

[5]



### The shape of Earth's orbit:

There is nothing wrong with this image, but students need to have a deeper understanding to get the true nature of the shape of Earth's orbit. Many teachers identify the shape as an ellipse. It is, however teachers should know what an ellipse actually is. The shape above is an ellipse, but so is a perfect circle. If the only image a student sees is similar to the one above, the student may think that an ellipse must be an exaggerated oval and that the Sun is much closer to that ellipse part of the time.

Students need to understand the perspective of the images shown. I like to use a hula hoop as an example. If you look at it from above, it looks like a circle, but if you view it from the side, it will have an oval shape.



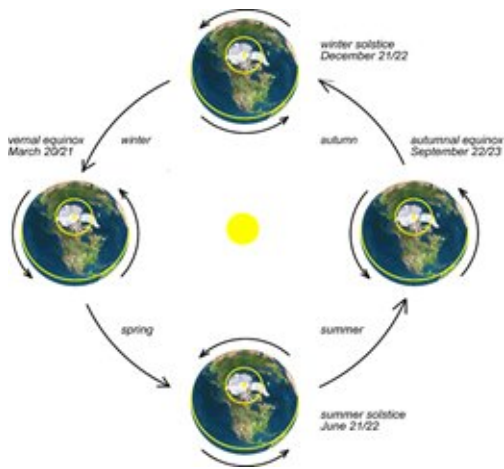
Top View



Side View

[6]

Students need to be shown views from above (North Pole views) as well as from the side (equator views) and understand that they are illustrating the same path.

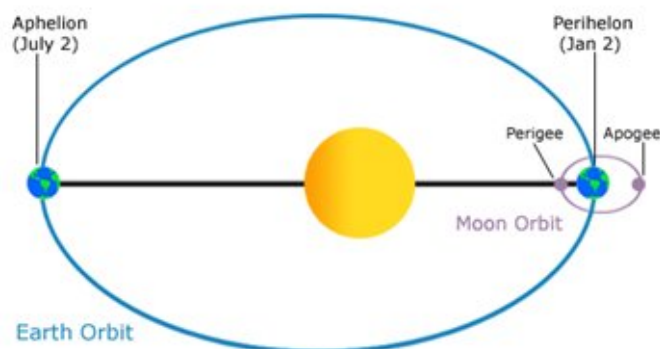


[7]

The [8]image above better illustrates the actual shape of Earth's orbit around the Sun. The actual elliptical path is closer to a circle in shape that it is to an oval.

The misconception that the Earth is closer to the Sun in the summer can be addressed in additional ways. Allowing students to directly confront misconceptions is ideal. The image below is a good example.

[9]



Even with an [10]equatorial view of the Earth's orbit around the Sun, it is quite apparent that the Sun is closer to Earth on Jan 2 than it is on July 2. A teacher can print out the picture and let students make measurements with a ruler. Ask them why it is hotter in July than it is in January. Let them put their explanations in writing. Only *now* can a teacher really address the tilt of the Earth and the

effect of the amount of direct sunlight on temperature. Without a good mental model and a chance to directly confront misconceptions, it is unlikely for students to change their understanding from a misconception to a scientifically correct understanding.

It is not always that the closer you are to something really hot, the hotter you will feel. The correct understanding with regard to seasons is that the more direct sunlight you have, the hotter you will feel. If teachers have this in mind when introducing and covering topics like seasons and the Earth's rotation and revolution, students will be much more likely to actually understand how daily temperature fluctuations and seasons work.

[11]A study by Philip M. Sadler and Gerhard Sonnert shows that when teachers included common misconceptions as incorrect answer choices on assessments, the misconception was actually more likely to be chosen by students. In the same study, when teachers were asked to predict incorrect answer choices of their students, only 41 percent could correctly identify likely wrong answers that students would choose. Professional development on student misconceptions is critical.

HCDE is offering a series of workshops addressing student misconceptions in all areas of science relating to the science TEKS and STAAR released science questions for grade 5 and 8 and high school biology. Find out more at [12]<http://wms.hcde-texas.org>.

### **Other Sources:**

[13]<http://assessment.aaas.org/>

[14]<https://www.learner.org/resources/series28.html>

[15]<https://www.learner.org/catalog/producers/puppro.html>

[16][http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/04/16/473273571/why-teachers-need-to-know-the-wrong-answers?utm\\_campaign=storyshare&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social](http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/04/16/473273571/why-teachers-need-to-know-the-wrong-answers?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social)

### **About the Blogger:**

Lisa Felske is curriculum director for science at Harris County Department of Education. Her areas of expertise include integrating science with other disciplines and student misconceptions in science. She enjoys being a Girl Scout leader, reading way past her bedtime, and using the Oxford comma.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0wk4qG2mIg>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3TRUDKpoAs>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/dish.png>
4. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/girl-on-world-misconceptions-blog.jpg>
5. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/sphere.png>
6. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/top\\_side-view-misconceptions-blog.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/top_side-view-misconceptions-blog.jpg)
7. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/rotation.png>
8. <http://web.nmsu.edu/~esgerken/lecture07/slide05.html>
9. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/orbit.png>

10. [http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/kits/tides/media/supp\\_tide06b.html](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/kits/tides/media/supp_tide06b.html)
11. <http://www.aft.org/ae/spring2016/sadler-and-sonnert>
12. <http://wms.hcde-texas.org/>
13. <http://assessment.aaas.org/>
14. <https://www.learner.org/resources/series28.html>
15. <https://www.learner.org/catalog/producers/puppro.html>
16. [http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/04/16/473273571/why-teachers-need-to-know-the-wrong-answers?utm\\_campaign=storyshare&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social](http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/04/16/473273571/why-teachers-need-to-know-the-wrong-answers?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social)



## Engaging the Online Student: 4 effective teaching practices (2016-05-09 11:00)

- hcdetx



[1] When I hear teachers talk about why they want to teach online, I often hear things like “I can work from home in my pajamas” or “I won’t have to deal with classroom management anymore.”

While those sentiments may be true, there is much to consider when translating your face-to-face teaching philosophies to a different teaching platform. Establishing these four effective online teaching practices is essential to the success of the online students as well.

**Engaging the learner as soon as possible is important** to build a sense of belonging and community in the online course. It is recommended that before the class begins you should contact the student through emails and phone calls and have discussion forums for students to get to know each other. This can also be done through digital storytelling so the learners can get to know

you and their classmates as real people.

**Regular and personalized communication** will keep the learners engaged and on pace throughout the course. High touch can be more important than high-tech. Just because a course is online does not mean that you should never see or talk to the students. Phone calls and video calls often help the students make the social and emotional connection to the course. Personalized and individual feedback is very meaningful to students and helps to keep them engaged in the course. Response to student correspondence within 24 hours will increase the instructor presence and make the learner feel like a part of a community.

**Expectations should be clear and explicit and directions clear and easy to understand.** When students know about what they have to do, realize the tools that they need to get it done and are notified about deadlines, they are more likely to stay on pace and engaged in the course.

**External resources can be great tools to supplement the course content** and help connect the learner to real life applications on the content. While there are endless resources that can enhance the course it is also very important to use the technology intentionally. While new tools, social media and digital communities can be very inviting and enhance the online course, make sure the tool is not driving the decision-making. It is always a good idea to review the objectives and make sure that the tool is helping you achieve those objectives.

While working in your pajamas does have some benefits, teaching online requires lots of time and dedication to the success of the students. By fostering student engagement and building rapport in the online classroom, you will ensure a productive and positive experience for the learner.

#### **About the Blogger:**

Lynnice Hockaday is a technology analyst for the Cirrus Learn Project at Harris County Department of Education. For the past 20 years, Lynnice has been an educator, curriculum specialist, technology coach and online instructor, and loves helping students and teachers reach outside the classroom walls by engaging and collaborating worldwide through online learning. Lynnice stays very busy outside of work with three active kids and enjoys hiking and biking in her spare time.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/shutterstock\\_233911162\\_ps1.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/shutterstock_233911162_ps1.jpg)

## Building Teamwork: Energize and connect through team-building exercises

(2016-05-16 12:02) - hcdetx



The last weeks of school are drawing to a close. After a well-deserved break, teachers and administrators will soon be planning and gearing up for a new school year. What better way to begin those back-to-school sessions than with active team-building exercises to energize your team members?

Below are a few examples of hands-on exercises to build communication and develop trust between teachers, administrators or other team members:

- **Mine Field** – Set up a “mine field” using chairs, empty boxes, etc. and leave enough space between the objects for someone to walk through. Blindfold one team member, and have the other member lead them through the mine field using only verbal directions.
- **Build It** – Groups of two are tasked with building a complex object out of common household items. The first team member has 10 minutes to write down detailed instructions for building the object (have them look at the object already built), and the second member then has 10 minutes to replicate the original object using only the instructions written by their partner.

- **All Tied Up** – In this exercise, groups are required to work together to complete a simple task such as wrapping a present or pouring a cup of water for everyone in the group. However, they are all tied together by their wrists. Problem-solving, communication and teamwork are essential in this exercise.

