



## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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281-660-9205

### **\$550,000 City of Houston investment in CASE for Kids City Connections feeds need for afterschool post-Harvey**

Dec. 5, 2017 - Citizens in 11 Houston City Council districts benefit for a fourth consecutive year from a \$550,000 program funded by the City of Houston and administered by Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids called CASE for Kids City Connections.

Nonprofit organizations in each of the council districts receive \$45,000 in funding ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for programs for children in grades K-12. Funding began Oct. 23 and continues through April 27. The city and CASE for Kids allowed school districts, charter schools, faith-based organizations or civic groups to apply through a request for proposal.

"City Connections promotes crime prevention, child safety, career exploration, enrichment activities and social and emotional learning for Houston children during a time of great need in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. "A recent survey shows a significant number of afterschool programs were affected by Harvey, yet many kept their doors open in those Houston communities."

As an afterschool intermediary, CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement.

According to HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., CASE for Kids City Connections is critically needed as Houston families continue to rebuild from Harvey.

"We are thankful the city continues to invest in our children and their families, especially as afterschool funding is being cut from other state and federal budgets," Colbert said. "Afterschool programs are important as they keep children in our city safe and provide enrichment."

Council members are invited on Dec. 5 and 6 to meet the recipients of the funding which is awarded through a request for proposal via CASE for Kids. CASE for Kids will provide photos and networking between the council members and the nonprofit organizations.

Several council districts are opting to increase funding for City Connections from their own council district service funds. Many are located in areas hard-hit by Harvey.

To find programs funded in each of the council districts, access <http://goo.gl/YfuAUw> or learn more about City Connections at [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org) .

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**Photo:** Organizations funded through CASE for Kids City Connections from Councilmember Larry V. Green, District K, gather for a group photo.

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May 16, 2017

## 2017 School Safety Summit highlights community-minded approach to protecting schools

Harris County Department of Education is partnering with Crime Stoppers of Houston for the 2017 School Safety Summit, a free event to be held Monday, June 12, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The annual event will bring school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and those interested in school safety together for a summit about the issues facing schools in 2017-2018. This year's theme, "I PLEDGE TO KEEP MY SCHOOL SAFE," emphasizes the ways that the combined work of individuals leads to a community-minded culture and increased safety.

Keynote speaker will be Juliet Stipeche, City of Houston director of education. Along with representatives from a variety of local, statewide and national agencies, Stipeche and other presenters will touch on critical school safety issues including mental health, human trafficking, internet crimes, police-student interactions, restorative discipline and updates to juvenile law.

Breakout sessions on these topics will be led by representatives from the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Love 146, Restorative Justice Collaborative of Houston, The Harris Center, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and the Klein ISD Police Department.

For the second consecutive year, the School Safety Summit will take place at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas. Those interested in attending may pre-register online at [www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) at no cost. Participants who pre-register will receive a free breakfast and lunch at the event. TCOLE credits are available for registrants.

**About the Center for Safe and Secure Schools:** Developed at the request of local superintendents in the spring of 1999 to advance safe and secure environments for learning and teaching, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools is a leader in the development of increased safety and security strategies in school environments for students and educators. Learn more about the trainings and other opportunities we offer at [www.safeandsecureschools.org](http://www.safeandsecureschools.org).

**About Harris County Department of Education (HCDE):** Serving students, teachers, schools and communities throughout Harris County, HCDE is a local governmental organization providing value for school districts while supporting educational opportunity. Partnering with Harris County school districts, HCDE maximizes local resources and respond to the needs of locally elected school boards and education leaders. HCDE services include school-based therapy for students, afterschool programs, Head Start, educator training, adult education and programs to promote safe schools. To learn more about how your county department of education can help you: [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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## **25 students representing Harris County Department of Education, local schools travel to Carnegie Hall to accept National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals**

Twenty-five of the best artists and writers from Harris County traveled to New York City this month to be honored with National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Gold Key Medals at Carnegie Hall. Harris County teens received 28 National Gold Key Medals for 2017, more than double the 12 earned last year, and 59 national medals in total. The Awards are sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education.

Students traveling to New York City's Carnegie Hall represent HCDE and the following school districts and private schools: Aldine, Klein, Deer Park, Clear Creek, Pasadena, Katy, Cy-Fair, Pearland and Spring Branch independent school districts and private schools River Oaks Baptist, St. John's School and The Village School.

"For more than 90 years, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards has recognized the vision, ingenuity and talent of our students and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated," said Andrea Segraves, Harris County Department of Education coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing. "With more than 330,000 entries nationally, we are proud of our Harris County medalists."

During the National Ceremony on June 8, hundreds of teens from across the U.S. were honored by actress and comedian Amy Schumer, Scholastic CEO and President Richard Robinson, actress Ellie Kemper, artist Paul Chan and more. Among those students was Saranna Zhang, Spring Branch Independent School District student and winner of a National Gold Key award for her artwork, "My Journey."

"This experience has really encouraged me to be more creative and open with my work," said Zhang. "It has definitely given me the motivation to keep making art and to share my views on what is important to me and the future of the world."

The Harris County writers who traveled to New York City for the Awards were Jacob DuPont, Klein ISD; Taylor Gleason, Deer Park ISD; Mary Ann Hurtado, Klein ISD; Shania Hurtado, Klein ISD; Tyler King, St. John's School; Vivian Tsao, The Village School; Peyton Vasquez, Deer Park ISD; Elizabeth Willms, Deer Park ISD; Julia Smith, St. John's School; and Urvashi Deshpande, The Village School.

The artists were Alexis Cazares, Pasadena ISD; Alexis Castillo, River Oaks Baptist; Alliemarie Crochet, Katy ISD; Fatemeh Ebrahimi, Katy ISD; Nallely Garza, Clear Creek ISD; Connie Lau, Katy ISD; Mackenzie Lopez, Klein ISD; Alec Martinez, Cy-Fair ISD; Asma Mashal, Katy ISD; Melissa Sosa, Pasadena ISD; Akhil Thadani, Aldine ISD; Bryce Williams, Cy-Fair ISD; Wendy Xie, Pearland ISD; Juwon Yoo, Spring Branch ISD; and Saranna Zhang, Spring Branch ISD.

For more information on the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and the complete list of national medalists from Harris County, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

**Photo:** Harris County students attending the 2017 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards pose on a bridge in Central Park.

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### **28 Adult Learners inducted into National Adult Education Honor Society Dec. 11 for overcoming hardships, showing compassion**

Hardships, perseverance and acts of kindness distinguish 28 adult learners ages 18-60 as they are inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society at a ceremony on Dec. 11 from 11 a.m.-noon at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington.

All of the students attend classes offered through Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education division in community learning locations throughout the county. Student stories include hardships with cancer, chaotic work schedules and family struggles. Their biggest fans in the audience will include family, teachers and fellow students.

"Our adult honorees come from workforce, GED and English as a second language classes," said Eduardo Honold, Adult Education director. "They are nominated by their teachers who recognize them as leaders who make an impact in their communities and through helping their classmates."

Induction into the National Adult Honor Society brings notoriety and written recommendations for future employment and education advancement. Each student gains a pin and certificate.

HCDE provides free classes in English as a second language, GED and workforce development at 50 locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties on a first-come, first-served basis. Communities include Alief, Baytown, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. For more information about classes, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

Bios from a few students being honored:

**Chhayamba Nupu Lama** from HCDE's ESL classroom located at the Salvation Army in Spring Branch is one of the 28 students being inducted into the honor society. He is a Buddhist monk who rides his bike to class each day and helps his fellow classmates with homework. He is learning English as his third language after already being fluent in Tibetan and Nepali. He is learning English in hopes of becoming a professional Tibetan-English interpreter and plans to specialize someday in management of nonprofit organizations. His teacher Jill Kaeser says her student is always calm, cheerful and inclusive with his classmates and assists others without being asked.

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**Melissa Long** is a middle-aged GED student attending classes in Katy. Her teacher Lavenia Cole says Long entered her class as a self-doubting, hesitant student but has since blossomed in to a confident, engaging learner who helps her fellow classmates.

Long is a full-time bus driver who likes to motivate the children who ride on her route. Her own childhood was filled with intimidation and verbal abuse from her father. As an adult, it negatively affected her own personal relationships. Today she has shifted her focus on to her spiritual beliefs to help improve her life and the lives of others. She is achieving high scores on her GED practice tests, and she likes to help her classmates. She will take the GED in spring 2018 and hopes to participate in the HCDE graduation in May.

**Diego Diaz** obtained his medical doctorate degree in El Salvador. His position in his home country is equivalent to a general practitioner in America. He currently has a Green Card and will obtain his citizenship in 2018. Diego is currently working on his GED at HCDE and is also enrolled in the certified nursing assistant workforce program. Diaz had to leave his family in El Salvador to pursue the American dream for his family. After he gains his citizenship along with his nursing certification and GED, he will send for his family. His teacher Arbrenia Bryant says Diaz is always willing to translate and provide clarity about medical terminology for his classmates.

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### **3 journalists honored by HCDE, TASB for public education reporting with 2017 Media Honor Roll**

Oct. 4, 2017- Three Houston journalists are being honored through the 2017 Media Honor Roll Award issued by the Texas Association of School Boards on behalf of Harris County Department of Education in August. The journalists are Christine Dobbyn, reporter for KTRK-TV, Channel 13; Fabian Gutierrez, assignments editor for KTMD-TV Telemundo 47; and Danica Smithwick, reporter for Community Impact Newspapers.

“These three talented journalists tackle the challenges facing public education and herald the successes of our million-plus students and teachers in greater Harris County through a humanistic approach,” said Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert. We appreciate their service to public education and their accurate approach and judgment in sharing public education news.”

KTRK-TV reporter Christine Dobbyn is recognized for her story on afterschool students from the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, who volunteered alongside their parents at the Houston Food Bank in an effort to expose the teens to the problem of hunger in their community. The story may be viewed through the following YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJCah2v8C7Q>

KTMD-TV assignments editor Fabian Gutierrez is honored for supporting HCDE Head Start and Adult Education programs throughout the year, helping get the word out about free education opportunities to the public. One story Fabian assigned was creatively angled at recruiting adult education construction workforce students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIzoyEDDNU0>

Honoree Danica Smithwick, reporter for Community Impact Newspaper, provided a comprehensive article about Harris County Department of Education and the services it provides to Harris County school districts and citizens. Her article is available on the newspaper’s website: <https://communityimpact.com/houston/cy-fair/at-the-capitol/2017/04/05/sen-bettencourt-targets-county-departments-of-education/> .

In addition to receiving plaques from HCDE and TASB, the association also recognizes these three honorees on its website: <https://goo.gl/ZcedHe> .

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### **93 HCDE Academic and Behavior School West students gain backpacks, supplies from HISD Hurricane Relief**

Sept. 28, 2017 - Student Tyrique Mayfield was one of 93 students at Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior School West who received a backpack Sept. 27 at a school assembly, courtesy of Houston Independent School District. Mayfield shared a customary handshake and smiled as he was handed the grey-and-black pack full of school supplies.

HISD Office of Special Education Services Program Specialist LaVora Wright attended the assembly and greeted the HISD students who are enrolled at AB West through contracted services. Harris County school districts contract with HCDE to provide specialized services along with a low, student-to-teacher ratio to education students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The 15 HISD students enrolled at AB West received extra supplies in their backpacks, but all students were given backpacks due to the tremendous outpouring of community contributions donated through Hurricane Relief Day hosted by HISD.

AB West parent Janet McCall from Fort Bend is a foster mom to three children. She also is responsible for her disabled husband. The McCall family lost their home and all their possessions during Hurricane Harvey. She received donations of clothing for AB West student La'Quesha through the assembly.

"There are days when you are really down and need to see the compassionate side of people," McCall said. "We appreciate the kindness and this heartfelt way people show compassion."

Through the assembly, four AB West teachers displaced by Harvey were also given donations from AB West staff and community.

"We are a family here at AB West, and helping those who are displaced and lost so much was the right thing to do," AB West principal Victor Keys said.

To view photos from the event, go to <http://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/ABW-Backpacks/G0000jQj69QCLflk/C0000Ocq75eZ9lcU> and enter password hcde1889 .

**Photo:** Student Tyrique Mayfield accepts a backpack from HCDE principal Victor Keys and HISD program specialist LaVora Wright.

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## **Academic and Behavior School students improve critical thinking, self-esteem through chess tournament**

Students at Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior Schools will participate in a Chess Tournament on Wednesday, May 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd. The tournament is hosted in partnership with Perfect TEAMPLAY Inc., a nonprofit organization that uses chess to mentor and motivate today's youth.

HCDE's Academic and Behavior Schools provide an enriching and supportive learning environment for students with intellectual, developmental and behavioral disorders. Students participating in the tournament practice critical thinking and strategy, as well as work on social skills and learn to accept consequences and criticism. Since chess is a game that expands the mind, it can also improve overall behavior and increase attention span and self-esteem.

HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert will join the tournament and play against select students from both Academic and Behavior Schools.

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HCDE’s Academic and Behavior Schools provide an enriching and supportive learning environment for students with intellectual, developmental and behavioral disorders. Students participating in the tournament practice critical thinking and strategy, as well as work on social skills and learn to accept consequences and criticism. Since chess is a game that expands the mind, it can also improve overall behavior and increase attention span and self-esteem.

HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert will join the tournament and play against select students from both Academic and Behavior Schools.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state’s largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county through its HCDE Schools division. Two schools support students with intellectual or behavioral disabilities and two alternative schools provide education for adjudicated or expelled youth. View our video and learn more about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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## Strife in Life: Adult Education Graduation Snapshot with Adolfo Gomez

(Harris County Department of Education's GED Graduation 2017 is scheduled for May 20 at 11 a.m. at 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas, 77022 in our conference center. This story is part of a series of interviews with our adult students called "Strife in Life." For class information, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).)

View video: <https://youtu.be/vp71uzF57Ds>

Adolfo Gomez, 35, came to the United States at age 21. He has worked religiously for up to 20 hours each day as a day laborer. Last year, he enrolled in an English class at Harris County Department of Education. The teacher said: "Don't just learn English. You can learn anything you want."

That moment stuck with Gomez as he thought about his little girl, 10, and wife Doris. He decided to go for his GED at a HCDE community class at Hastings High School in Alief.

Days were long and then came class and studies.

"Then I also had to be a father and a husband," he said.

He believes a higher power gave him the wisdom to go back to school.

"I did this for my family and my future," he said, clutching a graduation cap that would soon bear his tassel. That's why I'm here right now."

Gomez, now a foreman in a glass and aluminum company, will continue his studies at a local college. He wants to become an architect.

"So when I become an architect, I will be an example to my daughter," he said. "I believe in education. It's the key to opening doors."

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## **Partnership with Walmart provides employment opportunities for Harris County Department of Education adult learners**

Community partnerships are valuable assets to any organization. For Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education division, a five-year partnership with Walmart offers employment opportunities for adult learners looking for part-time jobs, as well as interview training.

As part of their second major round of hiring with HCDE, staff from the Walmart on Crosstimbers visited the Adult Education Learning Center on June 7 to recruit prospective employees and help more than 150 students and community members fill out online applications for jobs of their choice.

"Our partnership with Walmart is very important to us," said Adult Education Program Manager Angela Johnson. "They work with our students and their schedules to ensure they can continue with their education while gaining employment opportunities."

The partnership began five years ago when Johnson noticed the Walmart at Crosstimbers was looking for extra help. After speaking with Raquel Hernandez, Human Resources manager and personnel coordinator for the location, they decided to work together to find a solution for both organizations.

"A lot of the students at HCDE are willing to do part-time jobs on the weekends," said Hernandez. "That's exactly what our store needs."

Hernandez also believes in the importance of hiring within the surrounding area to make sure the community's needs are met.

HCDE Adult Education staff, including classroom aide Bianca Garcia, helped spread the word about the hiring event to area residents and students looking for jobs. Garcia posted the flyer on social media and invited friend Sonia Reyes to attend and meet with Walmart staff.

"This event is great because it gives people more opportunities for jobs, some of them their first job," said Garcia.

For more information on HCDE Adult Education classes, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

## Strife in Life: Adult Education Graduation Snapshot with Anselm Alexander

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When approximately 100 adult learners don red robes to receive recognition at Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education graduation ceremony on May 20, Anselm Alexander, 58, will proudly be among them.

For Alexander, a native of Trinidad and Tobago (an island nation in the Caribbean), the event will be the emotional culmination of a year-long endeavor to earn his GED. Given that his educational goals have had to compete with working full-time and being a father of six, Alexander has not always had an easy time focusing on his studies.

"It's hard to work, go to school, and then you have to study at night," Alexander, a Baytown resident who immigrated to the U.S. three years ago, said. "You just can't go to school, go back home and go to bed."

Still, Alexander didn't view whether to pursue his GED as a tough choice.

"I decided to get my GED because I am an electrician, but since being in the U.S. I've had problems getting a job," he said. "Some of the jobs I really wanted I didn't get it because they said you have to have a diploma or GED."

In addition to expanding his professional opportunities, Alexander said his elevated educational status comes with a new level of dignity.

"In life, one of the things I always wanted to be was an educated person," he said. "Having a GED, you can tell yourself, 'Hey, I am an educated person.'"

"I felt like a million bucks," Alexander said, when he learned that he had completed the requirements for the degree.

Alexander credits his HCDE Adult Education teachers, Ms. Kimberly Charles and Dr. Ericka Musa, for helping him along the way, repeating that they were "very helpful, very encouraging."

As far as next steps go, Alexander has already enrolled at Lee College in Baytown to start courses in the fall. He will be pursuing his dream of becoming an electrical engineer.

"Education is the key to open doors in this life," Alexander said, admitting that he's had to hold back some tears of joy since receiving the news that he's graduating in May.

"Tears came, they just didn't fall," he said, laughing.

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**For immediate release**

June 6, 2017

**Aging workforce, robust construction climate fuel  
need for workforce apprenticeship programs**  
**Harris County Department of Education, Adaptive Construction Solutions**  
**collaborate through innovative partnership**

With the blitz of baby boomer retirees in industry and construction, the shortage of skilled workers is ever so prevalent. That gap is closing thanks to a growing partnership between Harris County Department of Education and Adaptive Construction Solutions. While HCDE supplies adult academic remediation, Adaptive Construction Solutions, an ApprenticeshipUSA program, offers career training and employment. HCDE is currently serving 102 apprentices who are military veterans training to become iron workers. The model is so successful that it is being replicated and expanded into other occupational areas per the demands of area companies.

Navy veteran Anthony Serrata Jr., 24, is eight weeks into a three-year program which will build his construction and academic skills while he is also being paid. He says he instantly felt a kinship with the other men who are in his small class and gets all the help he needs from his two HCDE teachers: a trades teacher and a math/reading remediation teacher.