There are hundreds of creative team-building exercises available to unite teams. Whether you use one of the exercises mentioned above, or create one of your own, team-building is a perfect way to break the ice with new team members, or energize and connect your team before heading into a new school year.

Teams may also want to consider refreshing for the school year by attending our Leadership Series workshops this summer, which feature national presenters on an array of topics: [1]<http://goo.gl/QCBtuL>.

### **About the Blogger:**

Harris County Department of Education's Communication team helps promote the efforts of HCDE's programs and services to the education community. Our close-knit, award-winning team works together on creative strategies to effectively support the organization. We're always looking to share great stories and on occasion contribute to the HCDE blog, School Bell.

Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us!

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1. <http://goo.gl/QCBtuL>

2. <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEx>

3. <https://twitter.com/HCDEx>

4. <http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEx>

5. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

## Support Art Education: Making a case for elementary art programs

(2016-05-23 13:13) - hcdetx



[1] Just how important is art education? For elementary-aged students, it is a vital part of not only their development of fine motor skills, but also the right brain. Too many times in education are fine arts programs cut when budgets feel financial strain.

But educators and districts need to fight to keep elementary music and art as an integral part to the school day. For who are we to become if we don't have opportunities to grow creatively? Right now, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook/Instagram has a running contest that awards \$10,000 to each person who can fix a "bug" in one of his programs.

Most recently, a [2]young 10-year-old boy in Finland earned his \$10,000 for fixing an Instagram bug. He taught himself coding by watching YouTube videos and probably had many different creative opportunities in his short life. It's up to schools to help sustain avenues for creativity and to extol the values of the fine arts each day.

Here at HCDE, each summer we offer "You Gotta Have Art," a two-day workshop that trains new and experienced elementary art teachers in ways to help creativity bloom in young minds. By leading area school districts in art education, we are saying that the fine arts matter. Fine arts should be at the forefront of elementary instruction because we value the work of these professionals. Join us this July for our two-day workshop to help mold the creative problem-solvers of tomorrow. [3]View flier and register.

**About the Blogger:** Kelly Tummy is curriculum director for English language arts and social studies in the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. During her 25-year career in education/administration, she has loyally served Harris County as an educator in Galena Park, Humble and most recently Crosby ISD. Tummy's workshops focus on inquiry-based instruction in the ELA classroom. Her passion for cross-curricular connections helps students and teachers see the elasticity in education.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/art\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/art_ps.jpg)
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/may/03/instagram-comment-bug-10-year-old-hacking-f inland-reward>
3. [http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Fliers/GottaHaveArt16\(2\).pdf](http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Fliers/GottaHaveArt16(2).pdf)

## Remember the Fallen: Memorial Day is a time for reflection (2016-05-30 07:00)

- hcdetx



[1] Memorial Day is our federal holiday for remembering the people who died while serving as soldiers for our country. Flags and flowers are placed on graves of fallen soldiers. Memorials are held.

Memorial Day also signals the end of the school year. For educators, that's a time for closure and exhaustion.

As we rest during Memorial Day, let us never forget to honor those who served us and gave us the privilege of freedom. We thank those soldiers and hold their families close to our hearts.

### About the Blogger:

Harris County Department of Education's Communication team helps promote the efforts of HCDE's programs and services to the education community. Our close-knit, award-winning team works together on creative strategies to effectively support the organization. We're always looking to share great stories and on occasion contribute to the HCDE blog, School Bell.

Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us!

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Twitter: [3]<https://twitter.com/HCDEtx>

YouTube: [4]<http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEtv>

Pinterest: [5]<http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/memorial.jpg>

2. <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx>



3. <https://twitter.com/HCDEtx>
4. <http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEtv>
5. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

## 1.6 June

## CPR? Why educators need CPR and first aid training (2016-06-06 11:13) - hcdetx



[1] Would you know what to do in a cardiac, breathing or first aid emergency? The right answer could help you save a life.

We all hope we'll never be put in the position of having to save a child's life, but it could happen. Children test their physical limits and get caught in all kinds of dangerous situations. They choke on food, fall off bikes or play equipment and take risks daily. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, every five days in America a child dies from choking.

[2]Hands-on training that includes use of a CPR manikin, written and hands-on, skill-based instruction, practice and testing can give you the skills you need to save a life. Most CPR/First Aid courses also offer free online refreshers to keep your skills current.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says knowledge of pediatric first aid is critically important to the outcome of an emergency situation. Competencies you need include management of a blocked airway, rescue breathing and the confidence to use these skills. A few hours of your time is a worthwhile investment in the future of our students.

HCDE's [3]Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, hosts [4]CPR/First Aid training on June 16 from 9 a.m. to noon at 6005 Westview Drive, Houston, Texas, 77055. Cost is \$35. [5]Register here.

### About the Blogger:

Kathy Evans serves as a manager for the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment, or [6]CASE for Kids. CASE for Kids provides leadership, training, technical support and grants management to over 70 afterschool programs, serving over 8,000 youth. In her leisure time, Kathy spends time with her hubby and tries to get her three, four-legged sons—Chumley, Bentley and Dudley—to behave.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/cpr.jpg>
2. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10350>
3. <http://www.afterschoolzone.org/>
4. <http://hcde-texas.org/media/3937/cpr-training-web-2.pdf>
5. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10350>
6. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=025.CASE>

**Value Creative Teens: Enter, judge, sponsor Scholastic Art & Writing**  
(2016-06-13 10:41) - hcdetx



[1]  
Gold Key Medalist Andrea Conley, Houston ISD

Teachers, are you looking for a way to inspire your teen artists and writers? [2]Scholastic Art & Writing is an avenue for teens to get recognition for their artistic talents.

Local Village School student Gold Medalist Melanie Menkiti explains how the recognition feels. It's celebrating young artists the way that athletes are celebrated, she said, quoting filmmaker Ken Burns.

"Standing there with my fellow artists in Carnegie Hall where other greats once stood made me feel appreciated as a young artist," Menkiti said.

Sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education, these awards are submitted for judging in December. A variety of categories ranging from poetry to science fiction to short stories for writing and from drawing to photography to video games for art are available. Gold Key awardees advance to the national level for judging, and many get to attend medalist ceremonies at Carnegie Hall.

Here are three reasons you might consider getting involved with Scholastic Art & Writing this year to either enter, judge or sponsor.

1. The Awards offers opportunities for creative teens to earn recognition, exhibition, publication and scholarships for their writing or art.
2. Your school or district becomes part of a quality program which began in 1923 and includes alumni like Andy Warhol, Zac Posen, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote and Joyce Carol Oates.

You might have the opportunity to travel to New York City with your students if they earn national Medals. This recognition is "rock star" quality and allows both you and your student to celebrate your success as an artist, writer and teacher sponsor!

Here's what local Cypress-Fairbanks student artist Judy Labib said about her experience in New York City this summer: "I am extremely thankful for the opportunity I had to travel to go to New York and attend various events. Through these events I met other gold key recipients from all over the U.S. that have accomplished what I have as well. Meeting other people not only gave me new insights into art-making but allowed me to connect with others who understood the logistics of art world. From the workshops to the inspirational speakers, I have definitely received more than just a Medal. These events ultimately gave me a new perspective on art-making, which is the most important intangible item I took away from Scholastic."

We hope that you'll consider being involved in our regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards during the upcoming school year. The experience is guaranteed to enliven your fine arts program.

Here are some resources to get you started:

[3][http://hcde-texas.org/how-we-help-students/scholastic-art-writing-awards /](http://hcde-texas.org/how-we-help-students/scholastic-art-writing-awards/)

[4]<https://www.smores.com/c22ak-scholastic-art-and-writing-awards> [5]<http://oomscholasticblog.com/post/icymi-2016-scholastic-art-writing-awards-carnegie-hall?linkId=25196842>

**About the blogger:**

Andrea Segraves served in the public school system for 14 years as a teacher and an administrator before being named the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Center for HCDE. She is a boy-mom who spends her extra time at the ball fields and reading educational literature.

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/scholastic\\_ps3.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/scholastic_ps3.jpg)
2. <http://hcde-texas.org/how-we-help-students/scholastic-art-writing-awards/>
3. <http://hcde-texas.org/how-we-help-students/scholastic-art-writing-awards/>
4. <https://www.smores.com/c22ak-scholastic-art-and-writing-awards>
5. <http://oomscholasticblog.com/post/icymi-2016-scholastic-art-writing-awards-carnegie-hall?linkId=25196842>

## STEM Anyone? Inspiring Students to Pursue STEM Careers (2016-06-20 10:24)

- hcdetx



[1] Students are more interested in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers than we previously thought, according to a recent study published by the [2]Amgen Foundation.

Although students may show an increased interest in STEM fields, they are not translating that interest into a college STEM major. In order to more successfully move students into STEM careers, they need early opportunities that will inspire them to explore a variety of careers in scientific fields. Secondary science teachers are uniquely positioned to stimulate students' interest in STEM but often lack specific knowledge of pathways to STEM careers.

The Amgen student survey was designed to understand what motivates teens to study science and pursue a career in a scientific field. Results show that a surprising 81 percent of students are interested in science, but only 37 percent say that they like their science classes. It is not shocking that classroom teaching methods can greatly impact a student's desire to learn more about a topic.