“My goal was to find a trade that is meaningful and will help me be successful,” said the father of two. “We’ve all made mistakes, but this program helps us get back on track.”

While the construction teacher is showing students how to handle tools and measure materials, the academic teacher is called upon to give students a refresher course on fractions for measurement. Both teachers are available at all times to the adult learners.

Later in the day, students and teachers move to the corporation for on-the-job training. Adult education and literacy programs in the state are now funded through the Texas Workforce Commission through the U.S. Department of Labor in a move to help students acquire skills needed for the workplace. Locally, ApprenticeshipTexas supports the Texas Workforce Commission’s goals to expand registered apprenticeships, and Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast is the regional arm of the Texas Workforce Commission.

Through the workforce model, remedial math and language curriculum is customized by HCDE’s Adult Education division to fit the needs of local employers. The foundation course is the basic National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) core instruction which teaches construction fundamentals such as construction math, hand and power tools, construction drawings and safety. Employees move on to specializations after gaining the certification.

Besides the attrition of skilled workers who are retiring, robust construction in is another force driving the demand for a new generation of skilled workers.

“So much construction is occurring in the greater Houston area, and it’s projected to reach into the year 2040, so we had to take innovative steps to meet industry demands,” said James Carnes, U.S. Department of Labor.

HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. said the Department is uniquely positioned to offer support as its adult education program reach throughout Harris County, with 200 highly qualified adult education teachers and 50 learning centers ranging from Alief to Spring Branch to Liberty.

Success of the program with HCDE is bringing additional referrals for partnerships, according to Carnes. The attrition rate of the apprenticeship program is very low, he explained.

“With the case of classroom instruction, these students need training, support, remediation—the whole nine yards,” Carnes said. “Harris County Department of Education provides the tools needed for remediation needed in the program. All the parts fit together.”

For information about HCDE Adult Education programs and services, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

**Photo:** HCDE Instructor Clifton Hypolite works with student Anthony Serrata Jr. in a skilled workforce training class.

**About HCDE Adult Education:** With a 30-year track record, HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to “learn to earn,” including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties as HCDE serves over 8,000 adult learners. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information, access [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation) or 713-692-6216.

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### **Anthony Mays selected as senior director over HCDE's 4 specialized campuses**

Aug. 17, 2017- Anthony Mays, a 15-year education leader in middle and high schools in Dallas, Fort Worth and Pflugerville Independent School Districts, recently started his new position as senior director of Harris County Department of Education's Schools division.

The four specialized HCDE schools he will lead serve more than 25 school districts in the Harris County area. Districts contract with HCDE as the department supplies specialized environments and low student-to-teacher ratios to educate students in grades K-12 with unique needs.

Mays moves to Houston after serving as principal at Emmett J. Conrad High School in the Dallas Independent School District. His strong instructional leadership as principal is complimented by extensive experience as a special education educator. He gained his Bachelor of Arts from Huston-Tillotson College, a Master of Education from Texas State University and is currently earning his doctorate degree from Tarleton State University.

His experience with special populations students will provide valuable guidance as HCDE opens the first public recovery high school in Harris County this school year. As a goal-oriented leader, he will use his collaboration expertise to strengthen the instructional focus at all four specialized HCDE schools and to build on momentum for community support.

"I'm also eager to work with the HCDE team on developing our recovery high school for students with challenges with addictions," he said. "The opioid epidemic and other drug abuse among teens is a problem that HCDE is poised to impact here in Harris County."

The Tomball resident is a member of Texas Alliance of Black School Educators, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals and is listed in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*. He is married and has three children who attend public school.

## **Contracts for athletic surfaces and event rentals awarded**

New contracts for athletic surfaces and event rentals were awarded at the April 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

Newly awarded contracts include

**Athletic Surfaces (JOC-IDIQ):** Dynamic Sports Construction, Inc.; Fisher Tracks, Inc.; and Playgrounds Today, Inc. doing business as PTI Sports and Recreation Construction; and

**Event Rentals:** Sky High Party Rentals; and Southern Sound System, Inc. doing business as Southern Sound & Lighting.

Renewed contracts include

**Building Cleaning, Exterior:** Ameri-clean; Hardy & Hardy, Inc.; and Mid-Continental Restoration Company, Inc.;

**HVAC Equipment and Service (JOC-IDIQ):** Custom Air Products & Services, Inc.; ERC Environmental & Construction Services, Inc. doing business as ERC; Emcor Gowan, Inc. doing business as Gowan, Inc.; Heat Transfer Solutions doing business as HTS Texas; Climatec, LLC; and The Brandt Companies, LLC; and

**Modular Buildings:** Aries Building Systems, LLC; Industrial Laminates Corporation doing business as ILCOR Builders; McGrath Rent Corp and Subsidiaries doing business as Mobile Modular Management Corporation; and Palomar Modular Buildings LLC; and

**Playground Systems (JOC-IDIQ):** Adventure Playground Systems, Inc.; and Playgrounds Today, Inc. doing business as PTI Sports & Recreation Construction.

## **New Members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on April 18 include **Celeste ISD**, Celeste, Texas; **city of Duncanville**; **Hays County**, San Marcos, Texas; **city of Missouri City**; **Pilot Point ISD**, Pilot Point, Texas; and **Whitesboro ISD**, Whitesboro, Texas.

**About Choice Partners:** Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

## National Art.Write.Now.DC Exhibition Showcases Work from Harris County Students

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recently kicked off the year-long Art.Write.Now.DC exhibition at the U.S. Department of Education on Sept. 15 showcasing art and writing from 33 Harris County students. The exhibition also showcases the efforts of Harris County Department of Education to enrich the local community with the arts and to encourage students to be part of the Scholastic Awards' legacy.

Each year, the Art.Write.Now program features the year-long exhibition as well as a touring exhibition showcasing original works by teens from across the country. Curated, produced and presented by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the nonprofit which administers the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, each exhibition showcases a selection of inspiring and innovative work by teens from across the country who received national honors in 2017.

### Exhibition Location and Dates

- Art.Write.Now.DC 2017–18:
  - **Washington, D.C.**, U.S. Department of Education, Sept. 15, 2017– July 31, 2018
- Art.Write.Now.Tour 2017–18:
  - Tulsa, OK**, Center for Creativity, Tulsa Community College, Oct. 2–Oct. 28, 2017
  - Lexington, KY**, The Living Arts & Science Center, Nov. 10, 2017–Dec. 26, 2017
  - Elmira, NY**, The Arnot Art Museum, Jan. 12–Feb. 24, 2018
  - Youngstown, OH**, The Butler Institute of American Art, Apr. 1–June 3, 2018

Supported by the HCDE Board of Trustees and their respective school districts, 22 Harris County students traveled to Washington D.C. on Sept. 15 to view their artwork on display and receive recognition for their creativity and talent. Additionally, Aldine ISD art teacher Birgit Langhammer attended the event to represent and pay tribute to her student Freddy Diaz, a senior in Aldine ISD who passed away in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

The students who attended are **Samantha Kelly**, Houston ISD; **Karen Flores**, Pasadena ISD; **Grace Sanders**, St. John's School; **Emma Pulaski**, Episcopal High School; **Rachel Koch**, Episcopal High School; **Summer Elliott**, Clear Creek ISD; **Allyson Su**, Katy ISD; **Helen Wang**, Pearland ISD; **Sarah Hambly**, Spring Branch ISD; **Allison Maeker**, Klein ISD; **Sri Varanasi**, Katy ISD; **Jennifer Castillo**, Aldine ISD; **Ashley Liu**, Klein ISD; **Edward Bustos**, Cy-Fair ISD; **Savannah Moore**, Humble ISD; **Franklin Nwora**, KIPP; **Chimi Abuede**, Alief ISD; **Sasha Vermeil**, Episcopal High School; **Mia Sanchez**, Klein ISD; **Alexandra Bellon**, Tomball ISD; **Saranna Zhang**, Spring Branch ISD; and **Jayasurya Dileep**, Klein ISD.

For more information on the Art.Write.Now program, visit [www.artandwriting.org/what-we-do/art-write-now/](http://www.artandwriting.org/what-we-do/art-write-now/). For information on submitting works to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).



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### **Autism Summit 2017 set for Oct. 4-5 at HCDE offers resources to assist students with spectrum disorder**

**July 27, 2017** – Autism Summit 2017 will be held Oct. 4-5 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas. The conference provides autism experts with breakout sessions on issues including autism legislation, transition services and testimonials from young adults with autism spectrum disorder. Registration for the summit hosted by HCDE’s Teaching and Learning Center is \$150, with lunch provided both days. Register for the conference at [www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) by title or date.

The summit features Carol Gray on Oct. 4, consultant to children, adolescents and adults with autism. Gray provides a workshop on “Social Stories™,” a tool that supports safe, meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals and people with autism. Attendees all receive certification in the methodology at day’s end. Oct. 5 provides insights from keynote Dorothea Lerman, director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. CDC statistics show that one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder, and the condition occurs in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. For more information about the summit, call 713-696-8223.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.0052. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

## **Back-to-School: HCDE Provides Tips to Keep Children Safe in the Digital World**

Technology and digital devices are engrained in our children's daily life from an early age. With the increase in cyberbullying incidents over the past 10 years, many parents worry about the safety of their child in the digital world. Harris County Department of Education's Digital and Virtual Learning Manager David McGeary provides safety tips to help keep children from harm and become positive digital citizens.

5 tips to keep kids safe in a digital world:

1. Talk to kids about digital safety at a young age and do it often.
2. Be a part of your children's online experiences. Know the sites they visit and games they play.
3. Don't allow young children to spend unsupervised time online. Keep the family computer in a communal place. Keep charging devices out of private areas like bedrooms.
4. Enforce this rule: If you won't do something face-to-face, don't do it online. (Discuss social interactions.)
5. Humanize online social interactions. Remind them that behind every pixelated avatar is a human being.

McGeary first suggests that parents talk to their children about digital safety at an early age and remind them often. While children may be getting some education in safe online behavior from their school, students who have regular discussions with their parents about digital safety are more likely to be vigilant and self-advocate when something goes wrong online. He also suggests parents become partners in their child's online experiences.

"Take interest in the sites your children visit and the games they play," said McGeary. "If kids are engaged in constant discussion about the digital realm, they are much more likely to approach a parent or guardian if something out of the ordinary occurs."

Next, don't allow children to spend unsupervised time online, especially when they are younger. It may be helpful to place a family computer in a communal space like the living room or home office so that parents can see the screen content. Keeping device chargers out of bedrooms can also help keep children off their devices while in private areas.

McGeary also emphasizes one key piece of advice when discussing social interactions online – if you wouldn't do something face-to-face, don't do it online. Research shows that victims of cyberbullying have often bullied someone online themselves. By humanizing the online space and developing empathy for others, parents can help their children break the cycle of victim-and-victimization.

"Encourage children to engage in social activities that humanize online social interactions like sending an email to a distant family member or posting encouraging statements to friends via social media to remind them that at the end of every pixelated avatar is a human being," said McGeary.

For more resources on cyberbullying and digital safety, visit <http://www.cyberwise.org/digital-citizenship-resources>.

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### **Back-to-School: Harris County Department of Education's CASE for Kids offers tips for finding quality afterschool programs**

As the first day of school approaches, parents are searching for quality afterschool programs for their children to keep them learning and engaged after the school day ends. Harris County offers a wide variety of options for afterschool care ranging from tutoring and sports activities to comprehensive afterschool programs.

Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids), offers five tips to help families find a program that meets their needs:

1. **Safety and Emergency Procedures:** Ask about the safety and emergency procedures in place. The program should be able to provide answers about any type of situation.
2. **Staff-to-Student Ratio:** The staff-to-student ratio and maximum group size of an afterschool program can determine how much individual attention and supervision a child receives.
3. **Staff Training:** When searching for an afterschool program, ask about staff training and if they regularly attend professional development workshops. Research shows that well-trained staff interact better with students.
4. **Activities that Promote Learning:** Children are more likely to develop skills if the program offers a variety of academic and recreational classes. Look for afterschool programs that participate in activities that promote learning.
5. **Student Progress:** Ask how the program assesses student progress to stay informed.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving approximately 13,000 students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

When families think about afterschool programs, many focus on programs specifically for elementary students while their parents are working. Caruthers emphasizes the importance of keeping students in middle and high school engaged in meaningful activities as well.

This year, a joint project between CASE for Kids and the Houston Urban Debate League (HUDL) will serve 300 high school students in afterschool programs at 20 schools in Harris County. The program, [CASE Debates](#), will provide three in-depth seminars for youth and coaches along with three debate tournaments throughout the school year.

“We want to help families find a program that supplements the education students receive during the school day and extends that learning and excitement into afterschool programs,” said Thompson-Caruthers.

For more information on CASE for Kids and afterschool resources, visit [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).

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4. Enforce this rule: If you won't do something face-to-face, don't do it online. (Discuss social interactions.)
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McGeary suggests that while children may be getting information about safe online behavior from their school, students who have regular discussions with their parents about digital safety are more likely to be vigilant and self-advocate when something goes wrong online. He also suggests parents become partners in their child's online experiences.

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Next, don't allow children to spend unsupervised time online, especially when they are younger. It may be helpful to place a family computer in a common space like the living room or home office so that parents can see the screen content. Keeping device chargers out of bedrooms can also help keep children off their devices while in private areas.

-more-

Add one

McGeary also emphasizes one key piece of advice when discussing social interactions online – if you wouldn't do something face-to-face, don't do it online. Research shows that victims of cyberbullying have often bullied someone online themselves. By humanizing the online space and developing empathy for others, parents can help their children break the cycle of victim-and-victimization.

"Encourage children to engage in social activities that humanize online social interactions like sending an email to a distant family member or posting encouraging statements to friends via social media to remind them that at the end of every pixelated avatar is a human being," said McGeary. For more resources on cyberbullying and digital safety, visit <http://www.cyberwise.org/digital-citizenship-resources>.



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### **Back-to-School 2017-2018 Story Ideas from Harris County Department of Education**

*For more information, call Carol Vaughn, 281-660-9205 or Lindsey Sanders, 903-563-1649  
Stories will be arranged with content-specific, education specialists within HCDE. Please call for  
additional topics.*

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- 2. What's the latest trend in school supplies?** How can those items being brought into the classroom actually be distractive versus helpful (items like spinners). Steps to make sure you're buying the right supplies.
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**10. How creating a welcoming environment for students can prevent anxiety:** Provide tips for creating a welcoming environment during the beginning of schools. A positive classroom environment helps children ease anxieties. Develop good relationship with parents. Create a classroom atmosphere that puts children at ease.

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## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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903-563-1649

### **Back-to-School 2017-2018 Story Ideas from Harris County Department of Education**

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## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Rehabbed cars from Bates Collision Centers 'fuel smiles' for HCDE Head Start parent, employee post Harvey

**What:**

After losing their cars during Hurricane Harvey and overcoming daily transportation challenges, Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga receive rehabbed cars from Bates Collision Centers for their responsible parenting.

In its 19<sup>th</sup> year, HCDE Head Start's partnership with Bates Collision Centers is gifting cars number 33 and 34 to two deserving parents. Owners Lee and Leila Bates have been dedicated to the cause because they know about the sacrifices of being responsible parents.

The year, model and make of the two cars remain a surprise, which will be revealed through the unveiling and gifting of the cars. Bates employees donate time to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts. Community businesses/members donate gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

**When/Where:**

**Bahiyah Rashed receives her car on Dec. 12 from 10-11 a.m. at Bates Collision Center Baytown location, 3219 N. Main, in Baytown, Texas.**

**Vanessa Zuniga receives her car on Dec. 14 from 10-11 a.m. at the Bates Collision Center North Channel location, 15532 I-10 East, in Channelview, Texas.**

**Who:**

**About Bahiyah Rashed, HCDE Head Start Tidwell Center, recipient of the 33rd rehabbed car:** Bahiyah Rashed is a valued teacher at Tidwell Head Start, single mother of two sons Deon, 10 and Daveon, 9, and guardian to niece Kelsi, 7. Since losing her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey, Rashed has been sharing a vehicle with her mother. While the car has been a blessing, it has occasional mechanical issues and can be unreliable while trying to attend school, work and many extracurricular activities.

**About Vanessa Zuniga, HCDE Head Start Pugh Center, recipient of the 34th rehabbed car:** Vanessa Zuniga is the single parent of Nathan,

4, and employed full-time. Zuniga lost her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey and shares rides with friends and family. She begins her day early and waits for extended times to be picked up from work. She also relies on family members for Nathan's school rides.

**Media contact:** Contact Carol Vaughn, communications manager at 281-660-9205 or Lindsey Sanders, communications coordinator at 903-563-1649.





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**Longtime HCDE supporter Bates Collision Centers ‘fuels smiles’ by giving away two vehicles to Harvey survivors**  
***Head Start parent, employee to unwrap cars after receiving Responsible Parenting awards***

Dec. 12, 2017 – After losing their cars during Hurricane Harvey and enduring daily transportation challenges, Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga are receiving a special gift from Bates Collision Centers: the gift of transportation.

In its 19th year, HCDE Head Start’s partnership with Bates Collision Centers is giving away cars No. 33 and 34 to two moms who will be recognized with the Responsible Parenting Award. Owners Lee and Leila Bates have made this annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents often make in order to provide for their children.

“We’re fueling brighter futures,” said Lee Bates, president of Bates Collision Centers. “Responsible parenting is so important and it’s a big job in every family. But it becomes even harder when all the pieces aren’t in place, like transportation.”

Rashed and Zuniga were nominated by Head Start Center managers. Bates employees donate time to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donate gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

Leila Bates, vice president, says both she and Lee are proud of their employees who continue to supply time and resources to families they have yet to meet.

HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock believes the partnership is particularly important this year as parents face transportation issues post-Harvey.

“We continue to be thankful for our partnership with Bates Collision Centers,” said Peacock. “These cars make a difference in the lives of families who are already committed to making the world a better place for their children.”

-more-

**About Bahiyah Rashed, HCDE Head Start Tidwell Center, recipient of the 33rd rehabbed car:**

Bahiyah Rashed is a valued teacher at Tidwell Head Start, single mother of two sons Deon, 10 and Daveon, 9, and guardian to niece Kelsi, 7. Since losing her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey, Rashed has been sharing a vehicle with her mother. While the car has been a blessing, it has occasional mechanical issues and can be unreliable while trying to attend school, work and many extracurricular activities.

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Vanessa Zuniga is the single parent of Nathan, 4, and employed full-time. Zuniga lost her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey and shares rides with friends and family. She begins her day early and waits for extended times to be picked up from work. She also relies on family members for Nathan's school rides.