Students profess to enjoy hands-on learning like experiments and field trips the most, followed by tools and strategies that help them relate science to real life. One-way communication such as class discussions or teaching straight from the book are least interesting, but among the most common. In a race to ensure that students are successful in learning science content, we must also make sure that they are literate in pathways to science career success.

"We are in an era where scientific advances provide the opportunity to make meaningful progress against some of the world's most serious diseases. To sustain this momentum, we must inspire the next generation of innovators. Through this study, we have seen that teachers are critical catalysts to inspiring a love of science in students."—**Raymond C. Jordan**, senior vice president of Corporate Affairs at Amgen, and Amgen Foundation Board of Directors member.

Most teenagers lack opportunities to learn about specific scientific careers and opportunities to



engage with practicing science professionals—experiences that are critical to developing a lifelong love of science. Most students believe that knowing an adult in their field of interest would be helpful, but only 32 percent actually know an adult in a science-based career. Teachers, especially secondary teachers, can play a more impactful role in steering students toward STEM careers, but these teachers must have their own learning opportunities first.

HCDE hosts an annual summer opportunity for science teachers to learn more about STEM careers and to see STEM careers in action during industry based field experiences. Science Teachers and Industry: Learning About Chemicals in the Environment is sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council and industry partners. Teachers in the week-long program have the opportunity to learn more about the local chemical manufacturing industry, local and state regulatory agencies and a wide variety of STEM career opportunities from practicing scientists and higher education sources. Teachers get specific, practical advice and personal contact information that they can use to inform students about STEM careers in a variety of areas. This summer the program will run from July 18-21, 2016. For more information email [3]lfelske@hcde-texas.org .

Source: [4]<https://www.amgen.com/media/news-releases/2016/06/new-national-survey-sheds-light-on-how-to-better-engage-students-in-science-education/>

### **About the Blogger:**

Lisa Felske is curriculum director for science at Harris County Department of Education. Her areas of expertise include integrating science with other disciplines and student misconceptions in science. She enjoys being a Girl Scout leader, reading way past her bedtime, and using the Oxford comma.

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1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/stem.jpg>
2. <https://www.amgen.com/media/news-releases/2016/06/new-national-survey-sheds-light-on-how-to-better-engage-students-in-science-education/>
3. <mailto:lfelske@hcde-texas.org>
4. <https://www.amgen.com/media/news-releases/2016/06/new-national-survey-sheds-light-on-how-to-better-engage-students-in-science-education/>

## It's Math Time: Don't allow for dip in summertime number sense

(2016-06-27 16:34) - hcdetx



[1] One in five adults in the United States is functionally in-numerate and does not possess the mathematical competencies for modern jobs, [2]according to an article published in the Public Library of Science (PLOS), a peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal.

[3]The article called "Adolescents' Functional Numeracy Is Predicted by Their School Entry Number System Knowledge" is authored by David C. Geary, Mary K. Hoard, Lara Nugent and Drew H. Bailey.

There seems to be a mindset that numeracy is not as important as reading during the summer months when kids are out of school. In truth, both are equally important, and there are things you can do to keep your child's math skills sharp.

Here are some activities, depending on where you are during the day. Whether you're on the road, on vacation or in your home, where there's a will there's a way.

[4]



**In the store:**

- Count the number of items. Count on. Make sums like 1 and 3 make 4, etc.
- Estimate prices of items and keep running total of the bill with parent and sibling, closest wins.

- Count out the money in line while waiting to pay.

**In the car** (using your car clock):

- Calculate how many minutes until the hour. (Once that gets easy then work ahead.)
- Determine what time it will be in 43 min (use numbers that are appropriate to your child's age. (Adding 43 minutes to 6:00 is different than adding 43 minutes to 6:30.)
- Count the seconds it take to drive a mile (When I was young, my mom would put on the cruise control at 60 miles per hour. I used to see if I could count the 60 seconds from mile marker to the next mile marker.)

**In the kitchen:**[5]



- Measure ingredients, but not just for the recipe. Give other measurements to practice and pour it back into the package
- Compare  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups. It's super important that second-grade students and up can explain that the more fractional parts to make a whole.
- Cut food in fractions like halves, fourths, eighths. To be more difficult, use thirds, sixths and fifths.
- Use the thermometer to check temperatures of different items and compare.
- Set the oven temperature.
- Practice sums of numbers with items in the kitchen.

### **In restaurants:**

- Estimate the total bill.
- Give children the menu with prices and ask them to make an order that is about \$20.
- Calculate a 15 or 20 percent tip.

### **About the Blogger:**

Nicole Shanahan is the math specialist at HCDE. A self-professed Julia Roberts of presenters, she vows to weave a bit of entertainment into each of her math workshops. As teacher, mentor, trainer and coach, Nicole serves up workshops ala carte within districts or at HCDE headquarters at 6300 Irvington, Houston, TX. The mother-of-three clocks in more volunteer hours than the average bear can handle. She often writes about her cubs in her posts. Follow Nicole on Pinterest at: [6]Secondary Math | [7]Elementary Math

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/shutterstock\\_92970787.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/shutterstock_92970787.jpg)

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4072/adolescents-functional-numeracy-is-predicted-by-their-school-entry-number-system-knowledge.pdf>

3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4072/adolescents-functional-numeracy-is-predicted-by-their-school-entry-number-system-knowledge.pdf>

4. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/bowling-3.jpg>

5. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/at-home-1.jpg>

6. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/math-secondary/>

7. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/math-elementary>

## 1.7 July



**Happy 4th of July: Have a safe holiday! (2016-07-04 12:00) - hcdetx**



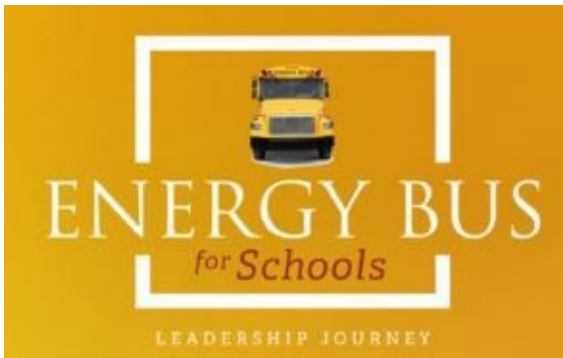
Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July! Like many of you, we're off today in recognition of Independence Day. Families all over the country are celebrating with parades, firework displays, picnics, barbecues and more. No matter how you're celebrating, the staff at School Bell and HCDE wish you a happy and safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday! **About the Blogger:** Harris County Department of Education's Communication team helps promote the efforts of HCDE's programs and services to the education community. Our close-knit, award-winning team works together on creative strategies to effectively support the organization. We're always looking to share great stories and on occasion contribute to the HCDE blog, School Bell. Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us! Facebook: [1]<https://www.facebook.com/HCDetx> Twitter: [2]<https://twitter.com/HCDetx> YouTube: [3]<http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDetv> Pinterest: [4]<http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>



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3. <http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDetv>
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## Ride the Energy Bus: Experience the power of positive leadership

(2016-07-11 11:38) - hcdetx



The Energy Bus for Schools Leadership Tour comes to Harris County Department of Education on July 28. The Energy Bus engages participants in the ride of a lifetime while revealing secrets for approaching life and the workplace with an attitude for success.

Everyone is tested in some capacity or another during their life and every team, organization and company deals with negative issues. For leaders interested in turning negative energy into positive results, The Energy Bus will utilize the following steps to transform your culture with the power of positive leadership:

1. Create your vision
2. Fuel your vision with purpose
3. Write down your vision/purpose statement
4. Focus on your vision
5. Zoom focus
6. Get on the bus
7. Fuel the ride with positive energy and enthusiasm
8. Post a sign that says "No Energy Vampires Allowed"
9. Navigate adversity and potholes

10. Love your passengers
11. Have fun and enjoy the ride

For more information or to get tickets, visit [1]<http://www.energybusschools.com/events.php>.

### **About the Blogger:**

Frances Watson-Hester has been an educator in public schools for the past 24 years. Her experience includes being a teacher, counselor, coordinator, assistant principal and principal. Frances is currently the senior director for the [2]Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. With two energetic boys, she spends her time keeping up with them and staying abreast of current educational practices.

1. <http://www.energybusschools.com/events.php>

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/who-we-are/divisions-and-leadership/teaching-and-learning-center/>

## Digital Summer Safety for Kids: 3 tips to consider (2016-07-18 11:47) - hcdetx



While we remember to put sunscreen on our kids for skin protection from the blazing days of summer, we also need to remember computer screen protection as our children spend their free time on computers. Many parents work during the summer and kids stay at home in front of screens, so this is a great time to remember digital safety tips for kids.

According to Pew Internet Research ([1][www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)) 92 percent of teens report going online daily. There are three tips parents should consider and discuss with their kids as they work to keep them safe online this summer.