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For Immediate Release

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**March 30, 2017**

## **Harris County Department of Education Baytown Head Start program recruits students for immediate openings**

Harris County Department of Education Head Start Baytown Centers are recruiting students ages 6 weeks to 3 years old for Early Head Start and ages 3 to 5 for Head Start. The Early Head Start Center is located at 1319 N. Pruett St. and the Head Start center at 1725 N. Pruett St. These programs ensure future success for students both academically and socially and provide comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

Tiana Toliver, parent to current Baytown Head Start student Hannah, credits the HCDE Head Start program for changing her life back in 2011. After leaving an abusive marriage, and not sure what to do next, Toliver enrolled her oldest child in Head Start and found she excelled in the classroom. While her daughter was attending Head Start, Toliver obtained a certificate in medical coding and billing to support her family.

Since 2011, Toliver has had three children attend Head Start and has seen the benefits it provides.

“Both of my daughters that moved on to elementary school are currently on the honor roll at Goose Creek CISD,” said Toliver. “I believe that is a result of the knowledge and support they received from the teachers in HCDE’s Head Start program.”

HCDE provides services through 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. Additional locations include J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, La Porte, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell.

**Photo:** Baytown parent Tiana Toliver stands with daughter, Hannah.

For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343 or visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart).

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**Urvashi Deshpande, Village High School, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
**Alec Martinez, Cy-Fair ISD, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Harris County Students Receive Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards**

Two Harris County students were recently honored with National Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards at the June 8 ceremony in New York City. Urvashi Deshpande from Village High School received the award for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade and Alec Martinez with Cypress-Fairbanks ISD received the award for 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

Each year, a special panel of national jurors selects two students from each grade for this prestigious award. In addition to being honored at the national ceremony, Deshpande and Martinez will receive \$500.

Deshpande, who won for her writing piece, said the Best-in-Grade Award gave her confidence in her abilities as a writer.

“This has really motivated me to keep writing and keep sharing my writing with others,” said Deshpande.

To find more information about the Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards, visit <http://www.artandwriting.org/scholarships/sponsoredawards/best-in-grade/>.

For many students, winning a National Scholastic Art & Writing Medal can change their life  
For two Harris County students, the Best-in-Grade Awards

In addition to being considered for awards within their respective categories, two writers and two artists from each grade are chosen each year as the Best-in-Grade. Students are chosen for this award by a special panel of national jurors and receive \$500 cash.

This year, two Harris County students were chosen for this prestigious award. Urvashi Deshpande from Village High School received the award for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade and Alec Martinez with Cypress-Fairbanks ISD received the award for 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

Along with receiving National Gold Medals, Deshpande and Martinez were invited onstage at the National Awards Ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City to receive the Best-in-Grade Award.

Deshpande, who won for her writing piece, said the award gave her confidence in her abilities as a writer and to keep sharing her writing with others.

“I really enjoyed reading other winners’ works and it was an honor to be onstage with so many incredibly talented people at the ceremony,” said Deshpande.

Martinez, who has always had an interest in film and photography, was encouraged to enter the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards by his teacher, Elizabeth Martinez. Believing the competition would open up opportunities for him and his peers,

“I didn’t realize I had a talent in photography until I received this award,” said Martinez “It’s motivated me to pursue it further.”

Martinez hopes to use his photography talent as a film director in the future and although Deshpande isn’t sure she’ll be a writer, she knows her writing ability will benefit her in any career she chooses.

“I love writing and will continue to do it as long as I live,” said Deshpande. “Although I don’t particularly see it as a career for myself, writing is a useful skill everywhere, so I will need it for any field I work in.”

To find more information about the Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards, visit <http://www.artandwriting.org/scholarships/sponsoredawards/best-in-grade/>.

**How did it feel to win the Best-in-Grade award for 9th grade?** It was so incredible! I was certainly not expecting it at all. Just to win the Gold Medal was a shock, but the Best-in-Grade award on top of that? It was a very pleasant surprise. Sometimes I have doubts about my abilities, but this award has made me absolutely sure that writing is something that I am good at, and has encouraged me to only work harder at improving my skills.

**Do you plan on writing in the future? Maybe as a career?** I absolutely love writing and I will continue to do it as long as I live. Although I don’t particularly see it as a career for myself, writing is a very useful skill everywhere, so I will likely need it for whatever field I will work in.

**What was your favorite part about the National Ceremony in New York?** Hearing the National Poets perform excerpts from their poems, and seeing the video of the amazing things they’ve been able to achieve was very inspiring. I also liked hearing Paul Chan speak and watching the extraordinary showcase of his artwork, and Dick Robinson’s speech about Scholastic was interesting to listen to and taught me a lot of things I didn’t know before. The whole night was really wonderful and I loved every minute of it (especially when I got to go up on stage). Just sitting there in Carnegie Hall for the very first time made me completely awestruck.

**How did you get involved in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards? Was this your first year to enter?** I have been submitting pieces since 7th grade. In both 7th and 8th grade, my English teachers at the Village School encouraged us to work hard on creating pieces during class time to be able to submit to Scholastic. In the high school, since time is much more limited, doing pieces for Scholastic isn’t really a part of the schedule. I’m glad that my middle school English teachers educated us on this whole process early on, so now in 9th grade I could submit a piece on my own.



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April 18, 2017

### **Harris County Department of Education Board approves plans for first public recovery school in Harris County**

The Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees voted 4-0 on April 18 to approve the budgeting and implementation of a recovery high school, the first public Harris County substance-use prevention high school. The Texas Education Agency reported that in 2014-2015, there were approximately 11,000 Harris County students that had drug offense issues, according to TEA Disciplinary District Data.

The school will be available to all 25 school districts in Harris County on a contractual basis and will serve 30 students as it is opened with a target date of September 2017. HCDE will renovate a 20,000-square-foot HCDE school facility located in the Greenspoint area in north Houston at 11902 Spears Road. The HCDE Board of Trustees approved \$950,000 in start-up funding for the project.

“It’s a good thing we are doing this because it’s a chance to help students in a revolutionary way,” said HCDE Board Vice President Eric Dick. “I had a troubled youth and am glad to be a solution to the problem.”

The goal of the recovery high school is to provide support and assistance to students after successful completion of a rehabilitation program. Students continue to receive counseling and support as they attend their school.

A low student-to-teacher ratio will be implemented as the school provides an academic curriculum along with life skills and recovery coaching. Staff at the school will include teachers, recovery coaches and counselors. The school will accept students from all areas of Harris County.

“We recognize those who struggle each day in the fight against addiction—the students, parents, teachers and community,” said Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. “This school represents a big step in recovery for students in Harris County.”

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July 18, 2017

## Harris County Department of Education Trustees approve CASE Debates to serve at-risk students

A nationally recognized debate program, the Houston Urban Debate League (HUDL), will serve 300 low-income, at-risk high school students in the Harris County area after the Board of Trustees approved the initiative on July 18.

The program, CASE Debates, is a joint project between HUDL and Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids), which serves 9,000 at-risk students in the greater Houston area.

HUDL currently operates solely within Houston ISD and has a successful track record providing debate programs and camps for approximately 1,000 students each year. CASE Debates will expand the current HUDL model by serving at-risk teens from 20 high schools in five Harris County school districts.

"Part of our mission is to equalize educational opportunity for students in Harris County, and this program will open doors for many at-risk teenagers," said HCDE Board President Louis Evans. "Our children will come of age in a global economy, and the ability to communicate effectively and think critically will be key to their success."

The program provides three in-depth seminars for youth and coaches along with three debate tournaments throughout the school year.

HUDL Board Chair Heather Hatfield attended the meeting in support the expansion of the program into additional Harris County school districts.

"Debate changes lives," Hatfield said. "We look forward to working with HCDE and the students of Harris County."

For more information about CASE Debates, call CASE for Kids at 713-696-1331.

**Photo:** Houston Urban Debate League Chair Heather Hatfield, Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert Jr., and CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers at the July 18 HCDE Board of Trustees meeting.

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### **Harris County Department of Education CASE for Kids coordinator Celestine honored with national afterschool leader award**

As Chasidy Celestine accepts the 2018 Next Generation of Afterschool award given by the National Afterschool Association, she reflects on her own teenage afterschool experiences and how they helped shape the confident professional she is today.

The afterschool dance group she joined gave her a sense of belonging, built her self-esteem, reinforced the importance of physical health and helped her build relationships. At 27, she is confident about impacting the next generation through her work in afterschool as one of the national "30 awardees under age 30." Celestine earned the award amid a field of more than 100 young afterschool leaders throughout the nation.

The Memorial City resident is program coordinator for Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. Through her job, she coaches other out-of-school time professionals throughout Harris County via workshops she leads. She is proudest of her customized science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workshops which use everyday household items. All her workshops encourage student voice, engagement and planning-and-reflection time.

As an afterschool intermediary, CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement.

"Chasidy is very passionate about being a resource to youth and her community," said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. "We are so proud that she is being recognized for the work she contributes to the afterschool field through her job as resource coordinator. She connects Harris County organizations and service providers so that we can provide high quality out-of-school time opportunities for kids."

-more-

Celestine grew up in Alief, earned a bachelor's in journalism at Stephen F. Austin University and gained a master's in public administration from Texas Southern University. While in college, she volunteered in afterschool programs and gained a job as youth involvement coach. She has worked for HCDE's CASE for Kids three-plus years.

"Afterschool gives youth a sense of belonging, teamwork, communication, responsibility, critical thinking and enhanced academic and enrichment skills," she said. "Afterschool gave me exposure to places, people and activities I would not have otherwise received." Celestine will be featured in an upcoming issue of the National Afterschool Association's AfterSchool Today magazine and will be recognized at the NAA national conference.

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# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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July 11, 2017

## **CASE for Kids Makes Summer Learning Day “Out of this World”**

Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, celebrates what makes afterschool programs “out of this world” with Summer Learning Day on July 13.

Children ages 5-13 attending Harris County summer afterschool programs will participate in the event focused on science and numeracy from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at HCDE’s North Post Oak Building, 6005 Westview.

Using the theme, “Afterschool is Out of This World,” this event allows students to experience a variety of hands-on, engaging activities that promote learning, exploration and skill development.

“In addition to helping students maintain and advance their academic growth during the summer, this event allows them to explore potential careers in the STEM field,” said HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr.

Activities include a portable planetarium from the Houston Museum of Natural Science, a rocket launch and a mock space escape room challenge. Students will also create a special intergalactic substance that they can take home.

Summer Learning Day is an annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer.

Learn more about Summer Learning Day by visiting <http://goo.gl/aWslc>.

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## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Entertainer SaulPaul to inspire, empower Out-of-School Time Conference attendees this Saturday**

**What:** **Saul Paul, rapper and performer**, shares his powerful life story, prose and music with staff who work with at-risk students in afterschool (out-of-school time) programs. **After serving time in prison, the singer-songwriter reversed his downhill path and graduated from UT Austin with honors. Part of his story includes how afterschool programs changed his path.**

**Active session includes audience participation** as the entertainer takes four words and turns them into a powerful rap song.

<https://youtu.be/V5e2r5PYIFI>

Many of conference sessions on Nov. 10-11 will focus on social-emotional issues and learning as front-line afterschool workers and leaders talk about students affected by Harvey. CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson Caruthers promotes discussion through a speakers' panel and workshop sessions.

**Who:** **SaulPaul who has performed at two TEDx Talks and America's Got Talent** will entertain afterschool staff who work with at-risk students in programs throughout Houston. Conference is hosted by Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education.

**When:** **Nov. 11, 2017, 12:30-1 p.m.**

**Where:** **HESS Club, 5430 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77056**

**Media contact:** Contact Carol Vaughn, Communications and Creative Services manager at 281-660-9205

CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education, provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

## **CASE for Kids provides learning tips for parents following Summer Learning Day**

Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, offers parents summer learning tips for their students to help prevent "summer slide," or the loss of academic skills and knowledge during the summer.

According to the National Summer Learning Association, most students lose approximately two months of grade level equivalency in math during the summer and low-income students typically fall behind in reading achievement. This loss is among the most significant causes of the achievement gap between lower and higher income students and one of the strongest contributors to the high school dropout rate.

CASE for Kids hosted their annual Summer Learning Day event on July 13 to emphasize the importance of keeping students engaged, safe and healthy every summer. At this year's event, Harris County students attending summer afterschool programs in childcare facilities and nonprofit organizations experienced a variety of space-themed activities that promoted learning, exploration and skill development.

Following Summer Learning Day, CASE for Kids offers parents tips to keep students engaged and learning during the remainder of the summer and help close the achievement gap:

1. **Dust off the library card.** Reading is the best and often cheapest way to keep kids' minds engaged during the summer.
2. **Hit the "off" button.** Screen time (phone, television, etc.) should be limited during the summer. Otherwise, kids may find little motivation to get much-needed exercise or participate in other summer learning activities.
3. **Get creative.** Students love to paint, draw and construct when they're at school, so encourage them to do the same at home.
4. **Leave the house.** Going to a park or riding a bike may not sound like "summer learning," but studies show healthy bodies and healthy minds are linked.
5. **Don't forget two plus two.** Keep kids' STEM brains in gear by doing small things like measuring flour and sugar for baking, calculating the grocery bill, or using flash cards or free online worksheets.

"We're dedicated to ensuring students receive high-quality and enriching academic experiences, even in the summer," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director. "It's important that our students return to school in the fall ready to succeed."

Find more summer learning tips and free local activities here: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4705/use-it-or-lose-it-flyer-2017.pdf>.

For more information on preventing summer learning loss, visit [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org).

## **Students in Harris County Department of Education special schools use game of chess to strengthen socialization, academic skills**

The game of chess is more than simply moving Rooks and Knights on a board, as students at Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior Schools know well. After weeks of preparation culminating in a chess tournament, these students have gained social and academic skills that can be applied to the classroom and beyond.

Through a partnership with nonprofit organization Perfect TeamPlay Inc., nearly 30 students at AB School East and West joined the Chess Club, where Coach James Hudson taught them more than just the rules of the game.

"Perfect TeamPlay Inc. is a nonprofit that uses chess and other activities to mentor and motivate students," said Hudson. "In addition to academic benefits, chess provides students with skills to become productive citizens."

Since many students at HCDE's AB Schools deal with intellectual or behavioral challenges, chess offers benefits that can be applied to any situation in life. From critical thinking and strategy, to patience and time management, chess can be used as a fun education and socialization tool. Since chess is a game that expands the mind, it can also improve overall behavior and self-esteem. AB School West Principal Dr. Victor Keys also notes that students "practice following directions and accepting consequences and criticism – qualities that are important in the real world."

HCDE staff and parents have also noticed the students are using these skills in their every-day life.

"We've noticed the skills our students gained through chess - time, attention, patience and strategy – have transferred into the classroom and throughout the school community," said AB School East Principal Mindy Robertson.

During the chess tournament, students were encouraged to participate in a Chess Math challenge, a new aspect of the Perfect TeamPlay Inc. tournaments. The challenge involved giving each chess piece a corresponding number and incorporating that into various mathematical equations. Several students excitedly volunteered to participate in the challenge while being cheered on by their peers. Perfect TeamPlay Inc. hopes this exercise will advance students' math skills and build self-confidence.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county through its HCDE Schools division. [Two schools support students with intellectual or behavioral disabilities](#) and two alternative schools provide education for adjudicated or expelled youth. [View our video](#) and learn more about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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**March 7, 2017**

## **HCDE communicators earn 28 awards from Texas School Public Relations Association**

Harris County Department of Education Communications and Creative Services and Client Engagement earned 28 awards at the 2017 Texas School Public Relations Association Star Awards competition. Awards were announced at the association's 55th annual conference in Galveston, Texas on February 22.

Awards for HCDE staff include two best of categories, nine gold awards, 10 silver awards and seven bronze awards. The association received over 1,000 entries in categories which included website, newsletter, writing, annual report and social media. The list of awards follows:

**Best of Category:**

- Internal Newsletter, print: "The Hub" employee newsletter
- Internal Newsletter, electronic: "The Connector" HCDE Board newsletter

**Gold:**

Internal newsletter printed (The Hub), internal newsletter electronic (The Connector), internal newsletter digital (The Hub), poster (Scholastic Art & Writing), annual report (Head Start), annual report (PAFR), photo (CASE for Kids), logo/trademark (Choice Partners), Video (HCDE), website (HCDE)

**Silver:**

Flyer (Learning Tips for Parents: CASE for Kids), Image identity package (Choice Partners), writing (Head Start annual report), news release (Adult Education grads), photo (Head Start), advertisement (Choice Partners), video (Human Resources), video (Head Start recruitment), e-newsletter (Center for Safe and Secure Schools), photo (Head Start ribbon-cutting)

**Bronze:**

Writing (Teaching and Learning Center), photo (CASE for Kids), video (Head Start), video (Education Foundation Ecobot), video (Business Services), computerized (Media Honor Roll), computerized (infographic)

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### Compton Head Start students benefit from JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative

Dec. 4, 2017 - Harris County Department of Education Compton Head Start students, located in the Northeast Multi-Service Center, will benefit from a free book vending machine throughout the month of December as part of JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative.

JetBlue, along with the Houston Mayor's Office, the City of Houston Health Department and the Houston Public Library, unveiled the book vending machine at an event on Nov. 28, 2017. During the event, JetBlue volunteers also visited each Head Start classroom and read to students to get them excited about reading.

Seven total branches of the Houston Public Library system remain shut down from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, leaving hundreds of children without access to their local libraries and the services they offer. The book vending machine will dispense 25,000 brand-new, free books for kids ages 0-14 in the community throughout the month of December.

"Excitement for literacy begins at an early age," said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. "We're thankful to JetBlue and our other community partners for giving our youngest learners access to books."

JetBlue's Soar with Reading initiative encourages kids' imaginations to take flight through reading. The event held on Nov. 28 concluded the second annual JetBlue For Good Month, a month-long celebration of kindness and good deeds. For more information, visit <https://www.jetblue.com/corporate-social-responsibility/youth-education/>.

HCDE operates 15 Head Start centers in northeast Houston. For information about enrollment or employment in Head Start, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart) or call 713-672-9343.

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governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).



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### **Confident HCDE Principal Academy grad Castilleja to lead HISD school HCDE recruits educators for 2017-2018 principal academy**

Aug. 2, 2017-- Principal Georgina Castilleja personifies a model school leader as she confidently crunches numbers in her office with a colleague. Within the hour, she cordially greets incoming Clifton Middle School sixth graders during their orientation. The graduate from Harris County Department of Education's Principal Academy hit the ground running this July preparing for her first year as leader of the Houston ISD middle school. Meanwhile at HCDE, leaders of the principal academy are busy preparing for a new class of fall recruits.

A recommendation from a friend last year led Castilleja to enroll in the HCDE program that prepares teachers to become certified school leaders. The hybrid program is both onsite and online as principal candidates meet once a month on weekends, combined with self-paced online assignments.

To date, all students completing the program and taking the principal certification exam passed the test. Personalized leadership coaching and mentorship is delivered by a handful of educators who have a history of successful school leadership. Each alumni class is small, with customized attention.

"We do more than just help our students pass the principal certification test," said Lidia Zatopek, director of the Educator Certification and Professional Advancement at HCDE. "We want to set our future school leaders up to succeed so that they create conditions that support teaching and learning which lead to high-performing schools."

Castilleja immersed herself into education in an entry-level position as a school office clerk 17 years ago. She worked while going to college to become a reading and language arts teacher and then an ESL teacher.

"I thought I'd be a teacher for the rest of my life, and in a way I feel that is still the case," she said. "However, I felt my influence would have greater impact outside of the classroom. Maybe not greater (than a teacher), as the most significant influence is within the classroom, but perhaps a wider-reaching impact as I come into contact with more stakeholders," Castilleja said.

She says the HCDE leadership program forced her to step out of her comfort zone and explore different areas of school leadership, waters she had not tread before.

During the past year the bilingual educator was assistant principal at Sharpstown High School on probationary status as she completed the HCDE Principal Academy.

Leadership advancement coaches at HCDE, including veteran administrators Deirdre Sharkey Williams and Chaney Ledet, helped Castilleja along the way. During the year, Castilleja said she and fellow students benefitted from guest panel principals who shared their experiences.

“One of those principals in the guest panel has now become a great mentor to me, and our first connection was on a Saturday at HCDE,” Castilleja said.

As the 17-year educator now prepares to lead her school of 800-plus students by example, she envisions and prepares Clifton to be a welcoming environment for all stakeholders—the students, teachers, parents and volunteers.

“I would like for people to say I work hard,” she said, thinking on how she wants to be remembered. But I would also like them to say that as a coach, I built them up and helped them grow.”

HCDE Principal Academy leader Zatopek beams as she recalls the growth she has seen in Castilleja, always a teacher but now a leader of her new community as principal.

“We’ll always be here for her, anytime she needs it,” said Zatopek.

For information about joining the “Lead Now” fall class of 2017 HCDE Principal Academy Cohort beginning Sept. 9, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/leadnow](http://www.hcde-texas.org/leadnow) or email [hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org](mailto:hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org).

**Photo:** Harris County Department of Education Principal Academy graduate Georgina Castilleja meets with incoming sixth graders at Clifton Middle School in Houston ISD, where she is principal for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year.

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### **Crabb named new senior director for School-Based Therapy Services at HCDE**

Carie Crabb is the new senior director for Harris County Department of Education's School-Based Therapy Services. HCDE's team of highly-trained physical, occupational and music therapists provide on-campus support for students throughout greater Harris County with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and other challenges.

Crabb has 28 years of experience as a school-based therapist. After graduating from Houston Community College in 1988, she began working at HCDE as a physical therapist assistant and was assigned to Houston Independent School District. She later obtained her master's degree in physical therapy at Texas Woman's University and returned to HCDE as a physical therapist.

During her time at HCDE, Crabb has served Houston, Galena Park, Pasadena, Goose Creek and Humble independent school districts as a therapist. Crabb joined the management team in 2004, where she has partnered with various school districts, the Gulf Coast Co-op and the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Early Childhood Intervention program.

Her expertise in physical therapy led her to serve as the HCDE center coordinator for clinical education for professional physical therapy and physical therapy assistant students who attend local colleges and universities. She has also served on the advisory boards for the Houston Community College and Wharton County Junior College Physical Therapy Assistant Programs and has been a guest lecturer for the Texas Woman's University doctoral program for physical therapy.

"I am committed to improving educational success for Harris County students through provision of high quality therapy services in partnership with the area school districts and charter schools," said Crabb. "I have been very fortunate to have a career I truly love and I'm excited about this next chapter at HCDE."

Crabb will begin her role as senior director on Feb. 1, 2017. She replaces retiring senior director Jean Polichino, who has led the division since 2007.

For more information about HCDE's School-Based Therapy Services, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices](http://www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices).

###



## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Free Distance Education Classes in ESL, GED offered through Harris County Department of Education**

Aug. 2, 2017--Adult English-as-a-second language and GED students in Harris County may enroll in self-paced, online learning classes through Harris County Department of Education beginning this fall. Classes are free on a first-come, first-served basis through an adult learner program called Distance First.

A Saturday orientation which includes pre-testing and registration is required to enroll in the program. Dates to enroll in one of the orientation classes are Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14 and Dec. 2 from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. at 626 Lindale, Houston, Texas, 77022.

“Adult learners constantly juggle responsibilities that include families, jobs and other obligations,” said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. “By providing a self-paced program, students can access GED or ESL lessons at home or any place with an Internet connection. We take away the stress of travel but at the same time deliver a quality program with technical and academic support.”

Pre-testing and assessment determines the entry level in subjects for each student. Technology training includes instruction on how to operate software. Group activities help students build time management skills. An experience technical assistance team helps throughout the program.

“Distance First classes are presented by online instructors and support staff and offer fundamental skills training that is tailored to their needs, as well as ample technical and academic support,” said Eduardo Honold, director of Adult Education at HCDE.

Students may also enroll in traditional classroom ESL, GED or workforce classes this fall. For more information about all learning opportunities and locations, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation) or call 713-692-6216.

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## **Supply catalog and JOC trades contracts awarded for access through HCDE Choice Partners**

Supply catalog and Job Order Contracting on-call trades contracts were renewed at the February 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Newly awarded contracts include

**Academic programs for QZAB Projects:** Action Potential Learning, LLC; Appleton Learning Corporation; Cengage Learning, Inc.; Education Galaxy, LLC; Gamesalad, Inc.; KAMICO Instructional Media, Inc.; McGraw-Hill Education, Inc. doing business as McGraw-Hill School Education, LLC; W. Oscar Neuhaus Memorial Foundation doing business as Neuhaus Education Center; Sirius Education Solutions, LLC doing business as Sirius Education Solutions; and 1Studentnest, Inc.;

**Job Order Contracting/CSP IDIQ On-Call Trades:** Aggieland Construction, LLC; ASA Builders; and RMB Management, LLC; and

**Moving, Storage and Related Items:** A-Rocket Moving & Delivery, Inc. doing business as A-Rocket Moving & Storage, Inc. and Roadrunner, Ltd doing business as Roadrunner Moving & Storage; doing business as Corestone Construction Services; ERC Environmental & Construction Services, Inc. doing business as ERC; Evolve Holdings, Inc.; Dura Pier Facilities Services, Ltd. doing business as Facilities Sources; Fusion Trading, LLC doing business as Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing; Horizon International Group, LLC; Texas Liqqa Tech Services, Inc. doing business as Liqqa Tech; Maintenance Solutions, Inc.; Mart, Inc.; Millennium Project Solutions, Inc.; Mooring Recovery Services, Inc. doing business as Mooring USA; Nash Industries, Inc.; Tandus Centiva US, LLC; and BR Kym, Inc. doing business as Worth Hydrochem of Houston 22.

Renewed contracts include

**Carpet Cleaning and Related Items:** Strumbono, LLC doing business as Corporate Care; GMW Quality Cleaning Solutions doing business as Hospitality Cleaning Solutions; and The King's Southern Division, LLC doing business as The Kings;

**Disaster Recovery Consultants:** Adjusters International, Inc.;

**Drug and Alcohol Testing Program:** Forward Edge, Inc. and Pinnacle Medical Management;

**Fine Paper:** Western - BRW Paper Company, Inc. doing business as Bosworth Papers, Inc. and Butler Business Products;

**Graduation, Yearbooks and Commemorative Items:** Pride and Recognition, Inc. doing business as Balfour Company; Taylor Publishing Company doing business as Balfour Publishing; Graduate Sales & Recognition, LLC doing business as Herff Jones; and Jostens, Inc.;

**Insurance and Third Party Administration Services:** Brown & Brown Insurance Services of San Antonio, Inc. doing business as Alamo Insurance Group; Financial Benefit Services, LLC (FBS); Curtis M. Finley doing business as Finley Financial Services; and Total Compensation Group Consulting, LP doing business as TCG Consulting;

**Materials, Parts, Equipment, Supplies and Related Items for Maintenance and Operations:** Alklean Industries, Inc.; Eagle United USA doing business as Eagle Mountain Flag & Flagpole; Convict Hill Floorcovering & Design, Inc. doing business as Lady Liberty Flag and Flagpole; Micro-X1, Inc.; and Visiontron Corporation;

**Online Tutoring Services:** Focus Care, Inc. doing business as FEV Tutor, Inc.; and On The Third Day Christian Ministries doing business as Laureate Learning Center;

**Travel Services:** GBJ, Inc., doing business as AFC Transportation; Travel Corp, LLC doing business as Corporate Travel Management, Allure by ctm and BH Goodman Bus Service, Inc.; doing business as Goodman Bus Service;

**Tree Trimming, Landscaping, Debris Removal and Other Related Services:** Asplundh Tree Expert Company; Yellowstone Landscape; The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company doing business as Bartlett Tree Experts; Central Landscape & Maintenance; and Metropolitan Landscape Management, Inc.; and

**Uniforms and Accessories – Purchase and Rental:** Al's Formal Wear of Houston, LTD doing business as Al's Formal Wear; Aviva Wholesale, Inc. (formerly: Nur International, Inc.); Boss & Hughes, LLC; VarsityBrands Holding Co., Inc. doing business as BSN Sports, LLC; Corporate Incentives, Inc.; Fruhauf Uniforms, Inc.; JW Drouin & Associates, LP doing business as J. Harding & Co.; Texas Motion Sports, LLC; TheMariachi Connection, Inc.; and Triple D Uniform Rental, Inc.

In addition, contracts for the 2017-2018 Choice Partners Supply Catalog, which includes hard bids for more than 1,100 items. Catalog items will be available from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018, and include

**Art Supplies:** PDG Industries doing business as Alamo Classroom Solutions; Blick Art Materials, LLC doing business as Blick Art Materials; Butler Business Products, LLC; Early Childhood, LLC doing business as Discount School Supply; Liberty Data Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Office Products; Nasco Education, LLC doing business as Nasco; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; S&S Worldwide, Inc.; School Specialty, Inc.; and Standard Stationery Supply Company;

**Athletic Supplies:** Varsity Brands Holding Company, Inc. doing business as BSN Sports, LLC; North Houston Athletics, LLC; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; S&S Worldwide, Inc.; and School Specialty, Inc.;

**Classroom Teaching Supplies:** PDG Industries doing business as Alamo Classroom Solutions; Butler Business Products, LLC; DGS Educational Products; Early Childhood, LLC doing business as Discount School Supply; Liberty Data Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Office Products; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; S&S Worldwide, Inc.; School Specialty, Inc.; and Standard Stationery Supply Company;

**Food Service Supplies:** Calico Industries, Inc.; Central Poly-Bag Corporation; Devin Distributing & Packaging, Inc.; Pollock Investments, Inc. doing business as Pollock Paper Distributors or Pollock Packaging; and Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products;

**Janitorial Supplies:** Western-BRW Paper Company, Inc. doing business as Bosworth Papers Company, Inc.; Buckeye International, Inc. doing business as Buckeye Cleaning Center-Houston; Calico Industries, Inc.; Capital Plastics International, Inc.; Conroe Paper & Chemical, Inc. doing business as Crown Paper & Chemical; Devin Distributing & Packaging, Inc.; High Point Sanitary Solutions; Last Group Enterprises, Inc.; Matera Paper Company, Inc. and Pollock Investments, Inc.; doing business as Pollock Paper Distributors or Pollock Packaging;

**Medical Supplies:** Beautiful Ventures, Inc. doing business as BVI Resources; Henry Schein, Inc.; Lippert Components Manufacturing, Inc.; Priscilla M. Ayerite doing business as NAO Global Health, LLC; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; and School Health Corporation;

**Office Supplies:** Western-BRW Paper Company, Inc. doing business as Bosworth Papers; Butler Business Products, LLC; Challenge Office Products, Inc.; City Office Supply, Inc.; Daniel Office Products, Inc.; DD Office Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Paper, Infinity Office Solutions; Liberty Data Products, Inc., doing business as Liberty Office Products; Nasco Education, LLC doing business as Nasco; National Art & School Supplies; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; Reliant Business Products, Inc.; School Specialty, Inc.; Standard Stationery Supply Company and Express Business Products;

**Technology Supplies:** ACCO Brands Corporation doing business as ACCO Brands USA, LLC; Butler Business Products, LLC; DD Office Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Paper, Infinity Office Solutions; Liberty Data Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Office Products; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; School Specialty, Inc.; Scott Electric and Xpress Business Products.

#### **New Members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Feb. 28 include **Bells ISD**, Bells; **Brown County**, Brownwood; **Comal ISD**, New Braunfels; **Educational Service Center (ESC) Region 11**, White Settlement; **Houston Kidz Center, LLC**, Houston; and **city of Jacinto City**.

New out-of-state members include **Community Access**, New York, N.Y.; **Escondido Union High School District**, Escondido, Calif.; and **Pasco County Board of County**, New Port Richey, Fla.

**About Choice Partners:** Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

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## **Supply catalog and JOC trades contracts awarded for access through HCDE Choice Partners**

Supply catalog and Job Order Contracting on-call trades contracts were renewed at the February 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

Newly awarded contracts include

**Academic programs for QZAB Projects:** Action Potential Learning, LLC; Appleton Learning Corporation; Cengage Learning, Inc.; Education Galaxy, LLC; Gamesalad, Inc.; KAMICO Instructional Media, Inc.; McGraw-Hill Education, Inc. doing business as McGraw-Hill School Education, LLC; W. Oscar Neuhaus Memorial Foundation doing business as Neuhaus Education Center; Sirius Education Solutions, LLC doing business as Sirius Education Solutions; and 1Studentnest, Inc.;

**Job Order Contracting/CSP IDIQ On-Call Trades:** Aggieland Construction, LLC; ASA Builders; and RMB Management, LLC; and

**Moving, Storage and Related Items:** A-Rocket Moving & Delivery, Inc. doing business as A-Rocket Moving & Storage, Inc. and Roadrunner, Ltd doing business as Roadrunner Moving & Storage; doing business as Corestone Construction Services; ERC Environmental & Construction Services, Inc. doing business as ERC; Evolve Holdings, Inc.; Dura Pier Facilities Services, Ltd. doing business as Facilities Sources; Fusion Trading, LLC doing business as Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing; Horizon International Group, LLC; Texas Liqua Tech Services, Inc. doing business as Liqua Tech; Maintenance Solutions, Inc.; Mart, Inc.; Millennium Project Solutions, Inc.; Mooring Recovery Services, Inc. doing business as Mooring USA; Nash Industries, Inc.; Tandus Centiva US, LLC; and BR Kym, Inc. doing business as Worth Hydrochem of Houston 22.

Renewed contracts include

**Carpet Cleaning and Related Items:** Strumbono, LLC doing business as Corporate Care; GMW Quality Cleaning Solutions doing business as Hospitality Cleaning Solutions; and The King's Southern Division, LLC doing business as The Kings;

**Disaster Recovery Consultants:** Adjusters International, Inc.;

**Drug and Alcohol Testing Program:** Forward Edge, Inc. and Pinnacle Medical Management;

**Fine Paper:** Western - BRW Paper Company, Inc. doing business as Bosworth Papers, Inc. and Butler Business Products;

**Graduation, Yearbooks and Commemorative Items:** Pride and Recognition, Inc. doing business as Balfour Company; Taylor Publishing Company doing business as Balfour Publishing; Graduate Sales & Recognition, LLC doing business as Herff Jones; and Jostens, Inc.;

**Insurance and Third Party Administration Services:** Brown & Brown Insurance Services of San Antonio, Inc. doing business as Alamo Insurance Group; Financial Benefit Services, LLC (FBS); Curtis M. Finley doing business as Finley Financial Services; and Total Compensation Group Consulting, LP doing business as TCG Consulting;

**Materials, Parts, Equipment, Supplies and Related Items for Maintenance and Operations:** Alklean Industries, Inc.; Eagle United USA doing business as Eagle Mountain Flag & Flagpole; Convict Hill Floorcovering & Design, Inc. doing business as Lady Liberty Flag and Flagpole; Micro-X1, Inc.; and Visiontron Corporation;

**Online Tutoring Services:** Focus Care, Inc. doing business as FEV Tutor, Inc.; and On The Third Day Christian Ministries doing business as Laureate Learning Center;

**Travel Services:** GBJ, Inc., doing business as AFC Transportation; Travel Corp, LLC doing business as Corporate Travel Management, Allure by ctm and BH Goodman Bus Service, Inc.; doing business as Goodman Bus Service;

**Tree Trimming, Landscaping, Debris Removal and Other Related Services:** Asplundh Tree Expert Company; Yellowstone Landscape; The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company doing business as Bartlett Tree Experts; Central Landscape & Maintenance; and Metropolitan Landscape Management, Inc.; and

**Uniforms and Accessories – Purchase and Rental:** Al's Formal Wear of Houston, LTD doing business as Al's Formal Wear; Aviva Wholesale, Inc. (formerly: Nur International, Inc.); Boss & Hughes, LLC; VarsityBrands Holding Co., Inc. doing business as BSN Sports, LLC; Corporate Incentives, Inc.; Fruhauf Uniforms, Inc.; JW Drouin & Associates, LP doing business as J. Harding & Co.; Texas Motion Sports, LLC; TheMariachi Connection, Inc.; and Triple D Uniform Rental, Inc.

In addition, contracts for the 2017-2018 Choice Partners Supply Catalog, which includes hard bids for more than 1,100 items. Catalog items will be available from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018, and include

**Art Supplies:** PDG Industries doing business as Alamo Classroom Solutions; Blick Art Materials, LLC doing business as Blick Art Materials; Butler Business Products, LLC; Early Childhood, LLC doing business as Discount School Supply; Liberty Data Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Office Products; Nasco Education, LLC doing business as Nasco; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; S&S Worldwide, Inc.; School Specialty, Inc.; and Standard Stationery Supply Company;

**Athletic Supplies:** Varsity Brands Holding Company, Inc. doing business as BSN Sports, LLC; North Houston Athletics, LLC; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; S&S Worldwide, Inc.; and School Specialty, Inc.;

**Classroom Teaching Supplies:** PDG Industries doing business as Alamo Classroom Solutions; Butler Business Products, LLC; DGS Educational Products; Early Childhood, LLC doing business as Discount School Supply; Liberty Data Products, Inc. doing business as Liberty Office Products; Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products; S&S Worldwide, Inc.; School Specialty, Inc.; and Standard Stationery Supply Company;

**Food Service Supplies:** Calico Industries, Inc.; Central Poly-Bag Corporation; Devin Distributing & Packaging, Inc.; Pollock Investments, Inc. doing business as Pollock Paper Distributors or Pollock Packaging; and Pyramid Paper Company doing business as Pyramid School Products;

**Janitorial Supplies:** Western-BRW Paper Company, Inc. doing business as Bosworth Papers Company, Inc.; Buckeye International, Inc. doing business as Buckeye Cleaning Center-Houston; Calico Industries, Inc.; Capital Plastics International, Inc.; Conroe Paper & Chemical, Inc. doing business as Crown Paper & Chemical; Devin Distributing & Packaging, Inc.; High Point Sanitary Solutions; Last Group Enterprises, Inc.; Matera Paper Company, Inc. and Pollock Investments, Inc.; doing business as Pollock Paper Distributors or Pollock Packaging;

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## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[cvaughn@hcde-texas.org](mailto:cvaughn@hcde-texas.org)  
281-660-9205

### **Financial mathematics grant awarded to HCDE brings personal money management training to Harris County educators, teens**

Harris County teachers will be equipped to teach a new high school course called “financial mathematics” through a \$19,000 grant provided to Harris County Department of Education’s Teaching and Learning Center through the Texas Financial Education Endowment.