1. **Encourage Responsible Sharing** Summer camp and family vacations often result in new social media connections for students. This is a great time for kids to check their privacy settings on all of their social media accounts. Remind kids to make sure their social media posts and profiles do not reveal too much personal information, such as their full name and location.
2. **Post Positively** Kids will have less face-to-face time and more digital communication time with their friends during the summer. This is a great opportunity to remind them to keep the comments and posts positive. Posting positives can be contagious and lead to others posting positively, so encourage kids to take the lead and be positive online. Remind kids that posting wild and crazy pics from summer parties may be funny now, but it could cost them future opportunities if seen by admissions counselors and hiring managers.

1. **Know the Law** There are rules in place to help you keep kids safe online. Knowing those laws and making sure that the sites frequented by the kids will help ensure their safety online. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) was put in place to protect the personal information of children under age 13. Websites are required to notify parents directly and get their approval before they collect, use or disclose a child's personal information. More information can be found at [2]COPPA. It is always a good idea to review the privacy policy of the websites and apps that kids frequent.

So when you are putting on the bike helmet and lathering in sunscreen to keep kids safe, remember to also check on their online safety. Online activity can be easy to ignore or brush off, but it could affect kids' safety, future and reputation and should be monitored carefully.

## Resources

- Cyberbullying - [3]<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/>
- Social Media Apps Parents Should Know About - [4]<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/social-media-apps-parents-should-know-about>
- Why Parents Should Care About Online Safety - [5]<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/6-reasons-why-parents-should-care-about-kids-and-online-privacy>

## About the Blogger:

Lynnice Hockaday is a technology analyst for the Cirrus Learn Project at Harris County Department of Education. For the past 20 years, Lynnice has been an educator, curriculum specialist, technology coach and online instructor, and loves helping students and teachers reach outside the classroom walls by engaging and collaborating worldwide through online learning. Lynnice stays very busy outside of work with three active kids and enjoys hiking and biking in her spare time.

1. <http://www.pewinternet.org/>

2. <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-protecting-your-childs-privacy-online>

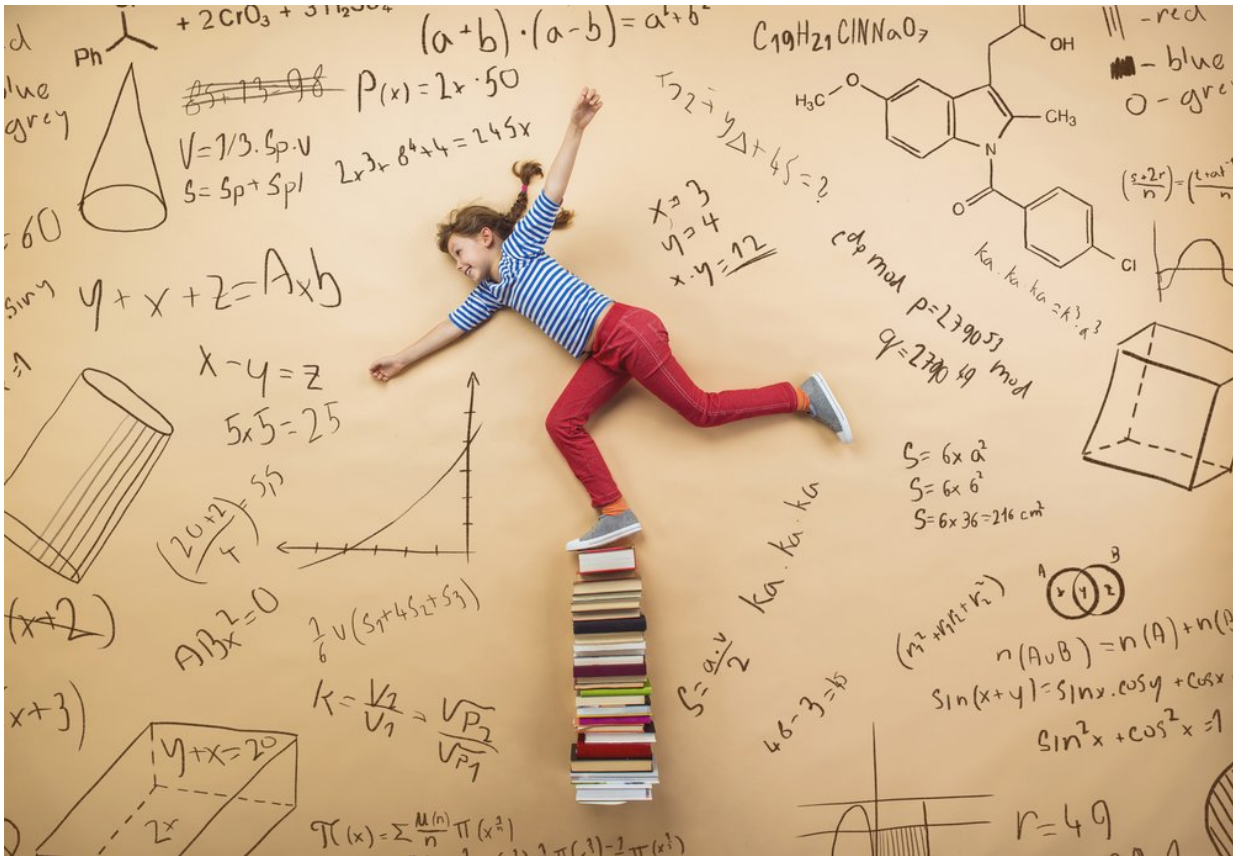
3. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/>

4. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/social-media-apps-parents-should-know-about>

5. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/6-reasons-why-parents-should-care-about-kids-and-online-privacy>



## First Attempt in Learning (FAIL): Encourage students to wander into the unknown (2016-07-25 12:00) - hcdetx





As a blogger, I usually focus on well-researched topics that can be propped up with experimental data or content from thought leaders with subject experience. For this series of blog posts, I'll try something a little bit different.

When we think about the topic of innovation, we often think about the latest/newest/greatest/flashiest gadget or digital resource. I've been the manager of innovation at Harris County Department of Education for almost seven years now. I have learned this one important lesson about innovation: It is more about risk and failure than anything else. Just recently, I read something from Jennie Magiera, a former teacher in Chicago and a current edtech leader. She encouraged readers to consider the word FAIL as an acronym for "first attempt in learning." I like this view of failure, but how do you do this while still meeting the learning needs of students and encouraging progress? The following blog post is part one of the lessons that I have learned about innovation, risk and the role of failure in education.

**Lesson Number 1:** Encourage students to wander into the unknown.

In educational technology, wandering into the unknown may mean allowing students to make their own determinations about how to use a specific tool or resource to solve a problem.

I once had students do a project on biomes in a biology class using PowerPoint to make a slide show to share with the rest of the class. At the time, PowerPoint was not used very often for classroom projects. Unbeknownst to me, the students didn't have a strong understanding of how to use this

software. On the surface, this would look like a recipe for disaster. However, what I received from my students were some clever applications of the software.

One group of students used slides as jumping off points for a choose-your-own-adventure game. Another group used a map that they created with clickable hotspots to teach others more about a subject that they might be interested in about the tundra. One of my co-teach students (who insisted on working alone) created a powerful image-driven slide show about the erosion of glaciers in the arctic. He didn't include a single word of text, just images and background music.

My students wowed me with their creativity and because I never told them how they **should** use a tool, they discovered novel uses on their own.

During the upcoming months, I'll be sharing more lessons in FAIL: first attempt in learning. Stay tuned for more installments.

### **About the Blogger:**

David McGeary, manager of innovation at HCDE, spends his days exploring the ways that old and new digital tools and resources can be used to enhance a student's ability to learn new things, collaborate with learners anywhere and share new ideas with the world. When not hard at work, David enjoys playing classical guitar, practicing photography or doing anything his new wife tells him to do.

## 1.8 August

## Let them CHOOSE: Fostering Lifelong Readers (2016-08-01 16:22) - hcdetx



As teachers return from a summer spent reading for pleasure, there are some salient points to keep in mind about students reading their choice of reading materials.

Language arts teachers do not have content to teach; they have recursive skills with increasing text complexities to tackle each year. Some students come to the next grade reading on grade level, or above/below grade level. While similar learning gaps exist in math, science and social studies, ELA teachers need to be more purposeful in addressing the skills to help build a stronger foundation for reading in any genre. When teachers create a strong foundation with these text-types, other genres and even writing will be more successful.

Building better readers is a daunting process at any grade level. Whether it is teaching students *how* to read or how to read *better*, elementary and secondary teachers alike must push for more independent practice with these texts. Much of a class period day is spent examining a text, teaching one particular text, and even asking students to identify the conflict, to describe the setting, or point out the setting. But at what point in instruction do teachers hand over the reins and see what students can do with a piece of text?

Donalyn Miller, *The Book Whisperer* author, reminds us on each page to LET STUDENTS CHOOSE books that interest them. Then and only then will we see real reading growth. Penny Kittle, *Book Love* author, advocates the same. Letting a child choose his or her reading path is the way to student reading success. Many of us read all summer for fun...why shouldn't students be doing the same in your class?

**About the Blogger:**

Kelly Tummy is curriculum director for English language arts and social studies in the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. During her 25-year career in education/administration, she has loyally served Harris County as an educator in Galena Park, Humble and most recently Crosby ISD. Tummy's workshops focus on inquiry-based instruction in the ELA classroom. Her passion for cross-curricular connections helps students and teachers see the elasticity in education.

## Leading Effectively: What Great Educators Do Differently (2016-08-08 12:47)

- hcdetx



What are the specific qualities and practices of great educators that elevate them above the rest? The upcoming Harris County Department of Education workshop featuring Dr. Todd Whitaker will reveal what the most effective educators do differently than their colleagues.

Blending school-centered studies and experience working with hundreds of administrators, this Leadership Series workshop on October 20, 2016 will focus on the things that most successful principals do that other educators do not.

Area administrators, counselors, principals, assistant principals and teachers will leave with specific practices they can immediately implement into their school to make them more effective leaders.

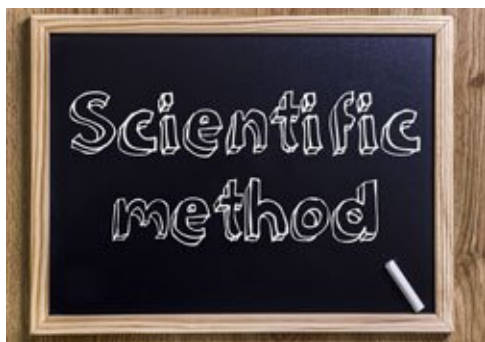
Recognized as a leading presenter in the education field, Todd Whitaker's message about the importance of teaching has resonated with more than 100,000 educators around the world. Join area educators in October to learn how to effectively prepare your students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To learn more or register for the workshop, visit [1]<https://goo.gl/Atjaau>. **About the Blogger:** Andrea Seg-raves served in the public school system for 14 years as a teacher and an administrator before being named the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Center for HCDE. She is a boy-mom who spends her extra time at the ball fields and reading educational literature.

1. <https://goo.gl/Atjaau>



## Scientific Method: Why teachers need to stop teaching it (2016-08-15 11:41)

- hcdetx



[1] It's back-to-school time, and teachers are busy attending professional development. In addition to learning new teaching and learning strategies, science teachers should also be thinking about how to ensure that their students have a good understanding of how science actually works. The first week of school is a great time for making sure your students understand the nature of science, or how science works.

Do not teach your students that there is a “scientific method.” I know you may have posters for this, and it may even be in your textbook or other curriculum materials. However, telling them that science always follows these steps leads to deep misconceptions about how science actually works.



[2] The scientific method includes steps to experimental design, which is not a method used by all scientists. By teaching that there is only one correct step-by-step way to do science, students may have a difficult time understanding that there are many more paths to scientific understanding. In some cases, laboratory experimentation is not possible.

For example, a population biologist may carry out ecological sampling techniques to study long-term changes in animal and plant populations. This is not a controlled experiment where one variable is manipulated, but it is definitely science.

Many discoveries in science had nothing to do with the scientific method. When Alexander Fleming accidentally left the cover off a petri dish in his lab, the bacteria he was cultivating was contaminated with mold spores. Then he noticed that the bacteria stopped growing. He did not start with a hypothesis; he started with an observation. It was probably something like: “Hmmm. That’s weird.”

Many fields of science are based on other types of scientific knowledge such as building models or examining evidence. For example, atmospheric scientists create computer programs to model and predict hurricane movement. A geologist might look at core samples or landforms to try to determine what happened in the past. These studies collect evidence, but they do not rely on controlled experimentation. Bioinformaticists (scientists who studies genomes) can generate enormous amounts of data about gene sequences. Their study doesn’t always start with a hypothesis; it might start with a question, such as whether temperature can turn a gene on or off.

In Texas, our science curriculum standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) do not require students to independently do experimental investigations until fifth grade. In K-4, students are asked to perform descriptive investigations. A descriptive investigation will not have a hypothesis. (It may have a prediction instead.) The descriptive investigation will not have variables, and it might not even have collected data to analyze and interpret. Students can become very confused when teachers tell them that science follows a “scientific method,” and then they never follow that method in science investigations.

So what should we tell students about how science works? Instead of teaching “scientific method” we should teach about the practices of science. This is part of the Science TEKS as well. It is also part of the conceptual framework outlined by the National Research Council in A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts and Core Ideas (online at [3][www.nap.edu/read/13165/chapter/4](http://www.nap.edu/read/13165/chapter/4)).

When learning science, students should know and be able to do the following:

1. Ask questions and define problems
2. Develop and use a model
3. Plan and carry out an investigation
4. Organize, analyze and interpret data
5. Use mathematical and computational thinking
6. Construct explanations and design solutions
7. Obtain, evaluate and communicate information
8. Engage in argument from evidence

Note the lack of a firm step-by-step process. The term hypothesis is not even mentioned.

So how should students really learn how science works? Students learn by actually doing science. After completing a descriptive investigation, let students use a metacognitive approach and analyze their steps in the process. They may find that the steps were not exactly linear or that they have more questions than they did when they started. Let them compare their actual steps to the steps in a “scientific method” poster. Students can then understand that although they carried out a scientific investigation, they did not follow a prescribed “scientific method.”

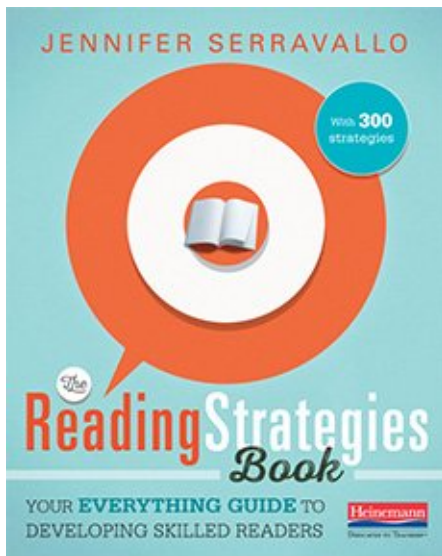
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1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/scientific-method.jpg>
2. [http://www.posterrevolution.com/poster.cfm/the-scientific-method-classroom-chart-poster-13x19?class=1001&gclid=CJW7q8eQvM4CFdgQgQod\\_XkChA](http://www.posterrevolution.com/poster.cfm/the-scientific-method-classroom-chart-poster-13x19?class=1001&gclid=CJW7q8eQvM4CFdgQgQod_XkChA)
3. <http://www.nap.edu/read/13165/chapter/4>

## Make Reading Actionable and Visible: Jen Serravallo's 300 strategies

(2016-08-22 12:42) - hcdetx



[1] Reading expert Jen Serravallo finds that reading strategies make the “often invisible work of reading actionable and visible.” From her experiences from teaching a wide range of student reading levels in two Title I schools in New York City and working within the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, the Vassar College alum has amassed considerable knowledge about teaching reading and writing.

Clear goal-setting, purposeful strategy instruction and plenty of time to practice helps teachers make learning visible to students, she says.

Her new book called “The Reading Strategies Book” references 300 strategies to share with readers to support 13 goals—from fluency to literary analysis.

Serravallo shares that practicing readers can benefit from goal-directed, differentiated instruction through the strategies. Each strategy is cross-linked to skills, genres and Fountas & Pinnell

reading levels.

Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center hosts Jen Serravallo and her workshop called [2]"Reading Strategies for Goal-Directed Instruction" on Sept. 22 at 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas. Administrators English language arts, bilingual and special education instructors and curriculum coordinators can benefit from her training. To register, go to [3][www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) and enter workshop number 10765.

### **About the Blogger:**

Andrea Segraves served in the public school system for 14 years as a teacher and an administrator before being named the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Center for HCDE. She is a boy-mom who spends her extra time at the ball fields and reading educational literature.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/reading-strategies.jpg>
2. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10765>
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/register>

## Practicing Grace and Ingenuity: The responsibility of all educators

(2016-08-29 07:00) - hcdetx



[1] One year I called my younger brother at the end of the first week of school and told him what a hard year it had already been for me. His response: All eight months? For people who don't work a school schedule, our year is a different year. August is the start of our year, not the eighth month of it. As school started this week, I was reminded of the responsibility of all educators to remember why we are here: student success.

Student success comes from all influences in a district—from the superintendent to the teacher to the groundskeepers to the referees at football games. We each have an opportunity to influence students somehow, and on our shoulders rests the success of every student in our districts. So how do we face a year that could be underfunded, understaffed and over-tested? We call on grace, and we call on ingenuity to get us through the day.

Grace comes in many forms. As educators and district employees, we need to remind ourselves that we don't deal in commodities and abstracts—we deal in real, live human beings who may not have breakfast, who may have lost a parent or a sibling, who may or may not have a roof over their heads. Grace reminds us to listen to these children, hear their points of view and their stories, and equip and support them along their storied paths. There is no power quite like the belief in another human being.

As C.S. Lewis reminds us: “We are what we believe we are.” No child comes to any school wanting failure and wanting struggle. All children want to succeed and see achievement each and every day in their lives.

But it is ingenuity that is the hallmark of a dedicated educator. That inventiveness and resourcefulness accompanied by grace will be what propels students toward success. Find a new way to teach a math concept so that it becomes more concrete for students. Choose a novel that students like and can relate to. Design a science experiment that will blow their minds and will encourage them to seek out new discoveries on their own. If you re-imagine a new way to teach often, you are invigorated in this profession and by extension you keep moving students along their paths to more success.