The teacher’s training project provides assistance to 70 high school math and career and technical education educators in all 25 Harris County districts. The training program implemented by HCDE’s Learning Center is called “New Course, New Challenges: Tackling Texas Financial Literacy through Financial Mathematics Professional Development.”

The new personal money management course satisfies a high school math graduation requirement for students in grades 11-12. The course may be taken instead of algebra 2. Math competencies related to real-world experiences include some of the following: net pay, income taxes, mortgage payment calculation, property taxes, mortgage insurance, closing costs and interest costs.

“We will be helping Harris County high schools to offer this course to their students,” said Nicole Shanahan, HCDE math curriculum director who will lead the project. “Through the course, students apply critical thinking skills to analyze personal financial decisions based upon the current and project economic factors,” she said.

HCDE will collaborate with a financial industry expert to design six lessons of the financial mathematics. The six-module content includes employment earnings, federal taxes, financial institutions and accounts, types of credit, investment options and retirement plans, and types of insurance. Teachers gain the six lessons to teach the course through a one-day, six-hour workshop offered through HCDE.

The financial mathematics grant was written through HCDE’s Center for Grants Development. It will be implemented beginning Jan. 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2019. Teachers interested in the training may email Nicole Shanahan, [nshanahan@hcde-texas.org](mailto:nshanahan@hcde-texas.org) .



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-more-

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### **Former CFISD communication leader named HCDE Client Engagement director**

Aug. 23, 2017 - Stephanie De Los Santos is the new director of the Harris County Department of Education Client Engagement division. With more than 20 years of experience in education and communications, she leads the HCDE division which provides marketing support to programs and services that serve over a million Harris County students and educators.

De Los Santos is former director for communication for Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District, where she served for 12 years before joining HCDE. Prior to her years of service in CFISD, she taught in Aldine ISD for nine years. The Houston native earned both her Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media and Spanish and a Master of Education from Houston Baptist University.

"I'm excited to be a part of an organization where the well-being of Harris County students is top priority," she said. "As director of client engagement, I hope to continue the tradition of excellence not only by incorporating the years of experience I have in the field of education and communication, but also connecting with and providing support to local school districts and surrounding communities."

De Los Santos is the mother of two graduates of CFISD's Jersey Village High School who now attend Trinity University and Oral Roberts University.

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## **HCDE Center for Grants Development hosts fall training series**

Beginning Aug. 23, 2017, Harris County Department of Education's Center for Grants Development will host the Quest for Grants Fall Training Series. Grant Writing Best Practices, the first of seven seminars, is an online seminar on Aug. 23 from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Grant Writing Best Practices seminar will cover habits of successful grant specialists, mistakes inexperienced proposal writers often make, budget considerations, general proposal writing tips and more.

Tips such as avoiding organizational jargon will help grant writers create best practices for their organizations and increase their number of successful grant applications.

"In most cases, we don't know the background and the expertise of the person reviewing our proposals," said Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard, Center for Grants Development director. "Because of this, it's best to write in layperson terms, avoiding acronyms and jargon."

All seminars are \$25 for in-county attendees and \$45 for attendees coming from outside Harris County. View a schedule of the upcoming fall seminars here: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4830/grants-flyer-training-schedule.pdf>.

### **Lookabaugh named executive director of Facilities Support Services at HCDE**

Gregory Lookabaugh is the new executive director of Harris County Department of Education's Facilities Support Services division. Formerly senior manager of facilities planning, Lookabaugh brings more than 35 years of experience working with educational institutions to his new role at HCDE. His main duties include leading an extensive team of employees as they consult in departmental operational reviews, training, facility design and construction management assistance, as well as facility maintenance and operations management.

Lookabaugh holds a bachelor's degree in engineering/industrial technology from Lamar University. His many professional accomplishments include serving as a life member of the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) and as a board member of the Custodial Management Association of Texas (CMAT). In 2009, Lookabaugh assisted the United States Department of Energy (DOE) in preparing the Guide to Operating and Maintaining Energy Smart Schools to educate school districts across the nation in energy conservation.

Many conferences and organizations have sought Lookabaugh's expertise in facilities management. He was a keynote speaker at the Ohio Association of School Business Officials Facility Masters Conference in 2016, and he regularly presents at both the annual and midwinter TASBO conferences.

A veteran of the US Navy, he received an honorable discharge in 1981. He lives in Montgomery, Texas.

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**Groundbreaking set for Harris County's first public recovery high school Oct. 17**  
***Fortis Academy to be led by Anthony Moten, longtime principal,***  
***administrator from West Orange Cove ISD***

Oct. 5, 2017 - Fortis Academy, Harris County's first public recovery high school, breaks ground this month after overcoming flood damages from Hurricane Harvey. Harris County Department of Education has invited elected officials, educators and leaders in the recovery community to view the renovation of the facility, which previously served as a high school for at-risk students.

The ceremony is scheduled for Oct. 17 at 10 a.m. at the school, located at 11902 Spears Road, and will include a tour of the facility, discussion of the recovery school concept, an introduction to the school's new principal, and reveal of the school logo.

The 20,000-square-foot recovery school, located in the Greenspoint area, will open during the 2017-2018 school year to 30 students from any of the 25 Harris County school districts on a district contract basis. Fortis Academy is designed to help students who have completed a substance abuse or dependency rehabilitation program continue their studies in a sober environment.

In addition to the academic component of the traditional high school, the recovery school combines life coach support and counseling, along with data-driven best practices.

The renovation plans include the addition of a culinary kitchen and dining area to support a culinary arts curriculum. The outdoor design will feature walking trails, a ropes course for personal development and team-building, an outdoor kitchen, and a garden.

Anthony Moten, longtime principal and leader in the West Orange Cove Independent School District, will lead the school.

"Dr. Moten was selected to lead our recovery school because of his commitment and dedication to meeting students' unique needs," said Superintendent James Colbert. "The compassion and expertise that Dr. Moten brings along with him will have a long-lasting impact on students who desperately need our help."

-more-

Earning the reputation as an exceptional educator as a seven-year leader of West Orange Middle School, Moten helped transform the school that was failing to meet state standards. Under his leadership, West Orange earned eight Texas Education Agency distinctions.

Moten received his undergraduate degree from Langston University, a master's degree in education administration from Texas A&M University–Commerce and a doctorate from Lamar University. He and his family are currently living in The Woodlands.

Recovery schools are critical to recovering youth as studies show the risk of relapse is higher when students return to their pretreatment schools. HCDE recently became a member of Adolescent Recovery Oriented Systems of Care, or AROSC, a group of agencies in the Houston Recovery Initiative that provides substance abuse treatment, preventative care, after-care and recovery support for adolescents in the Houston area.

“Through our membership in AROSC, we are able to benefit from a credible knowledge base of best practices and pooled resources from the recovery community,” Colbert said. “The recovery school will help students heal, grow and ultimately discover how to live their very best lives while continuing their education.”

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## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Groundbreaking Oct. 17 hails Harris County's first public recovery high school  
*Public invited for details about 'Fortis Academy' for recovering teens***

**What:** *Harris County Department of Education breaks ground on the county's first public recovery high school.* The school will open in the 2017-2018 school year to serve 30 recovering teens from any of the 25 Harris County school districts through district contracts. The recovery school combines life coach support and counseling, traditional academics, and data-driven best practices.

The 20,000-square-foot facility will be equipped with a kitchen to support a culinary curriculum. It also features a therapeutic ropes and zip-line course, walking trails and a garden. An unveiling will reveal the school's logo along with architectural renderings.

**Who:** Harris County Department of Education's Superintendent James Colbert will introduce school partners and leaders, including principal Dr. Anthony Moten along with leadership from Turning Point, a substance use disorder treatment service which will provide contract counseling services at the school. Adolescent Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (AROSC) will also be introduced as part of an integral community support system.

**When:** **Tuesday, Oct. 17, 10-11:30 a.m.**

**Where:** **11902 Spears Road** (formerly Highpoint School North)  
Houston, Texas 77067

**Media contact:** Contact Carol Vaughn, Communications manager, 281-660-9205,  
cvaughn@hcde-texas.org



## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Groundbreaking Oct. 17 hails Harris County's first public recovery high school**  
*Open to the public interested in details about 'Fortis Academy' for recovering teens*

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### **Harris County Department of Education Therapist Leah Alba receives Tom Waugh Fellowship pin**

Nov. 15, 2017 - Harris County Department of Education Physical Therapist Leah Alba was recently honored with the Tom Waugh Fellowship pin on Oct. 27, 2017 at the Texas Physical Therapy Association (TPTA) Annual Conference in Corpus Christi. Alba also recently received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

The Tom Waugh Leadership Development Program aims to help foster and develop professional leadership skills in members of the TPTA who show potential and desire to become more active in the organization. The program includes two phases and takes two years to complete.

“Through this program, I had an opportunity to receive personalized mentorship by leaders in the organization,” said Alba. “I hope to increase organizational involvement at both the local and state levels and become a better advocate for the profession of physical therapy.”

The Meyerland resident has been a therapist with HCDE for 17 years and is currently assigned to work in Houston Independent School District. Before joining HCDE, Alba completed her physical therapy degree in the Philippines and worked in several different clinical settings in the U.S. including a nursing facility, rehabilitation hospital and home health. In 2000, HCDE opened the door for Alba to work with children.

“In my role at HCDE, I get to spend time with children every day,” said Alba. “Hardly a day goes by that I don’t see the clear and lasting impact on the way my students are able to participate and function in their classroom and around the school.”

Working on school campuses throughout Harris County, HCDE’s physical therapists, occupational therapists and music therapists help meet the needs of more than 7,000 students each year who struggle with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and other challenges.

For more information about HCDE’s School-Based Therapy Services, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices](http://www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices) . For information on the Tom Waugh Leadership Development Program, visit <http://www.tpta.org/?page=TWLDP> .

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## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Harvey-impacted families receive gift of transportation from longtime HCDE supporter Bates Collision Centers**

Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga received the gift of transportation and Responsible Parenting Awards from longtime supporter Bates Collision Centers on Dec. 12 and 14. After losing their vehicles during Hurricane Harvey and enduring months of transportation challenges, Rashed and Zuniga were overwhelmed when receiving their rehabbed cars at the Bates Collision Baytown and Channelview locations.

The giveaway ceremony on Dec. 14 in Channelview looked different this year as Bates Collision Centers was burglarized the night before. While the rehabbed vehicle was unharmed, the wrapped gifts for the family were stolen from the facility. Owners Lee and Leila Bates, their employees and community partners came together and acted quickly to replace the gifts in time for the ceremony.

This year, more than 30 businesses in the Baytown and Channelview areas contributed to the annual car giveaways. Bates employees donated time to work on the cars and helped fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donated gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

The Bates Collision and Head Start staff were joined at the giveaway ceremonies by members of the community, local businesses, elected officials, HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. and HCDE Board members Erica Lee Carter and Michael Wolfe.

In its 19<sup>th</sup> year, HCDE Head Start's partnership with Bates Collision Centers gifted cars No. 33 and 34 to the two moms. Recipients of the Responsible Parenting Awards are chosen based on need, dedication to their child's education and commitment to becoming self-sufficient.

Superintendent Colbert believes the partnership between HCDE Head Start and Bates Collision Centers is particularly important this year as much of the county faces transportation issues post-Harvey.

"Hurricane Harvey has dramatically changed what some people's holiday looks like this year," said Colbert. "It's touching and impactful that, through our partnership with Bates, we're able to give cars back to families that lost them."

-more-

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## **Harvey survivors receive gift of transportation from longtime HCDE supporter Bates Collision Centers**

### ***Head Start parent, employee unwrap rehabbed cars after receiving Responsible Parenting Awards***

Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga received the gift of transportation on Dec. 12 and 14 from longtime partner and supporter Bates Collision Centers. After losing their vehicles during Hurricane Harvey and enduring months of transportation challenges, Rashed and Zuniga unwrapped their rehabbed cars after receiving Responsible Parenting Awards.

This year, more than 30 businesses in the Baytown and Channelview areas contributed to the annual car giveaway. Bates employees donated time to work on the cars and helped fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donated gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

“These cars demonstrate true community support and bring normalcy and independence back to these families,” said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert.

In its 19<sup>th</sup> year, HCDE Head Start’s partnership with Bates Collision Centers gifted cars No. 33 and 34 to the two moms. Owners Lee and Leila Bates have made this annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents often make in order to provide for their children.

“Responsible parenting is so important and it’s a big job in every family,” said Lee Bates, president of Bates Collision Centers. “But it becomes even harder when all the pieces aren’t in place, like transportation.”

Superintendent Colbert believes the partnership is particularly important this year as much of the county faces transportation issues post-Harvey.

“This year is unique because everyone was affected by Harvey,” said Colbert. “It’s touching and impactful that, through our partnership with Bates Collision Centers, we’re able to give cars back to families that lost them.”

#### **About Bahiyyah Rashed, HCDE Head Start Tidwell Center, recipient of the 33rd rehabbed car:**

Bahiyyah Rashed is a valued teacher at Tidwell Head Start, single mother of two sons Deon, 10 and Daveon, 9, and guardian to niece Kelsi, 7. Since losing her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey, Rashed has been sharing a vehicle with her mother. While the car has been a blessing, it has occasional mechanical issues and can be unreliable while trying to attend school, work and many extracurricular activities.

#### **About Vanessa Zuniga, HCDE Head Start Pugh Center, recipient of the 34th rehabbed car:**

Vanessa Zuniga is the single parent of Nathan, 4, and employed full-time. Zuniga lost her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey and shares rides with friends and family. She begins her day early and waits for extended times to be picked up from work. She also relies on family members for Nathan’s school rides.

## **HCDE Autism Summit 2017 Provides Tools, Insight for Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Fifty-four educators in the Greater Houston area attended Autism Summit 2017 on Oct. 4-5 at Harris County Department of Education. The summit featured keynote speakers Carol Gray and Dorothea Lerman, and provided breakout sessions with autism experts that focused on autism legislation and transition services. Participants also heard testimonials from a panel of young adults with autism spectrum disorder.

During the first day of the summit, Gray provided a workshop on using “Social Stories™” to help students with autism dealing with the impact of Hurricane Harvey. Social Stories™ is a tool that supports safe, meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals and people with autism. On the second day, Lerman provided important insight for participants as the director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.

“This Autism Summit was informative and engaging,” said Leslie Willis-White with Gulf Coast Community Services Association. “It provided a different perspective for working with students with autism.”

The Autism Summit also featured a “Question and Answer” session with a panel of young adults with autism spectrum disorder. The panelists included Madison Flavin, graduate student at Rice University who was diagnosed with autism at age 19; Nicholas Guillerman, Katy ISD Career and Technology teacher involved in Houston Autism Resources and Support (HARS); and Grant Manier, emerging Eco-artist who has won multiple awards for his Eco-impressionism and recently published a children’s book about his experiences.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. CDC statistics show that one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder, and the condition occurs in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. To view photos from the summit, visit <https://goo.gl/FMkYVD>.



## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Autism Summit 2017 set for Oct. 4-5 at HCDE offers resources to assist students with spectrum disorder**

- What:** Harris County Department of Education's two-day Autism Summit 2017 will provide breakout sessions on issues including autism legislation, transition services and testimonials from young adults with autism spectrum disorder.
- The first day of the summit features noted author Carol Grey, who will focus on using "Social Stories" to help students with autism suffering from post-Harvey trauma. Day two provides insights from keynote Dorothea Lerman, director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.
- Who:** HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center presents Carol Grey, noted author and consultant to children, adolescents and adults with autism, and Dorothea Lerman, director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.
- When:** Oct. 4-5, 2017 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Where:** Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd. Houston, TX 77022
- Media contact:** Contact Carol Vaughn, Communications and Creative Services manager at 281-660-9205 or Lindsey Sanders, communications coordinator at 903-563-1649.



## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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281-660-9205

### **HCDE awarded 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive Meritorious Budget Award by Association of School Business Officials International**

Nov. 27, 2017 - Harris County Department of Education was awarded the Association of School Business Officials International Meritorious Budget Award for excellence in budget presentation. The award promotes and recognizes excellence in school budget presentation. It is awarded to school districts whose budgets have undergone a rigorous review by financial professionals.

“HCDE has applied for and gained this award for nine consecutive years as a part of our commitment for fiscal responsibility to Harris County taxpayers,” said Jesus Amezcua, HCDE’s assistant superintendent of Business Services.

In applying for the award, school business officials gain budget presentation practices and enhance their skills in developing and presenting a school system budget.

HCDE Business Services submitted the 2017-2018 budget to a rigorous team review based on stringent criteria, according to ASBO International Executive Director John Musso.

“The Meritorious Budget Award program helps applicants create an accessible, accurate budget that builds trust with their community,” Musso said.

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elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

## Harris County Department of Education Baytown Head Start program recruits students for immediate openings

Harris County Department of Education Head Start Baytown Centers are recruiting students ages 6 weeks to 3 years old for Early Head Start and ages 3 to 5 for Head Start. The Early Head Start Center is located at 1319 N. Pruett St. and the Head Start center at 1725 N. Pruett St. These programs ensure future success for students both academically and socially and provide comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

Tiana Toliver, parent to current Baytown Head Start student Hannah, credits the HCDE Head Start program for changing her life back in 2011. After leaving an abusive marriage, and not sure what to do next, Toliver enrolled her oldest child in Head Start and found she excelled in the classroom. While her daughter was attending Head Start, Toliver obtained a certificate in medical coding and billing to support her family.



Since 2011, Toliver has had three children attend Head Start and has seen the benefits it provides.