Meet this school year head-on with equal portions of grace and ingenuity, and maybe your first hard week will result in a glorious school year full of student success beyond your wildest dreams.

### **About the Blogger:**

Kelly Tummy is curriculum director for English language arts and social studies in the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. During her 26-year career in education/administration, she has loyally served Harris County as an educator in Galena Park, Humble and most recently Crosby ISD. Tummy’s workshops focus on relevant, responsive and research-based professional learning that yield increased student achievement and teacher engagement. Follow her on **Twitter @KellyTummy**

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/shutterstock\\_397707610.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/shutterstock_397707610.jpg)

## 1.9 September





School Bell Blog is taking a break this week for Labor Day. Enjoy the day off from school and work today and have a happy and safe Labor Day!

Read more about the history of Labor Day here: [1]<https://www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history>.

**About the Blogger:** Harris County Department of Education's Communication team helps promote the efforts of HCDE's programs and services to the education community. Our close-knit, award-winning team works together on creative strategies to effectively support the organization. We're always looking to share great stories and on occasion contribute to the HCDE blog, School Bell.

Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us!

Facebook: [2]<https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx>

Twitter: [3]<https://twitter.com/HCDEtx>

YouTube: [4]<http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEtv>

Pinterest: [5]<http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

1. <https://www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history>

2. <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx>

3. <https://twitter.com/HCDEtx>

4. <http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEtv>

5. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

## Let Students Learn Their Own Way: Encourage multiple intelligences

(2016-09-12 09:26) - hcdetx





I have had the privilege to serve students, families and the community for almost two decades as a teacher, reading specialist, district intervention coordinator, principal and in my current role as the director of special populations for Harris County Department of Education. My passion lies with those students who have an extraordinary gift of learning differently. I am convinced that our students come to us with intelligences that are unique to themselves that may not fit into what some consider the "intelligent" student. I am referring to what is called multiple intelligences.

Dr. Thomas Armstrong, psychologist, lecturer, consultant and author, wrote the book, "In Their Own Way: Discovering and Encouraging Your Child's Multiple Intelligences," which has been said to shatter the conventional wisdom that brands our students as "underachievers," "unmotivated," or as suffering from "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder," or other "learning disabilities."

Armstrong explains how these flawed labels often overlook students who are in possession of a distinctive combination of multiple intelligences, and demonstrates how to help them acquire knowledge and skills according to their sometimes extraordinary aptitudes.

The eight intelligences Dr. Armstrong is referring to are:

- **Linguistic intelligence** ("word smart")
- **Logical-mathematical intelligence** ("number/reasoning smart")
- **Spatial intelligence** ("picture smart")
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence** ("body smart")
- **Musical intelligence** ("music smart")

- **Interpersonal intelligence** ("people smart")
- **Intrapersonal intelligence** ("self smart")
- **Naturalist intelligence** ("nature smart")

The first two, linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence, are the most commonly appreciated in the educational world, however there are six other intelligences that should be equally examined and celebrated. Take time to observe children to see what they are naturally attracted to and how they naturally solve problems. Doing this gives insight to teachers as to how to design lessons that tap into the unique abilities that these students possess, which could allow them to demonstrate what they have learned in their own way.

Parents should take this same approach and encourage and support the development of interests in the fine arts, music, sports, culinary skills, nature or even architecture. Our students are more than the curriculum that is taught in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. They are unique, passionate, brilliant individuals who have a desire to be validated and deserve to be taught and encouraged to reach their fullest potential...in their own way. **About the Blogger:** Darlene Breaux serves as the Director for Special Populations for the Teaching and Learning Center at the Harris County Department of Education. She has a passion for working with students with learning differences and helping them discover the brilliance in their differences. When not training, coaching teachers and supporting parents, Darlene enjoys listening to music, learning the new line dances and shopping for that PERFECT shoe!

## Building Culturally Responsive Educators: Leadership Summit 2016

(2016-09-19 06:20) - hcdetx



[1] How can educators go beyond sound pedagogical practices to achieve academic excellence for the teacher and the student? Through Harris County Department of Education's (HCDE) Leadership Summit 2016, Dr. Kimberly McLeod reveals how academic excellence is not purely an intellectual process. She shares how values, beliefs and behaviors interact to influence the culture of the learning environment.

Culturally responsive educators believe that all children can learn. That learning process can happen regardless of race, intellect, achievement and other external factors such as socio-economic status and parental involvement. Culturally responsive educators know the importance of truly understanding their students and providing a learning environment where every student feels valued and understood.

Participants in the HCDE Leadership Summit 2016 will gain powerful strategies that will change perspectives and encourage leaders to embrace change that will positively impact academic achievement. Participants will engage in activities that create campus learning environments with a culture of practices and beliefs that enhance and accelerate positive academic outcomes serving to empower the teacher and the learner.

Dr. Kimberly McLeod is known nationally and internationally for her research based approach to professional development and is an expert consultant in the field of cultural responsiveness. Join Houston area leaders in education on October 24 at [2]HCDE's Leadership Summit 2016 to engage in activities and discussions to embrace changes that will positively impact academic achievement.

Register for our no-cost, [3]Leadership Summit .

**About the Blogger:** Lynnice Hockaday is a technology analyst for the Cirrus Learn Project at Harris County Department of Education. For the past 20 years, Lynnice has been an educator, curriculum specialist, technology coach and online instructor, and loves helping students and teachers reach outside the classroom walls by engaging and collaborating worldwide through online learning. Lynnice stays very busy outside of work with three active kids and enjoys hiking and biking in her spare time.

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/shutterstock\\_110625884\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/shutterstock_110625884_ps.jpg)

2. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=11121>

3. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=11121>

**Challenge Punishment-Oriented Thinking: Lead to restore with circle process (2016-09-26 14:57) - hcdetx**





Punishment-oriented thinking for youth behavior is old news.

Punitive approaches that rely mainly on exclusionary practices to manage student behavior are being challenged by a process called “restorative practices,” a spin-off from restorative justice. Restorative practices have been for a long time and highlights the importance of building relationships, repairing harm and holding students accountable for repairing the harm they cause. “Circles” are being used as the means to improve school climate, culture and build a sense of community with less reliance on exclusionary practices such out of school suspension, expulsion, and in school suspension.

The idea is to use restorative circles in classrooms to set things right when there is conflict. The result is a calmer, more focused group of students that respect the community values, norms and relationships established in the classroom. Time spent with behavior management is reduced and students learn how to be responsible for their behavior.

The circle is explained in great detail by the [2]International Institute for Restorative Practices, a graduate school devoted to restorative practices in Pennsylvania.

“The circle is a versatile restorative practice that can be used proactively, to develop relationships and build community or reactively, to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts and problems. Circles give people an opportunity to speak and listen to one another in an atmosphere of safety, decorum and equality. The circle process allows people to tell their stories and offer their own perspectives (Pranis, 2005).”

Restorative process is being implemented in school districts around the country. Locally, an

innovative educator named Karen Sparks from Katy ISD is co-piloting restorative practices on her campus. Sparks has been an advocate for students and parents for 20-plus years.

If you're already using restorative practices through circles, we'd like to hear from you.

To hear more about "restorative practices" and the use of "circles" for behavior improvement, consider attending our training on Oct. 20 from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. with Sparks at Harris County Department of Education, 6005 Westview Dr., Houston, Texas 77055. Register for "[3]Show Me How to Do Circles," [4][www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) (workshop number 11084).

### **Resources for Circles:**

The International Institute for Restorative Practices, [5][www.iirp.edu](http://www.iirp.edu) .

Pranis, K. (2005). The Little Book of Circle Processes. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

### **About the Blogger:**

Ecomet Burley, a 26-year administrator, is the leader of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. Established in 1999, the Center provides school safety and security training for school districts in greater Harris County. Burley, the former superintendent of La Marque ISD, resides in Pearland with wife Frances, an elementary school principal. Education, Burley insists, is the primary and native language spoken in their home.

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/shutterstock\\_199091393\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/shutterstock_199091393_ps.jpg)
2. <http://www.iirp.edu/>
3. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=11084>
4. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/register>
5. <http://www.iirp.edu/>

**1.10 October**

## Looking for Ways to Financially Support School Activities? Get grants!

(2016-10-03 09:00) - hcdetx



Educators use many approaches to acquire grant funding. Some teachers apply to their education foundations to secure teacher grants. These education foundations as 501(c)3 nonprofits receive support from individuals and businesses within their community interested in supporting district activities including teacher grants and scholarships. Teachers can also apply directly to organizations that support classroom, student and/or teacher activities. These can include awards, fellowships and grants.

If interested in approaching these organizations, you need to work with your campus principal and most likely your district administration to apply. Many districts have formal approval processes before a teacher or other district staff can apply for a grant. Plus, some of the information requested by the funder can only be obtained from district administration. Campus or district leadership will most likely need to sign the application. These are valid processes, and the money awarded will require tracking and monitoring by the campus and district.

Applications can range from a simple email inquiry to a more complex online or written proposal. Some funders ask for an email or letter of inquiry as an introduction. If the funder is interested in the project, a formal proposal will be requested. Each organization that grants funds has its own mission, goals and funding priorities. In order to get funded, the project you present must align perfectly with the funder's interests.

Writing and submitting applications or proposals to organizations interested in funding your classroom or student projects can take some time, but are very rewarding. If you don't ask, you will never know.

“A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent

doing nothing.” – George Bernard Shaw

You may be one of the lucky ones that gets your project funded with the first request. However, it is not uncommon to have to apply to several organizations before finding the right fit.

Here is a brief listing of grants that support classroom activities:

1. Donors Choose – [1][donorchoose.org](http://donorchoose.org) is a United States–based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that allows individuals to donate directly to public school classroom projects.
2. Fund for Teachers Grants – [2]<http://fft.fundforteachers.org/> supports educators’ efforts to develop skills, knowledge and confidence that impact student achievement.
3. Save on Energy Teacher Grants – [3]<https://www.saveonenergy.com/teacher-grant/> looks for the best lesson plans for teaching students about energy or sustainability.
4. AEP Teacher Vision Grants – [4]<http://www.aep.com/community/TeachersAndStudents/TeacherVisionGrants.aspx> is for those who have participated in the National Energy Education Development Project. AEP supports projects that improve student achievement. Also supports projects where teachers motivate youth to learn to think creatively, to step into leadership roles and to address the challenges of the future.
5. VFW Teacher Award - [5]<https://www.vfw.org/Community/Teacher-of-the-Year/> recognizes teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism. Teachers may plan field trips to city hall, organize community volunteer projects, invite local veterans to speak in class or anything else to help students develop a better understanding of democratic values and beliefs.

To find more resources, go to [6]<http://www.pinterest.com/grant-info/educators>.

### **About the Blogger:**

Center for Grants Development Director Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard is a nationally certified grants professional. For 20 years, she has helped organizations acquire foundation, corporate and collaborative government grants. She and her husband enjoy arts and music festivals, their dog Mandy and two cats Austin and Kitty.

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1. <http://www.donorchoose.org/>
2. <http://www.fundforteachers.org/>
3. <https://www.saveonenergy.com/teacher-grant/>
4. <http://www.aep.com/community/TeachersAndStudents/TeacherVisionGrants.aspx>
5. <https://www.vfw.org/Community/Teacher-of-the-Year/>
6. <http://www.pinterest.com/grant-info/educators>



## The GED Helps Adults Get Back on Track: Is it enough? (2016-10-10 14:17)

- hcdetx



[1] For the more than 600,000 adults without high school diplomas in Harris County, gaining a High School Equivalency Certificate (HSEC) is traditionally a way of getting back on track. Maybe the goal is to attend college or to compete for family-sustaining jobs. Yet the road to obtaining a HSEC becomes steeper, and its economic rewards are somewhat underwhelming.



The GED test is currently the only way to obtain a HSEC in Texas, but more options are on the way. Since the GED test was updated in 2014, the number of people taking the test and those passing the test dropped by as much as 90 percent compared to previous years.

Why? The new test is significantly harder, incorporating both national and Texas college and career readiness standards. For instance, approximately 60 percent of the new math test covers algebra, a topic that was barely addressed by the old GED test. Reading and writing tasks in the new GED also require students to analyze and evaluate multiple reading passages.

Some veteran adult education teachers in our program received extra training to cope with the higher level academic requirements of the test. The more rigorous test standards were designed to ensure that GED certificates were truly equivalent to high school diplomas and that they truly demonstrated readiness for college or other post-secondary training. On the negative side, the new test is making it much harder for adults to get back on track with their education.

In 2015, the GED Testing Service rolled back the passing score for GED test because GED passers were actually better prepared for college than the average high school student. So while GED passing rates are slowly beginning to climb, it is still a very challenging test. This is especially true for adults who have been out of school for a few years.

Even if an adult is successful in obtaining a GED, how much of an impact is going to have on their lives? Most of the recent research on the impact of the GED shows that the economic impact of obtaining a GED for a person is about \$80 a week compared to someone without high school diploma.

More significant wage impacts don't begin to show up until adults have a few years of college or job related post-secondary certificate. Recent labor market research also shows that in Texas and nationwide, up to 60 percent of jobs in the next 10 years will require a college degree, making it harder for those with just a GED or high school diploma to effectively compete for most available jobs.

Changing labor market conditions lead to changes in federal legislation that supports education and training. The Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act passed in 2010 encourages adult education programs to work closely with local workforce boards, colleges and other organizations to provide undereducated adults with integrated education and training opportunities that can help adults get to good jobs faster. Under this model, adults can work on getting a high school equivalency certificate and an industry recognized certificate at the same time. Examples of certificate careers include occupations in welding, pipefitting or computer repair.

While it's not easy for adults to juggle the demands of family and work with a rigorous academic and training program, the rewards are huge for those who can. This exciting new way forward challenges adult education programs in Harris County to think beyond the GED. More than ever, it is just a stepping stone to the development of career pathways for undereducated adults.

**Resources:**

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) [2]<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/www.gedtestingservice.com>

[3]<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/01/13/ivy-league-grads-can-t-pass-the-new-ged.html>

[4][https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES\\_.Web\\_.pdf](https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES_.Web_.pdf)

[5]<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/08c31e72f32353839545fcaefeb03f49.pdf>

**About the Blogger:**

Since 2009, Dr. Eduardo Honold has been director of the Adult Education division at HCDE. He oversees the delivery of GED, ESL, English language civics and integrated vocational and literacy classes to more than 7,000 adults annually under a contract Houston-Galveston Galveston Area Council. At a cost of less than \$500 per student and positive client satisfaction of over 95 percent, the Adult Education division delivers high-quality literacy services through innovative practices like distance learning, integrated vocation/literacy training, workforce literacy and fast-track GED curriculum. Dr. Honold honed his professional skills after decades of experience raising four children with his wife at the helm. Born in Santiago, Chile, he proudly became a U.S. citizen in 1998.

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1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/graduate.jpg>

2. <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/www.gedtestingservice.com>

3. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/01/13/ivy-league-grads-can-t-pass-the-new-ged.html>

4. [https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES\\_.Web\\_.pdf](https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES_.Web_.pdf)

5. <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/08c31e72f32353839545fcaefeb03f49.pdf>

## Create Safe and Supportive Schools: Support National Bullying Prevention Month (2016-10-17 09:52) - hcdetx



[1] October is National Bullying Prevention Month and Harris County Department of Education will join schools and communities across the nation to raise awareness and support bullying prevention.

Bullying Prevention Month was initiated by PACER's National Bullying Center in 2006 and has since grown to an entire month of education and awareness activities recognized by schools and communities throughout the world.

There are many ways schools and community members can get involved this October for the 10-year anniversary of National Bullying Prevention Month:

- Celebrate Unity Day: Students, teachers and community members will wear orange and send a united message of support on Unity Day, Wednesday, Oct. 19.
- Hold events and activities: Schools and communities around the country recognize National Bullying Prevention Month through creative events and initiatives. If you would like to hold your own event, there are many resources available at [2][www.PACER.org/Bullying](http://www.PACER.org/Bullying).
- Participate in the You're Not Alone campaign: New this year, the You're Not Alone campaign provides resources and education on ways communities can show they are united against bullying,

including classroom and event toolkits.

Getting involved and supporting National Bullying Prevention Month can help create safe, supportive schools and communities for our students. For more information and resources, visit [3][www.PACER.org/Bullying](http://www.PACER.org/Bullying).



IFRAME: [4]<https://youtu.be/DcFqZk2UKUQ>

### **About the Blogger:**

Ecomet Burley, a 26-year administrator, is the new leader of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, [5]<http://www.safeandsecureschools.org>. Established in 1999, the Center provides school safety and security training for school districts in greater Harris County. Burley, the former superintendent of La Marque ISD, resides in Pearland with wife Frances, an elementary school principal. Education, Burley insists, is the primary and native language spoken in their home.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/bully1.jpg>
2. <http://www.PACER.org/Bullying>
3. <http://www.PACER.org/Bullying>.
4. <https://youtu.be/DcFqZk2UKUQ>
5. <http://www.safeandsecureschools.org/>

## High Stakes and High Needs: Preparing Early Career Teachers

(2016-10-24 10:21) - hcdetx



Studies show that teachers who are early in their career leave the profession due to lack of support and feelings of failure in their school environment. They remain when they have supportive administration and regular opportunities to learn from peers.

One type of support shown to decrease teacher turnover is mentoring and coaching for beginning teachers. In fact, when beginning teachers receive mentoring, their focus shifts to student learning much earlier in their practice. They also become more effective teachers as they are learning through guided practice.

The assumption is that when teachers, particularly early career teachers, have an opportunity to: reflect on their practice; develop perspectives about their roles as educators; and compare those perspectives to actual practice, they develop a new awareness of what effective teaching and learning looks like.

Harris County Department of Education's alternative educator preparation program supports teacher candidates with placement in high-needs schools in the Houston area. Candidates are placed with mentors based on the specific subject and grade level the candidates teach. The HCDE educator preparation program requires that mentors provide early career teachers with high-quality, targeted feedback on their instruction.