“Both of my daughters that moved on to elementary school are currently on the honor roll at Goose Creek CISD,” said Toliver. “I believe that is a result of the knowledge and support they received from the teachers in HCDE’s Head Start program.”

HCDE provides services through 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. Additional locations include J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, La Porte, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell.

**Photo:** Baytown parent Tiana Toliver stands with daughter, Hannah.

For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343 or visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart).

### **HCDE Board Approves New Meeting Date, Time**

At the July 18 board meeting, HCDE board members unanimously approved a new meeting date and time for upcoming board meetings.

Beginning August 2017, HCDE board meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month, with some exceptions. The new meeting time will be 1 p.m. View the revised HCDE calendar that reflects this change here: [http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4739/2017-18hcdecalendar\\_v2.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4739/2017-18hcdecalendar_v2.pdf)

HCDE board meetings are open to the public. Board agendas can be found on the [Board of Trustees webpage](#) the week before each meeting and the public can view archived videos of the meetings on [HCDE's Youtube channel](#).

# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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June 27, 2017

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## HCDE Ecobot Challenge Inspires Next Generation of Female Engineers

Each year, more than 1,000 Harris County students participate in the HCDE All-Earth Ecobot Challenge to show off their STEM skills in an environmental-themed robotics challenge. Noticeable this year was the number of all-female engineering teams in the competition. At a time when women are still underrepresented in the science and engineering workforce, programs like the Ecobot Challenge seek to inspire all students to explore STEM fields.

For many of the girls at this year's event, the challenge was their first taste of engineering. Many were already interested in math and science, but through this challenge they were able to develop their skills in engineering, programming and leadership. Humble ISD 4th grader Courtney Daniel explained how she and her team honed a variety of skills during the challenge.

"For engineering, you need to have great math and science skills, and for Ecobot you need to have time management skills, be confident in yourself and be creative," said Daniel.

The challenge also requires teams to be flexible and find different ways of solving problems. This is important for students to learn early on because encountering obstacles and challenging problems is in the nature of work in STEM fields. Daniel appreciates that through the Ecobot Challenge, girls can experiment with their skills in a fun, safe environment.

"This is an event for children that is really fun, so if you make a mistake, it's okay," said Daniel.

Baylor College of Medicine Academy (BCMA) Robotics Teacher and long-time Ecobot volunteer, Misty Kirkland, believes in addition to inspiring young girls to continue in STEM fields, the annual challenge shows students what they're capable of and strengthens their skills.

In her Computer Science Concepts course, she watched one of her female Ecobot teams, the Dream Girls, figure out their strengths and use them to their advantage.

"Once they saw what they were capable of, their team melded," said Kirkland. "One realized she was best at programming, while another became the team leader and kept the group organized and on track."

The Dream Girls, made up of eighth graders Nadia Sadler, Ja'Coria Dean, Serena Hammond and Clareka Bailey, placed second overall during the 6-8 grade challenge.

"I think more girls should try engineering. Don't second guess yourself and underestimate your abilities," said Sadler, the team's leader. "You can do anything you put your mind to."

The annual All-Earth Ecobot Challenge is hosted by the Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment, or CASE for Kids, and the Education Foundation of Harris County. To learn more about this event, visit <http://www.ecobotchallenge.com/>.

**Photo:** Dream Girls team from Baylor College of Medicine Academy strategize before the robotics competition at Ecobot Challenge 2017 (left: Nadia Sadler, Serena Hammond, Ja'Coria Dean and Clareka Bailey).

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## **HCDE Employee Robert Bell Supports GED Students through Volunteering**

Harris County Department of Education and its employees support enriching educational opportunities in the county and provide value through service. HCDE employee Robert Bell goes a step further and carries this mission into his personal life.

For the past three months, Bell has been voluntarily tutoring adult learners in the HCDE GED program. As the HCDE network analyst and storage administrator, Bell specializes in math, a subject in which many students struggle.

“I know the issues people have with math,” said Bell, “so I saw an opportunity to help out.”

The additional tutoring helps students pass their GED tests and ultimately take advantage of better job opportunities. Current GED student Kimberly Schleisser, who has been working with Bell for a month, appreciates his ability to easily break down math problems.

“The tutoring is helpful because he covers everything in detail to make sure we completely understand the material,” said Schleisser.

Bell also feels connected to the adult learners he tutors in several ways. His mother teaches GED and ESL classes at LoneStar College, so he is familiar with the program. More specifically, in 2015 he attended the University of Houston and received his bachelor’s degree at the age of 43, so he understands firsthand the determination it takes to go back to school later in life.

“I volunteer to tutor because I understand what they’re going through,” explained Bell. “It’s also important to me as an employee of HCDE because it’s another way I can help further the goals of our organization.”

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**June 27, 2017**

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Bell also feels connected to the adult learners he tutors in several ways. His mother teaches GED and ESL classes at Lonestar College, so he is familiar with the program. More specifically, in 2015 he attended the University of Houston and received his bachelor's degree at the age of 43, so he understands firsthand the determination it takes to go back to school later in life.

"I volunteer to tutor because I understand what they're going through," explained Bell. "It's also important to me as an employee of HCDE because it's another way I can help further the goals of our organization."

Those interested in volunteering can call the HCDE Adult Education division at 713-692-6216 and ask for Eduardo Honold, director of Adult Education.

**Photo:** HCDE employee Robert Bell helps Adult Education student Kimberly Schleisser with algebra in preparation of her GED test.

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**Elected Officials visit HCDE Head Start centers to celebrate  
National Head Start Association 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday**

On Thursday, May 18, elected officials will attend community reading parties at Harris County Department of Education Baytown and La Porte Head Start centers to celebrate the National Head Start Association's 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday. La Porte City Manager Corby Alexander will read to students at the La Porte Head Start Center, 927 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St., beginning at 9 a.m. and Baytown Mayor Pro Tem David McCartney will read at the Baytown center, 1725 N. Pruettt St., at 10 a.m.

Community reading parties will take place at Head Start centers across the nation to celebrate the 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday and highlight the importance of local engagement in Head Start classrooms.

The elected officials will also take a tour of the two Head Start centers and receive a "thank you" surprise from the centers for their support. Additionally, all 15 HCDE Head Start centers will participate in various activities in honor of the 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

For more information on HCDE Head Start services and center locations, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart).

**About the HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership:** Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,330 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at seven community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and foremost teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

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### **HCDE Head Start Centers receive school supplies from Houston-based Plantgistix**

Sept. 28, 2017 - Harris County Department of Education Head Start students at the Fifth Ward, Pugh, Dogan, Coolwood, San Jacinto and Sheffield centers received more than \$10,000 worth of backpacks and school supplies donated by Houston-based business Plantgistix.

The Plantgistix Community Outreach Committee, consisting of Darryl Dastous, Felesia Taylor, Tiffani Speller and Scott Skrabanek, delivered the backpacks on Sept. 25 to the Sheffield Head Start Center located at 14300 Wallisville Rd. Plantgistix also donated \$100 to each of the 24 classrooms for additional materials and supplies.

The committee members, along with Plantgistix CEO Marc Levine, understand the importance of early learning and the impact these supplies can make for students. The backpacks, containing essential classroom items such as colored markers, crayons, glue sticks and folders, will fill a need for many families affected by Hurricane Harvey.

"I believe everyone deserves an opportunity to grow," said Levine. "We at Plantgistix are honored to be able to help meet the needs of others."

A recent survey conducted by the HCDE Head Start division showed nearly 70 families at the six centers receiving the donation experienced some sort of damage to their homes or cars. Many other families saw an impact on their financial situation as a result of the storm.

"This donation from Plantgistix is even more necessary for the success of our students in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey," said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. "We're thankful to our community partners for filling a vital need in the Head Start community."

HCDE is currently recruiting students for all 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343 or visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart). For more information on Plantgistix, visit [www.plantgistix.com](http://www.plantgistix.com).

**Photo:** Students from Harris County Department of Education Head Start Sheffield try on their new backpacks, courtesy of east Houston community partner Plantgistix. The company donated \$10,000 worth of backpacks and school supplies along with \$100 donations to each classroom.

-more-

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### **HCDE Head Start presents free community screening of ‘The Raising of America’**

Harris County Department of Education Head Start, in partnership with Harris County Public Health, hosts a free community screening and panel discussion of the acclaimed documentary “The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation” on Aug. 26, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington Blvd.

Nearly 24 percent of American children are born into poverty today, facing multiple adversities with potential life-long consequences for their physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development. The purpose of this screening is to bring together a diverse audience to promote meaningful conversation and local action to improve conditions for families with young children in Harris County.

“It’s vital for communities to support programs that build healthy and caring communities for our children at an early age,” said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. “This screening is a way to connect families, organizations and community, and promote early child health and well-being.”

A light breakfast will be provided at the event and parking is free. Participants will also receive a certificate for two hours of professional development for attending.

RSVP for the community screening at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/13470968289> . Find more information on this series at <http://www.raisingofamerica.org/>.

**About Harris County Department of Education (HCDE):** HCDE serves as one source for all learners as an organization committed to improving education within school communities. Core services include Head Start, afterschool programs, therapy services, special schools and adult education/workforce development. Additional services include grants, research, business services, educator certification/professional development, purchasing co-op, records management, facilities and school safety best practices. More information is available at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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**April 12, 2017**

## **Klein ISD Teacher Mike Keimig Receives HCDE Susan O' Connor Award for Teaching Excellence**

Klein ISD English Teacher Mike Keimig has been actively involved in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for nine years. To him, the Scholastic Awards provide his junior high students opportunities to publish their work, earn scholarships, and most importantly, find their voice and learn to enjoy writing.

This year, Keimig received the 2017 Susan O'Connor Award for Teaching Excellence, a prestigious award highlighting his exemplary work and commitment to expanding opportunities for creative young people through the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

The Susan O'Connor Award, named after writing teacher and Scholastic Awards advocate Susan O'Connor, is presented annually by Harris County Department of Education to one regional teacher who has made an impact on students' lives through the Awards.

"I encourage my students to participate in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards because I've found they show amazing individual voice when presented with an opportunity to be heard," said Keimig.

In addition to expanding opportunities through the Scholastic Awards, Keimig supports and challenges his students every day as their teacher. For Klein ISD parent Karen Dupont, Keimig has also become a mentor for her two boys, ninth grader Jacob and 11<sup>th</sup> grader David.

Keimig taught Jacob in eighth grade at Doerre Intermediate and continues to support him in high school. After being inspired to enter the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards by Keimig, Jacob discovered a passion for writing and received National Silver and Gold Key Writing Medals.

Although he didn't teach Dupont's oldest son David, Keimig tutors him for the English End-of-Course exam. Due to David's Asperger's, a form of autism, he needed additional help with writing. When Dupont reached out to Keimig he offered to tutor David without hesitation.

"Mr. Keimig has allowed David to make incredible strides in his written and spoken communication," explains Dupont. "His help means so much to our family."

Dupont adds that Keimig makes an impact on his students by challenging, motivating and supporting them and is a positive mentor for them at the intermediate age.

Keimig was recognized at the Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Ceremony at the Alley Theater on March 25, where he was presented with a check for \$500 from award namesake Susan O'Connor. He is also invited to attend the National Awards Ceremony along with his students at Carnegie Hall in New York City this summer.

"I'm so thankful for the wonderful opportunities my students have received from Harris County Department of Education and the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards," said Keimig. "It truly does change young adults when they have opportunities to be recognized outside of the school setting."

Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The program has an impressive legacy of being the first to acknowledge creative talent and is today's largest source of scholarships for creative teens. For more information on the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

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### **Confident HCDE Principal Academy grad Castilleja to lead HISD school HCDE recruits educators for 2017-2018 principal academy**

Aug. 2, 2017-- Principal Georgina Castilleja personifies a model school leader as she confidently crunches numbers in her office with a colleague. Within the hour, she cordially greets incoming Clifton Middle School sixth graders during their orientation.

The graduate from Harris County Department of Education's Principal Academy hit the ground running this July preparing for her first year as leader of the Houston ISD middle school. Meanwhile at HCDE, leaders of the principal academy are busy preparing for a new class of fall recruits.

A recommendation from a friend last year led Castilleja to enroll in the HCDE program that prepares teachers to become certified school leaders. The hybrid program is both onsite and online as principal candidates meet once a month on weekends, combined with self-paced online assignments.

To date, all students completing the program and taking the principal certification exam passed the test. Personalized leadership coaching and mentorship is delivered by a handful of educators who have a history of successful school leadership. Each alumni class is small, with customized attention.

"We do more than just help our students pass the principal certification test," said Lidia Zatopek, director of the Educator Certification and Professional Advancement at HCDE. "We want to set our future school leaders up to succeed so that they create conditions that support teaching and learning which lead to high-performing schools."

Castilleja immersed herself into education in an entry-level position as a school office clerk 17 years ago. She worked while going to college to become a reading and language arts teacher and then an ESL teacher.

"I thought I'd be a teacher for the rest of my life, and in a way I feel that is still the case," she said. "However, I felt my influence would have greater impact outside of the classroom. Maybe not greater (than a teacher), as the most significant influence is within the classroom, but perhaps a wider-reaching impact as I come into contact with more stakeholders," Castilleja said.

She says the HCDE leadership program forced her to step out of her comfort zone and explore different areas of school leadership, waters she had not tread before.

During the past year the bilingual educator was assistant principal at Sharpstown High School on probationary status as she completed the HCDE Principal Academy.

Leadership advancement coaches at HCDE, including veteran administrators Deirdre Sharkey Williams and Chaney Ledet, helped Castilleja along the way. During the year, Castilleja said she and fellow students benefitted from guest panel principals who shared their experiences.

“One of those principals in the guest panel has now become a great mentor to me, and our first connection was on a Saturday at HCDE,” Castilleja said.

As the 17-year educator now prepares to lead her school of 800-plus students by example, she envisions and prepares Clifton to be a welcoming environment for all stakeholders—the students, teachers, parents and volunteers.

“I would like for people to say I work hard,” she said, thinking on how she wants to be remembered. But I would also like them to say that as a coach, I built them up and helped them grow.”

HCDE Principal Academy leader Zatopek beams as she recalls the growth she has seen in Castilleja, always a teacher but now a leader of her new community as principal.

“We’ll always be here for her, anytime she needs it,” said Zatopek.

For information about joining the “Lead Now” fall class of 2017 HCDE Principal Academy Cohort beginning Sept. 9, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/leadnow](http://www.hcde-texas.org/leadnow) or email [hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org](mailto:hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org).

**Photo:** Harris County Department of Education Principal Academy graduate Georgina Castilleja meets with incoming sixth graders at Clifton Middle School in Houston ISD, where she is principal for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.0052. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) .

# PRESS RELEASE

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**May 30, 2017**

## **HCDE chosen as outstanding Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Regional Affiliate to be featured at U.S. Department of Education in fall 2017 exhibit**

Work from Harris County Department of Education's creative teens in grades 7-12 who earned Gold Key awards in the 2017 Scholastic Awards regional competition will be showcased at the U.S. Department of Education's Student Art Exhibit in Washington, D.C. The exhibit will be featured from September 2017 through July 2018. It is the first time in its 14 years as regional sponsor that HCDE has been selected for the prominent national spotlight.

Scholastic Art & Writing is a national art and writing competition which recognizes talent from teens in grades 7-12 from public, private and home schools. HCDE is one of 100 regional affiliates in the nation. Alumni from the program include notables such as Robert Redford, Sylvia Plath, Andy Warhol, Stephen King and Truman Capote.

Earlier this year, HCDE received the 2017 Gold Key for Excellence in the Field Award, presented annually to an outstanding affiliate partner of the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, sponsors of Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. The Alliance said it is proud to feature its partnership with HCDE as about 30 art pieces will be included in the regional highlight exhibit at the U.S. Department of Education.

"We are proud to be a sponsor of this program and are in awe of the talent exhibited each year by our Harris County teens and the incredible commitment and dedication of their teachers," said County School Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "We continue to grow this program regionally to showcase our local artistic talent."

For more information about how to enter, judge or sponsor the awards, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic) .

**Photo:** Kenedi Cooper of Klein Forest High School stands by her digital self portrait at a Harris County Department of Education regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards exhibit at Spring Street Studios, Houston in March 2017.

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## **HCDE Staff Prepares Facilities for Students' Return after Hurricane Harvey**

Harris County Department of Education staff joined schools and districts across the area last week in assessing and repairing facilities affected by Hurricane Harvey.

The four facilities affected were the Early Head Start and Head Start centers in Baytown, the site for Fortis Academy located at 11902 Spears Road, and Academic and Behavior School East located at 7703 South Loop East.

While the damage at these sites was extensive, a team of HCDE employees worked tirelessly in the aftermath of Harvey preparing these facilities for students' return. The two Baytown Head Start centers and AB School East welcomed students when they returned on Monday, Sept. 11, 2017.

As a result of the damage to HCDE's public recovery school Fortis Academy, the groundbreaking event originally scheduled for Sept. 12 is postponed.

To stay informed on HCDE recovery efforts and updates, visit [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) and follow us on social media at [facebook.com/HCDEtx/](https://facebook.com/HCDEtx/) and [twitter.com/HCDEtx](https://twitter.com/HCDEtx).

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**For immediate release**

June 1, 2017

## **HCDE teacher-in-training Jennifer Siger named top 'Intern of Year' by Texas Alternative Certification Association**

(The Texas Alternative Certification Association named Jennifer Siger the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of the Texas Alternative Certification Association Intern of the Year for 2016-2017. Siger will be presented a \$1,000 award and plaque at the Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education in October. Harris County Department of Education's teacher alternative certification program and principal certification program prepares over a hundred educators for leadership positions yearly throughout greater Harris County. This story about Siger's journey in her first year in training with Harris County Department of Education as teacher at Black Middle School was produced earlier this year. For more information about the teacher of principal prep program, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep](http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep) .)

Rookie middle school teacher Jennifer Siger works with students she calls "inbetweeners." The often misunderstood middle schoolers can be a challenge, she acknowledges, but they're also a joy to be around.

The teacher-in-training enrolled in the Harris County Department of Education teacher alternative certification program gets plenty of support from teacher veterans who are her instructors. Siger began preparing for her new career through evening, weekend and online classes at HCDE last year and is already working as a teacher.

The HCDE educator preparation program provides a personalized training experience for aspiring teachers as qualified college graduates enter the program and spend seven to 10 months in pre-service training taking teacher preparation courses. The next 12 months are spent teaching. Small group instruction is hallmark to the program, with a range in classroom size of eight to 20 students in the teacher prep course.

Since 2011, the program has recorded a 100 percent pass rate for students completing the courses and taking the certification exams, said Lidia Zatopek, director for HCDE's Educator Certification and Professional Advancement. Assistance is provided in securing teaching assignments in elementary or secondary education classrooms.