The program curriculum consists of coursework that focuses on core teaching practices. Specifically, a subset of high-leverage instructional practices have been included in the curriculum that the candidates learn prior to entering the classroom. They are supported through mentorship to master

each practice when they enter the classroom. Additionally, these early career teachers are supported with professional development via the collaborative and reflective practice framework when they begin their second year of teaching.

For more information about HCDE's alternative educator preparation program, visit [1]<https://goo.gl/g21C0o>.

**About the Blogger:**

Deirdre Sharkey is the Leadership Advancement Officer for Harris County Department of Education. Before coming to HCDE Deirdre was a transformational school leader in an urban public school district. A recent newly-wed, she enjoys spending time getting fit with her hubby.

1. <https://goo.gl/g21C0o>

## Support Local Teen Writers and Artists: Scholastic Art & Writing Awards 2017 (2016-10-31 11:42) - hcdetx



[1] We are looking forward to viewing all the wonderful works from Harris County teen artists and writers as the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards 2017 officially kicks off and continues through Dec. 15, 2016.

Since 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have recognized the vision, ingenuity, and talent of our nation's youth and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated. Harris County Department of Education is the regional sponsor of the Awards, and the [2]Teaching and Learning Center is preparing for the intake and adjudication for another exciting year.

If you know a student who would like to enter, visit this site: [3]<http://www.artandwriting.org/>. This year an unprecedented amount of digital resources are available both at the [4]national and [5]regional level. (These materials were designed to assist Harris County educators and administrators to help all participants submit well-edited and photographed original works for digital adjudication, with the goal to showcase great technical skill and artistic vision.)

In 2016, volunteer art and writing professionals helped us judge a record 7,259 entries from teens in public and private schools in grades 7-12 in Harris County.

Recruitment for judges is underway. We are seeking qualified individuals who are teachers, administrators, faculty members and professional artists and writers to evaluate student works and recognize them with Gold and Silver Key awards and honorable mentions.

If you'd like to help, please visit the following sites to enroll:  
[6]<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Writing2017> for writing,  
[7]<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Art2017> for art.



Art adjudication will take place on site Jan. 6, 2017 from 8:30 am – 4 p.m. (free covered parking available, lunch will be provided). Writing adjudication will take place Jan. 2-13, 2017 online (with onsite adjudication to take place at HCDE Jan. 6, 2017 between 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

We hope you'll consider getting involved regionally with Scholastic Art & Writing through submitting and judging. It's inspiring and rewarding!

**About the blogger:**

Andrea Segraves served in the public school system for 14 years as a teacher and an administrator before being named the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Center for HCDE. She is a boy-mom who spends her extra time at the ball fields and reading educational literature.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/isabella-goodman.jpg>
2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/who-we-are/divisions-and-leadership/teaching-and-learning-center/>
3. <http://www.artandwriting.org/>
4. <http://www.artandwriting.org/what-we-do/educator-resources/>
5. <https://www.smores.com/c22ak>
6. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Writing2017>
7. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Art2017>

## 1.11 November

## Quality Instruction: It starts with the principal (2016-11-07 06:23) - hcdetx



[1]

Principal Academy grad Tudon Martinez and his staff

Now more than ever, there is a need for principals to be instructional leaders. They are responsible for instructional programs and curricula. They are also expected to foster academic growth in students and meet state assessment accountability requirements. Instructional leadership is evident in schools where principals communicate high academic standards for all students and are highly visible in classrooms to ensure that quality teaching and learning are taking place.

This month's featured instructional leader is Tudon Martinez, a 2016 graduate of the [2]Harris County Department of Education Principal Academy. Although only a second year principal at Ethel R. Coop Elementary School in Houston ISD, his students are already making academic gains. Before serving as a principal, Tudon was an instructional specialist supporting teachers in high-needs middle schools.

HCDE Principal Academy built on Tudon's skill set by providing individualized leadership coaching and targeted resources to hone his instructional leadership practice. As a result, he meets regularly with teachers to facilitate their professional learning, to analyze student data, and to give them individualized feedback about instruction.

Principles of Instructional Leadership is one of the core components of the HCDE Principal Academy coursework. Principal candidates get an overview of the relationship among curriculum, instruction, and assessment of student learning. They examine effective teaching and learning approaches and practice a variety of strategies for using data to drive instructional decision making. Through research and project-based learning, candidates learn the impact of effective staff super-

vision and evaluation on student learning. They also learn the role of professional development in improving school instructional programs.

The Principal Academy has two cohorts each year. The spring cohort begins January 7, 2017. For more information about HCDE's Principal Academy, [3]visit our website.

**About the Blogger:** Deirdre Sharkey is the Leadership Advancement Officer for Harris County Department of Education. Before coming to HCDE Deirdre was a transformational school leader in an urban public school district. A recent newly-wed she enjoys spending time getting fit with her hubby.

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/coop-admin\\_ps.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/coop-admin_ps.jpg)

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/who-we-are/divisions-and-leadership/educator-certification-and-professional-advancement/principal-certification/>

3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/who-we-are/divisions-and-leadership/educator-certification-and-professional-advancement/principal-certification/>

## Feeling Drained? Remember to feed your teacher soul, too (2016-11-14 10:36)

- hcdetx



[1] November is a difficult month for teachers and for administrators. We all want to keep that energy going from September, but there are parent calls that drain our energy, inservices that keep giving us new information, and even weekends that are filled with grading and planning instead of family or personal time. November is a good time to remember to make some of that time just for you, the teacher or administrator.

Take some time and “turn off” school. Don’t take papers home. They will get graded. Don’t take evaluations home—they will get done. Turn your cell phone off (or at least turn off email notifications). Spend some time doing something you love.

Do you miss taking photos just for fun? Do you miss breathing fresh air? Head to Galveston, spend time kayaking on the marshes and look at all the great birds passing through for the winter. I attended the Houston Arts Partnership Conference this fall, and [2]The Artist Boat is a nonprofit that does just that. Plus, the nonprofit ties this habitat exploration back to art. Taking time away from our hectic jobs in education is a must. Spending that time outdoors and practicing art can only refresh you in the best way possible.

We would all do well to remember that November is a hard time. We aren’t quite to the end of

first semester, so there isn't a break in sight just yet. And we aren't quite through with that list we made in August to get students where they need to be by the end of first semester. There is always this sense of urgency in teaching. Remember that taking care of yourself is just as urgent.

### **About the Blogger:**

Kelly Tummy is curriculum director for English language arts and social studies in the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. During her 26-year career in education/administration, she has loyally served Harris County as an educator in Galena Park, Humble and most recently Crosby ISD. Tummy's workshops focus on relevant, responsive and research-based professional learning that yield increased student achievement and teacher engagement. Follow her on Twitter @KellyTummy.

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/shutterstock\\_3608870331.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/shutterstock_3608870331.jpg)

2. <http://www.artistboat.org/>



Teachers give us a lot to be thankful for. You may wonder if the long hours are worth it.

To the world you may be a teacher, but to your students you are a HERO.

On this Thanksgiving we salute you. Whether you're chasing Black Friday deals or resting for the long weekend, savor your time off.

Enjoy your just deserves—or desserts!

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1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/shutterstock\\_327149252.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/shutterstock_327149252.jpg)





**1.12 December**

## The Whys of Teaching: Holidays, hugs and more... (2016-12-05 11:35) - hcdetx



[1]

Teachers from HCDE's Teacher Alternative Certification Program

Being a teacher has its perks. Summers off and generous holidays are a few. Then there are the altruistic reasons.

My friend who is a retired, 20-year teacher continually shares stories with me about the days she see students in restaurants and stores. Someone has that ah-ha moment when they recognize her. Arms fly around her neck. It's like a lost best friend is found.

Being a teacher can be tough, but if making a difference is in your genes, it could be a career change well worth thinking about.

At Harris County Department of Education, we have a teacher alternative certification program which features an extensive support system. If you or someone you know is considering changing careers, please come to one of our information sessions and we'll fill you in.

Think about it. When is the last time you hugged your CPA or insurance agent? Find out more about what teaching is all about and if it's your calling.

Attend our session this Thursday or on dates beyond. [2]Register for the free information session , access our website for information, [3][www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep](http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep) or call 713-696-1348.

**About the blogger:** Harris County Department of Education's Communication team helps promote the efforts of HCDE's programs and services to the education community. Our close-knit, award-winning team works together on creative strategies to effectively support the organization. We're always looking to share great stories and on occasion contribute to the HCDE blog, School Bell.

Let us know what interests you! Send us your questions and suggestions on future blog topics at [4][schoolbell@hcde-texas.org](mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org). And don't forget to follow us!

Facebook: [5]<https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx>

Twitter: [6]<https://twitter.com/HCDEtx>

YouTube: [7]<http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEtv>

Pinterest: [8]<http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>

1. [https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/teacher\\_ps1.jpg](https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/teacher_ps1.jpg)
2. <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10943>
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep>
4. <mailto:schoolbell@hcde-texas.org>
5. <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx>
6. <https://twitter.com/HCDEtx>
7. <http://www.youtube.com/user/HCDEtv>
8. <http://www.pinterest.com/hcde/>