Siger chose English language arts and reading 4-8 as her teaching discipline and teaches sixth grade English language arts at Frank Black Middle School in the Houston Independent School District, a partner with HCDE in the program. Because of the brain changes teens undergo through puberty, the teacher prep program includes adolescent psychology and brain development discussions for teachers that aspire to teach these budding adolescents.

"They're very unsure of themselves and make a lot of poor choices because of it," said Siger, a mother of two from Klein.

She enrolled in the HCDE alternative certification program to make the switch from private to public school teacher, a move which requires Texas Teacher Certification. "On the other hand, they are so ready and excited to learn about the world at large.

“They are starting to envision themselves as individuals and are hungry to explore the possibilities available to them.”

Along with teaching the writing, technology, hands-on activities and teamwork are prominent in her classroom. During a bottle-flipping persuasive writing exercise, student teams weigh the pros and cons of flipping water bottles which should land upright. It’s currently trending, but schools don’t like the menacing noise and mess that results in student grandstanding.

A video shows the principal giving his take on why he doesn’t like the practice. She hands out laptops for students to use to get their research to support the side they take. Collaboration is rampant. Siger watches for attention-deficit behaviors and redirects students to the assignment.

“One, two,” she says. “One, two, eyes on you,” the class choruses, returning to their lists of pros and cons.

Best teaching practices are at the heart of the alternative certification program at HCDE, Siger said. Keeping teens engaged in their studies means exploring what works and doesn’t.

“Most (teacher prep) programs would give you tools and say here, now go do it,” she explained. “HCDE helps its teachers every single step of the way. The facility and staff are top notch, and they are very invested in us. It’s cliché to say it’s a big family...but I know they care about me, and that’s important to me.”

Siger was inspired to enter the teaching profession by a teacher who made a difference in her life. She was a sixth grade English teacher and instilled a love for books.

While she doesn’t expect to make a difference in all her students’ lives, she knows she is making a difference with many. That’s good enough, she says.

“I smile all day at work,” Siger said. “These kids are truly a joy to be around.”

(Siger was recently nominated for the Texas Alternative Certification Association Intern of the Year Award. Winners will be determined by the association by June.)

(For information about the HCDE teacher alternative certification program, call 713-696-1348, email [hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org](mailto:hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org) or go to [www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep](http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep).)

**Photo:** Jennifer Siger teaches sixth grade at Frank Black Middle School in Houston Independent School District through the Harris County Department of Education teacher alternative certification program. Her student Valeria Martinez shows off a poster she is using in her persuasive writing exercise about a new teen craze called “bottle flipping.”

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### **Autism Summit 2017 set for Oct. 4-5 at HCDE offers resources to assist students with spectrum disorder**

**July 27, 2017** – Autism Summit 2017 will be held Oct. 4-5 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas. The conference provides autism experts with breakout sessions on issues including autism legislation, transition services and testimonials from young adults with autism spectrum disorder. Registration for the summit hosted by HCDE’s Teaching and Learning Center is \$150, with lunch provided both days. Register for the conference at [www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) by title or date.

The summit features Carol Gray on Oct. 4, consultant to children, adolescents and adults with autism. Gray provides a workshop on “Social Stories™,” a tool that supports safe, meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals and people with autism. Attendees all receive certification in the methodology at day’s end. Oct. 5 provides insights from keynote Dorothea Lerman, director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. CDC statistics show that one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder, and the condition occurs in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. For more information about the summit, call 713-696-8223.

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## Harris County Department of Education Therapist Leah Alba Receives Tom Waugh Fellowship Pin

Nov. 8, 2017 – Harris County Department of Education Physical Therapist Leah Alba was recently honored with the Tom Waugh Fellowship pin on Oct. 27, 2017 at the Texas Physical Therapy Association (TPTA) Annual Conference in Corpus Christi. Alba also recently received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

The Tom Waugh Leadership Development Program aims to help foster and develop professional leadership skills in members of the TPTA who show potential and desire to become more active in the organization. The program includes two phases and takes two years to complete.

“Through this program, I had an opportunity to receive personalized mentorship by leaders in the organization,” said Alba. “I hope to increase organizational involvement at both the local and state levels and become a better advocate for the profession of physical therapy.”

The Meyerland resident has been a therapist with HCDE for 17 years and is currently assigned to work in Houston Independent School District. Before joining HCDE, Alba completed her physical therapy degree in the Philippines and worked in several different clinical settings in the U.S. including a nursing facility, rehabilitation hospital and home health. In 2000, HCDE opened the door for Alba to work with children.

“In my role at HCDE, I get to spend time with children every day,” said Alba. “Hardly a day goes by that I don’t see the clear and lasting impact on the way my students are able to participate and function in their classroom and around the school.”

Working on school campuses throughout Harris County, HCDE’s physical therapists, occupational therapists and music therapists help meet the needs of more than 7,000 students each year who struggle with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and other challenges.

For more information about HCDE’s School-Based Therapy Services, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices](http://www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices). For information on the Tom Waugh Leadership Development Program, visit <http://www.tpta.org/?page=TWLDP>.

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## Head Start Father Makes Volunteering in Schools a Priority

Every year, National Parental Involvement Day celebrates the powerful contributions parents provide at school and home to support student success. For Harris County Department of Education Head Start parent Lawrence Simmons, volunteering is part of his daily routine.

As a father of five children ranging from high school to pre-k, Simmons' work as a school volunteer borders on a full-time job. His youngest, 3-year-old Miosotis, attends Sheffield Head Start Center and is accustomed to seeing him at her school. Simmons visits the Sheffield center almost daily to help with everything from office and clerical work, to monitoring the front doors and helping teachers with classroom activities.

Additionally, he was elected as this year's Head Start Policy Council Chairperson and regularly leads a group of parents and guardians that act as the parents' voice in making decisions for the program.

"I volunteer because it benefits not only my individual child, but all of the children who attend Sheffield," said Simmons. "They know there is another adult on their side and it gives them a feeling of community."

Although he is most active at the Sheffield center these days, Simmons continues to volunteer at his children's elementary and high schools as well.

"It's important to stay involved in your children's education, even after they leave elementary school."

This National Parental Involvement Day, HCDE recognizes the many dedicated parents like Simmons who volunteer their time and resources to create healthy, effective school environments for their children.



## **Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference equips professionals, caregivers of children with challenging behaviors**

Harris County Department of Education Head Start is hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference on May 5 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington. Cost of the workshop is only \$10 and includes lunch and free parking through a grant-funded initiative from the Hogg Foundation.

The conference is open to early childhood educators, families, members of the Head Start community and others who work with children with challenging behaviors. The focus of the event is to provide participants with tools for working with children with challenging behaviors and increase public awareness of mental health issues among children and adults.

Conference funder the Hogg Foundation advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research and public education.

To register for the conference, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) and search by date or workshop number 11212. For information, call 713-696-2170.

**About the HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership:** Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,270 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at seven community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and foremost teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

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### **Houston Area GIS Day helps teens realize career options using the technology**

Nov. 17, 2017 - Through the Houston Area Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Day, high school students are learning that GIS technology applies to a majority of 21st century career paths. From disaster relief to medical fields, GIS is the way of the future.

Students from five school districts visited Harris County Department of Education on Nov. 16 where Houston-Galveston Area Council members assembled GIS labs, drone stations, geocaching, mobile command vehicles and provided GIS trivia. The annual event gives the teens a global view of how GIS works, especially in instances like Hurricane Harvey.

“There are great opportunities in this technology-driven career,” said HCDE Teaching and Learning Center Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske, who helped coordinate the event. “Students learned how all these agencies worked together to provide updated information at a city and county level. There was incredible information shared between companies, agencies and government during Hurricane Harvey.”

GIS computer software is used for creating maps that are used for analyzing and reporting information such as weather, elections, flood prediction and more. The hard-hit city of Silsbee, Texas near Beaumont is still recovering from the effects of Harvey, and Silsbee High School human geography teacher Erin Smith says GIS is continuing to help her city recover and plan for the future. Students in her human geography class are helping with that effort.

The Silsbee students are learning to use ArcGIS software from company Esri this semester. They’ll apply that knowledge to help with disaster relief in a community still ailing from Harvey.

-more-

“We’ll plot it out in times of hurricanes and disasters and include which routes to avoid, what routes for emergency management to take, and examine the problems we encountered during Hurricane Harvey so we can learn how to better prepare,” said Smith, whose “human geography” class studies how people interact throughout the world.

This year’s GIS Day focused on Harvey and how GIS played an integral part in planning, response and recovery. Teens from Silsbee participated along with four other high schools in Houston and Spring.

The event was hosted by HCDE’s Teaching and Learning Center and led by Felske and the Houston-Galveston Area Council’s Geographic Data Workgroup. Numerous emergency response teams brought GIS-powered vehicles to the event held in the Conference Center and extending into the Irvington parking area.

Felske says future plans for GIS studies include a grant from Kinder Morgan which will allow her to create professional development for teachers who want to learn to use GIS software with their students. To learn more about the free training, email [lfelske@hcde-texas.org](mailto:lfelske@hcde-texas.org).

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## Strife in Life: Adult Education Graduation Snapshot with Infant Eggleton

**View video: [https://youtu.be/i\\_oXiyBQonk](https://youtu.be/i_oXiyBQonk)**

At just 27 years old, 2017 GED graduate Infant Eggleton has faced more hardships than most. Through her determination and positivity, and support from teacher Rosie Coleman, she will walk the stage and receive her GED on May 20 with approximately 79 other adult learners.

Earning her GED is a crucial step for Eggleton, who is trying to make life better for her three children. In May 2016, Eggleton's youngest child was diagnosed with meningitis and they spent two months in the hospital. Eggleton wasn't financially stable at the time and didn't know where to turn for help. Her three children were taken from her, and this pushed Eggleton to make a change.

"Ultimately, I'm grateful for the push because I get to be a better mom," said Eggleton. "Getting my GED proves that I can complete something positive. I know I'm going to make my kids proud of me."

Eggleton found the support system she needed at Memorial Assistance Ministries through HCDE's Adult Education program and completed the program in just three months.

"Rosie Coleman is the best teacher I've ever had," said Eggleton. "She pressed me to keep going. She is the support system I always wanted and needed."

Eggleton is optimistic about her future and plans to continue school in June to become a dental hygienist.

"Getting my GED is not the end of what I can do, it's the beginning of what I'm going to do."

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## **Early childhood contracts renewed in January for access through HCDE Choice Partners**

Contracts for early childhood supplies, LED lighting, roofing and more were renewed at the January 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Renewed contracts include

**Construction-JOC (JOC-IDIQ):** *Falkenberg Construction Co. Inc.;*

**Early Childhood Supplies and Related Items:** *Charles J. Becker & Bro. Inc. doing business as Becker's School Supplies; Brattle Publishing Group LLC; Complete Book and Media Supply LLC; Express Booksellers LLC doing business as Express Booksellers; Kaplan Early Learning Company; Learning Resources doing business as Educational Insights; Music in Motion Inc.; National Educational Systems; S&S Worldwide Inc.; Therapro Inc.; Varsity Brands Holding Co. Inc. - BSN Sports LLC doing business as US Games; and Anna Walther - Wood Etc. Co. doing business as Wood Etc. Co.;*

**Janitorial Cleaning Services:** *Ambassador Services LLC; GMW Quality Cleaning Solutions doing business as Hospitality Cleaning Solutions; and Soji Services Inc. doing business as Metroclean Commercial Building Services;*

**LED Lighting and Related Items:** *Aleddra Inc.; BTM Solutions LLC; Consolidated Electrical Distributors Inc.; Crawford Electric Supply Co. Inc.; Eco Induction Systems LLC doing business as EIS Lighting; Summit Electric Supply Co. Inc.; D Reynolds Company LLC doing business as The Reynolds Company; Unified Sunergy Systems LLC; and XtraLight Manufacturing Ltd.;*

**Roofing, Waterproofing and Moisture Control (IDIQ):** *American Contracting U.S.A. Inc.; Atlas Universal Inc.; CS Advantage USAA Inc.; D & G Quality Roofing Inc.; Fusion Trading LLC doing business as Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing; J Reynolds & Company Inc.; John A. Walker Roofing Co. Inc.; and Sea-Breeze Roofing Inc.; and*

**Technology Products and Services:** *Barnes & Noble Booksellers Inc.; Bass Computers Inc.; Double M Laser Products Inc. doing business as Enhanced Laser Products (ELP); FireFly Computers LLC; Gaggle.Net Inc.; Houston Information Team LLC (HIT); Insight Investments LLC; Insource Technology Direct LLC; iTech Enterprises doing business as iTech Solutions; LyncVerse Technologies Inc.; NWN Corporation; Netsync Network Solutions; Phonoscope Enterprise Group; Phonoscope LightWave Inc.; Rugged Protection LLC; Set Solutions Inc.; SHI/Government Solutions; Way Tech LLC doing business as Silicon Mountain Memory; Total Technologies LLC; True North Consulting Group LLC; and Tele-Communication Inc. doing business as Unified Communications.*

## **New Members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Jan. 26 include **Burleson County**, Burleson; **Denison Independent School District**, Denison; **Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas**, San Antonio; **city of Keene**; **Pawnee Independent School District**, Pawnee; **city of Prairie View**; **city of Seguin**; and **Wylie Independent School District**, Wylie.

New out-of-state members include: **Clay County**, Liberty, Mo.; **Muscogee County School District**, Columbus, Ga.; **Somerton School District #11**, Somerton, Ariz.; **South Miami**, Fla; and **University of Washington**, Seattle, Wash.

**About Choice Partners:** Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

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## **Early childhood contracts renewed in January for access through HCDE Choice Partners**

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**Janitorial Cleaning Services:** *Ambassador Services LLC; GMW Quality Cleaning Solutions doing business as Hospitality Cleaning Solutions; and Soji Services Inc. doing business as Metroclean Commercial Building Services;*

**LED Lighting and Related Items:** *Aleddra Inc.; BTM Solutions LLC; Consolidated Electrical Distributors Inc.; Crawford Electric Supply Co. Inc.; Eco Induction Systems LLC doing business as EIS Lighting; Summit Electric Supply Co. Inc.; D Reynolds Company LLC doing business as The Reynolds Company; Unified Sunergy Systems LLC; and XtraLight Manufacturing Ltd.;*

**Roofing, Waterproofing and Moisture Control (IDIQ):** *American Contracting U.S.A. Inc.; Atlas Universal Inc.; CS Advantage USAA Inc.; D & G Quality Roofing Inc.; Fusion Trading LLC doing business as Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing; J Reynolds & Company Inc.; John A. Walker Roofing Co. Inc.; and Sea-Breeze Roofing Inc.; and*

**Technology Products and Services:** *Barnes & Noble Booksellers Inc.; Bass Computers Inc.; Double M Laser Products Inc. doing business as Enhanced Laser Products (ELP); FireFly Computers LLC; Gaggle.Net Inc.; Houston Information Team LLC (HIT); Insight Investments LLC; Insource Technology Direct LLC; iTech Enterprises doing business as iTech Solutions; LyncVerse Technologies Inc.; NWN Corporation; Netsync Network Solutions; Phonoscope Enterprise Group; Phonoscope LightWave Inc.; Rugged Protection LLC; Set Solutions Inc.; SHI/Government Solutions; Way Tech LLC doing business as Silicon Mountain Memory; Total Technologies LLC; True North Consulting Group LLC; and Tele-Communication Inc. doing business as Unified Communications.*

## **New Members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Jan. 26 include **Burleson County**, Burleson; **Denison Independent School District**, Denison; **Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas**, San Antonio; **city of Keene**; **Pawnee Independent School District**, Pawnee; **city of Prairie View**; **city of Seguin**; and **Wylie Independent School District**, Wylie.

**About Choice Partners:** Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

###

## **Compton Head Start Students Benefit from JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative**

Harris County Department of Education Compton Head Start students, located in the Northeast Multi-Service Center, will benefit from a free book vending machine throughout the month of December as part of JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative.

JetBlue, along with the Houston Mayor's Office, the City of Houston Health Department and the Houston Public Library, unveiled the book vending machine at an event on Nov. 28, 2017. During the event, JetBlue volunteers also visited each Head Start classroom and read to students to get them excited about reading.

Seven total branches of the Houston Public Library system remain shut down from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, leaving hundreds of children without access to their local libraries and the services they offer. The book vending machine will dispense 25,000 brand-new, free books for kids ages 0-14 in the community throughout the month of December.

"Excitement for literacy begins at an early age," said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. "We're thankful to JetBlue and our other community partners for giving our youngest learners access to books."

JetBlue's Soar with Reading initiative encourages kids' imaginations to take flight through reading. The event held on Nov. 28 concluded the second annual JetBlue For Good Month, a month-long celebration of kindness and good deeds. For more information, visit <https://www.jetblue.com/corporate-social-responsibility/youth-education/>.

HCDE operates 15 Head Start centers in northeast Houston. For information about enrollment or employment in Head Start, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart) or call 713-672-9343.

## **Contracts for medical supplies, curriculum and more renewed for access through Choice Partners**

Contracts for medical supplies, curriculum, frozen desserts and more were renewed at the July 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Renewed contracts include

**Award Jackets, Screen Printing, Embroidery and Related Items:** Pride and Recognition Inc. doing business as Balfour; Butler Business Products LLC; Corporate Incentives Inc.; Keith Kouba doing business as DBS Texas-Houston and JW Drouin & Associates doing business as J. Harding & Company.

**Curriculum, Instructional, Assessment and Intervention Materials and Supplies:** AbleNet Inc.; Accelerate Learning Inc.; Cengage Learning Inc.; Early Childhood LLC doing business as Discount School Supply; DrumFit USA Corporation; Educator's Depot Inc.; Lektro Inc. doing business as Escue & Associates; Inter-State Studio & Publishing Co.; KAMICO Instructional Media Inc.; Kaplan Early Learning Company; Lerner Publishing Group; Lightspeed Technologies Inc.; McGraw-Hill Education Inc. doing business as McGraw-Hill School Education LLC; Peoples Education Inc. doing business as Mastery Education; Positive Promotions Inc.; Rally! Education; School Specialty Inc.; Southwest Education Inc.; TCC Learning LLC; Teaching Systems Inc.; Hights Cross Communications doing business as Triumph Learning LLC; and Troxell Communications Inc.

**Food Equipment, Parts, Repair, Installation, Maintenance, Small Wares, and Related Items and Service:** Ace Mart Restaurant Supply Company; American Vending Sales Inc.; Heritage Food Service Group Inc.; ISI Commercial Refrigeration Inc.; Tari Inc. doing business as Jean's Restaurant Supply; Terry Woodard Enterprises Inc. (Kommercial Kitchens); Pasco Brokerage Inc.; Crazy Cousins Inc. (Shepherd Food Equipment); Preferred Food Service Design/Supply Inc. and Texas Food Service Equipment Co.

**Frozen Dessert Products:** Champion Concessions LLC (Dippin' Dots);

**Medical Supplies and Related Items:** Alpha Omega Systems and Services Medical doing business as AOSS Medical Supply LLC; HeartSafe America Inc.; Henry Schein Inc.; and NAO Global Health LLC;

**Promotional and Related Items:** 4imprint Inc.; Authentic Promotions.com; Buffalo Specialties Inc.; Butler Business Products LLC; Blue Ribbon Promotions LLC doing business as Calfee Specialties; Challenge Office Products Inc.; Marketing Magic International LTD; OTC Direct doing business as Oriental Trading Company Inc.

**Signage and Scoreboards (JOC/IDIQ):** Kaiser International Inc. doing business as Same Day - Kaiser Graphics and National Signs LLC; and

**Student and Educational Travel Services:** Green Light Group Tours; Vagabond Tours Inc. doing business as Educational Travel Adventures; and STA Travel Inc.

## **New members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on July 18 include **Mohave County**, Kingman, Arizona; **S&S CISD**, Sadler; **Temple College**, Temple; and **city of Texas City**, Texas.

Additional out-of-state members include **Ann Arbor Public Schools**, Ann Arbor, Mich.; **DeSoto County School District**, Arcadia, Fla.; **Henry County Board of Commissioners**, McDonough, Ga.; **Three Rivers Community College**, Norwich, Colo.; **Las Vegas Valley Water District**, Las Vegas, Nev.; **Lee County Port Authority**, Fort Myers, Fla.; and **city of Leesburg**, Fla.

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###

## **Harris County Department of Education Head Start hosts job fair for early childhood teachers and other positions**

Harris County Department of Education Head Start is hosting a job fair to recruit teachers, teaching assistants and other staff members to join any of its 16 locations spread throughout northeast Harris County. The recruitment event will be held Friday, June 23, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at HCDE's Compton Head Start Center located at 9720 Spaulding St., Houston, Texas 77016.

Qualifications for Head Start Teaching Assistant, Early Head Start Teacher and Head Start Teacher include experience working with young children and in interest in early childhood education. Those who hold child development associate (CDA) degrees are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates may reserve interviews by calling 713-696-2177 or by emailing [HSeducation@hcde-texas.org](mailto:HSeducation@hcde-texas.org).

In addition to the Compton Head Start center, HCDE provides services to facilities in Baytown, J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell. Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

Visit [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) for general information about HCDE Head Start and locations.

**About the HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership:** Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,330 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at five community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and foremost teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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###

## **Contracts for pizza, ice cream and tires awarded for access through HCDE Choice Partners**

Contracts for pizza, ice cream, technology and tires were awarded at the June 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Newly awarded contracts include

**Ice Cream Products:** JA-EN Enterprises doing business as JP Ice Cream Distributors; Kemm Ice Cream LLC; La Brisa Ice Cream; La Costenita Distribuidor Inc., Paletteria El Pibe, The Master's Distribution System; and Yumi Ice Cream Co. Inc.;

**Recapped Tires, New Tires, Related Items and Services:** Goolsbee Tire Services Inc. and Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company;

**Site Based Pizza Program:** Bull's Eye Brands Inc. doing business as Smart Mouth Foods; and

**Technology Products and Services:** 3P Learning Inc. doing business as 3P Learning; 806 Technologies Inc.; Marjan Dubois doing business as Adaptive Technology Systems; Advantage Imaging Supply Inc.; Alpha Omega Wireless Inc.; Aspire HR Inc.; AVES Audio Visual Systems Inc.; Blackboard Inc.; Paul Lo doing business as Capsuletek LLC; Dahill Office Technology Corporation doing business as Dahill; Eduproject Ell LLC; Evolve Holdings Inc.; Exebridge Inc.; Gaggle.Net Inc.; GK Holdings Inc. doing business as Global Knowledge Training LLC; GovConnection Inc. doing business as Connection; GTS Technology Solutions Inc.; Howard Industries Inc. doing business as Howard Technology Solutions; iLearn Inc.; J & B Imaging Services Inc. doing business as JABIS Security Services; Lantana Communications Corporation; M&A Technology Inc.; Micro Integration & Programming Solutions Inc.; myOn LLC; Jessica Rocio Adam doing business as NAZCA Technologies and Consulting; Northwest Communications Inc. doing business as NW Radio; PCPC Direct LTD; RLS Interests doing business as Prime Systems; Quasar Data Center Ltd; Rethink Autism Inc.; Ron Turley Associates Inc.; WayTech LLC doing business as Silicon Mountain Memory; Southern Computer Warehouse; Teaching Systems Inc.; Total Technologies LLC; Troxell Communications Inc.; Twotrees Technologies and Unique Digital Technology Inc.

Renewed contracts include

**Energy Savings Contract Services (ESCO):** Siemens Industry Inc.;

**Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment and Related Items:** Butler Business Products; Educator's Depot Inc.; Kaplan Early Learning Company; Kay Davis Associates LLC; Lakeshore Equipment Company doing business as Lakeshore Learning Materials and Library Interiors of Texas, LLC;

**Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment, Related Items and Services:** D3 Inc. doing business as 9 to 5 Seating; Challenge Office Products Inc.; Computer Comforts Inc.; Allsteel Inc. doing business as Contract Resource Group LLC; ESI Ergonomic Solutions LLC; Facility Interiors Inc.; Hallmark Office Products Inc.; Lavaca County Office Supply Inc. doing business as South Texas School Furniture; Palmieri Furniture Limited; TESCO Industries LLC; Today's Classroom LLC; Vanguard Environments Inc. and Watson Furniture Group Inc.;

**IDIQ Construction and Maintenance (Job Order Contracting):** Baseline Paving & Construction Inc.; Basic IDIQ Inc.; Construction Masters of Houston Inc.; E Contractors USA LLC; ERC Environmental & Construction Services Inc. doing business as ERC; Horizon International Group LLC; Brown & Root

Industrial Services LLC; Millennium Project Solutions Inc.; SETEX Construction Corp.; JR Thomas Group Inc. doing business as The Thomas Group Inc.; Tommy Klein Construction Inc.; The Sithe Group LLC doing business as TSG Industries; J.T. Vaughn Construction LLC doing business as Vaughn Construction and Westco Ventures LLC;

**IDIQ Finishes (Painting, Drywall, Acoustical Ceilings and Flooring):** BaseLine Paving & Construction Inc. and Lee Construction and Maintenance Company doing business as LMC Corporation;

**Maintenance and Operation Parts and Equipment:** Acme Architectural Hardware Inc.; High Point Sanitary Solutions; Johnson Supply & Equipment Corporation doing business as Johnson Supply; Lansdowne-Moody Company LP; Lennox Industries Inc.; McCoy Corporation doing business as McCoy's Building Supply and Zimmerer Kubota & Equipment Inc.;

**Musical Instruments and Related Items and Services:** Universal Melody Services doing business as Brook Mays Music/H&H Music; Guitar Center Inc. doing business as Music and Arts Centers; The Mariachi Connection and Washington Music Sales Center Inc. doing business as Washington Music Center;

**Rental, Lease, and Purchase of Copiers and Related Items:** Dahill Office Technology Corporation doing business as Dahill;

**Rental, Lease or Purchase of Digital Duplicators and Related Items:** Dahill Office Technology Corporation doing business as Dahill;

**Retail Energy Provider:** Reliant Energy Retail Services LLC and Energy Future Holdings Corporation doing business as TXU Energy Retail Company Inc.;

**Solid Waste and Recycling Services:** Waste Management of Texas Inc.; and

**Textbooks, Library Books and Related Items:** American Reading Company; Barnes & Noble Booksellers Inc.; Coughlan Companies Inc. doing business as Capstone; Cengage Learning Inc.; Complete Book and Media Supply LLC; Lektro Inc. doing business as Escue and Associates; Express Booksellers LLC doing business as Express Booksellers; KAMICO Instructional Media Inc.; Keystone Books & Media; Scholastic Library Publishing Inc.; Steps To Literacy LLC; Teacher Created Materials Inc. and Cox Subscriptions Inc. doing business as WT Cox Information Services.

## **New members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on June 20 include **Alvin Museum Society**, Alvin; **Brazosport College**, Lake Jackson; **city of Brenham**; **Center ISD**, Center; **Chapel Hill ISD**, Tyler; **Edcouch Elsa ISD**, Edcouch; **Nacogdoches ISD**, Nacogdoches; **Second Baptist**, Houston; and **Union Grove ISD**, Gladewater, Texas.

New out-of-state members include **Hernando County School District**, Brooksville, Fla.; **Jacksonville Aviation Authority**, Jacksonville, Fla.; **Marblehead Schools**, Marblehead, Mass.; **Maryland Aviation Administration**, Glen Burnie, Md.; **city of Miramar**, Fla.; **Ridgeland School District 122 Board of Education**, Oak Lawn, Ill.; **School Board of Leon County**, Tallahassee, Fla.; **city of Scottsdale**, Ariz.;

**Somerton Elementary School District #11**, Somerton, Ariz.; **Spotsylvania County Public Schools**, Fredericksburg, Va.; and **University of Nevada**, Las Vegas, Nev.

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###

# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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April 12, 2017

## **Klein ISD Teacher Mike Keimig Receives HCDE Susan O' Connor Award for Teaching Excellence**

Klein ISD English Teacher Mike Keimig has been actively involved in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for nine years. To him, the Scholastic Awards provide his junior high students opportunities to publish their work, earn scholarships, and most importantly, find their voice and learn to enjoy writing.

This year, Keimig received the 2017 Susan O'Connor Award for Teaching Excellence, a prestigious award highlighting his exemplary work and commitment to expanding opportunities for creative young people through the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

The Susan O'Connor Award, named after writing teacher and Scholastic Awards advocate Susan O'Connor, is presented annually by Harris County Department of Education to one regional teacher who has made an impact on students' lives through the Awards.

"I encourage my students to participate in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards because I've found they show amazing individual voice when presented with an opportunity to be heard," said Keimig.

In addition to expanding opportunities through the Scholastic Awards, Keimig supports and challenges his students every day as their teacher. For Klein ISD parent Karen Dupont, Keimig has also become a mentor for her two boys, ninth grader Jacob and 11<sup>th</sup> grader David.

Keimig taught Jacob in eighth grade at Doerre Intermediate and continues to support him in high school. After being inspired to enter the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards by Keimig, Jacob discovered a passion for writing and received National Silver and Gold Key Writing Medals.

Although he didn't teach Dupont's oldest son David, Keimig tutors him for the English End-of-Course exam. Due to David's Asperger's, a form of autism, he needed additional help with writing. When Dupont reached out to Keimig he offered to tutor David without hesitation.

"Mr. Keimig has allowed David to make incredible strides in his written and spoken communication," explains Dupont. "His help means so much to our family."

Dupont adds that Keimig makes an impact on his students by challenging, motivating and supporting them and is a positive mentor for them at the intermediate age.

Keimig was recognized at the Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Ceremony at the Alley Theater on March 25, where he was presented with a check for \$500 from award namesake Susan O'Connor. He is also invited to attend the National Awards Ceremony along with his students at Carnegie Hall in New York City this summer.

"I'm so thankful for the wonderful opportunities my students have received from Harris County Department of Education and the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards," said Keimig. "It truly does change young adults when they have opportunities to be recognized outside of the school setting."

Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The program has an impressive legacy of being the first to acknowledge creative talent and is today's largest source of scholarships for creative teens. For more information on the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

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June 20, 2017

## **Houston's got talent! Students from 9 CASE for Kids summer programs paired with professional artists to perform at Hobby Center June 22**

Kids hit the big stage at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts in Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby St, for the annual Kids' Day at Hobby Center on June 22. Rehearsals for 135 students begin at 3 p.m. and the curtains rise at 6 p.m. for the hour-long performance. The students in elementary and middle school attend afterschool programs funded through Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

The event gives students opportunities to learn from local professional artists in CASE after-school summer programs. Kids' Day at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts is the culminating event. Students perform or display their artistic works ranging from movie-making to stage combat to theatre at the Hobby Center.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County. The students participating in Kids' Day at Hobby Center are enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs through the Texas Education Agency's Afterschool Centers on Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center.

HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. says the long-standing, fine arts, summer program helps bring attention to the importance fine arts plays in shaping a well-rounded individual, giving kids exposure to experiences with music, theatre, art and dance.

Artist professionals like Samuel Dinkins of Dinky Drum Co. LLC work with the students for several weeks in their summer afterschool programs. Other artists come from nonprofits such as FotoFest, Ensemble Theatre and the Brazilian Arts Foundation.

School districts participating include Pasadena, Alief, Aldine, Clear Creek, Galena Park and Spring Branch.

"Hobby Center is a state-of-the art facility and the staff there allows our students to see the nuts-and-bolts as well as the glitz that accompanies theater and performance," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director. "Fine arts are an essential element in education, and by working with these afterschool fine arts vendors, students are able to explore the fine arts."

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) .



## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Kids' Day Entrepreneurship delivers holiday marketplace with lessons on money management**

Hands-on lessons in entrepreneurship evolve into a marketplace filled with tutus, bow ties, homemade slime, bath balm, soap bars and more at Kids' Day Entrepreneurship, Friday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to noon, 6005 Westview, Houston, Texas. Hosted by Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, the event brings together about 150 students from 10 area schools.

Afterschool students from Alief, Aldine, Houston, Stafford, Spring, Clear Creek, Galena Park, Humble and Southwest Schools Charter are studying entrepreneurship, marketing and money management during their afterschool programs. The curriculum created by CASE for Kids prepares students for this culminating event.

**What:** Kids' Day Entrepreneurship

**When:** Friday, Dec. 9, 10 a.m.-noon

**Where:** Harris County Department of Education (North Post Oak), 6005 Westview, Houston, Texas 77055

**Who:** Students from the following 10 schools/zip codes:

**Houston ISD**—Sharpstown International (77036), **Charter**—Southwest Middle School (77057)

**Clear Creek ISD**—Clear Creek Intermediate (77573); **Galena Park ISD**—North Shore Ninth Grade (77015); **Aldine ISD**—Francis Elementary (77091) and Drew Academy (77091); **Alief ISD**—Best Elementary (77036) **Humble ISD**—Sterling Middle School (77338);and **Stafford ISD**—Stafford High School (77477).

“Our afterschool students have been busy designing businesses, conducting market research, setting profit points, investigating advertising techniques and analyzing differences between spending and saving money,” said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. “With this curriculum we create, students experience the first-hand challenges and opportunities of operating a business in a free market economy.”

Kids Day at Entrepreneurship gives Houston-area students real-life, hands-on experience in business practices, economics and marketing. Guest bankers will assist the students with opening mock checking accounts and completing mock loan applications.

As an afterschool intermediary, CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement.

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**March 30, 2017**

## **Klein ISD student combines performing with love of writing at HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing reception**

Several hundred teen artists and writers attended an artist reception and celebration to kick off Spring Break on March 11 at Spring Street Studios in Houston. Among the talented teens was Klein ISD eleventh grader Mary Ann Hurtado, who read her award-winning piece, "From Sea to Shining Kiosk."

As a member of the Klein Collins High School orchestra and debate team, Hurtado is no stranger to performing for an audience. During the first of four regional receptions for Harris County Scholastic winners, Hurtado entertained the crowd with her natural writing ability and confidence speaking in public.

In addition to performing, writing is a passion of Hurtado's. Although she normally writes poetry, music and science fiction, a recent shopping experience on Black Friday inspired her to try her hand at humor.

Hurtado's story received a regional Scholastic Gold Key Award and one of five "best in class" American Voice nominations recognized nationally. She also recently received a National Scholastic Gold Key Award and is invited to attend the National Awards Ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City this summer.

For more information about the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards or to view the full list of regional winners, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).





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For more information about the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards or to view the full list of regional winners, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

## **Harris County Department of Education La Porte Head Start program recruits students ages 3-5 for immediate openings**

Harris County Department of Education La Porte Head Start Center located at 927 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. is recruiting students ages 3 to 5 years. The program ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

For La Porte Head Start grandparent Amanda Kastl, the HCDE Head Start program is a blessing in a variety of ways. Not only does 4-year-old granddaughter Rayne gain socialization skills and early preparation for elementary school while attending Head Start, but the La Porte family service providers helped Kastl through her most challenging times.

After losing both parents, two brothers and a niece in the span of a couple years, the La Porte Head Start staff became a support system for Kastl and guided her through the steps to get her Texas realtor license when she was struggling emotionally.

“I was maxed out emotionally,” said Kastl, “but the family service providers at La Porte helped me set goals and provided support when I needed it most.”

Grateful for the help Head Start has provided her family, Kastl stays involved in the center through volunteer work, the parent committee and the Head Start Policy Council. She was integral in creating a safer experience for La Porte students while at school.

After recognizing that the small, two-lane road in front of the center was unsafe for families to drop off and pick up students, she worked with city officials to install school zone signs and “No Parking” signs, and convert the road to a one-way thoroughfare to decrease hazardous traffic.

HCDE provides services through 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. Additional locations include Baytown, J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell.

For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343. For information about community partnerships or donations, call Armando Rodriguez at (713) 696-2179 or email [arodriguez@hcde-texas.org](mailto:arodriguez@hcde-texas.org). Visit [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) for general information about HCDE Head Start and locations.

**About the HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership:** Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,330 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at seven community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and foremost teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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## **Harris County Department of Education La Porte Head Start program recruits students ages 3-5 for immediate openings**

Harris County Department of Education La Porte Head Start Center located at 927 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. is recruiting students ages 3 to 5 years. The program ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

For La Porte Head Start grandparent Amanda Kastl, the HCDE Head Start program is a blessing in a variety of ways. Not only does 4-year-old granddaughter Rayne gain socialization skills and early preparation for elementary school while attending Head Start, but the La Porte family service providers helped Kastl through her most challenging times.

After losing both parents, two brothers and a niece in the span of a couple years, the La Porte Head Start staff became a support system for Kastl and even guided her through the steps to get her Texas realtor license when she was struggling emotionally.

“I was maxed out emotionally,” said Kastl, “but the family service providers at La Porte helped me set goals, stay on track and provided support when I needed it most.”

Grateful for the help Head Start has provided her family, Kastl stays involved in the center through volunteer work, the parent committee and the Head Start Policy Council. She was also integral in creating a safer experience for La Porte students while at school.

After recognizing that the small, two-lane road in front of the center was unsafe for families to drop off and pick up students, she worked with city officials to install school zone signs and “No Parking” signs, and convert the road to a one-way thoroughfare to decrease hazardous traffic.

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## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Carol Vaughn  
Communications Manager  
[cvaughn@hcde-texas.org](mailto:cvaughn@hcde-texas.org)  
281-660-9205

### **Lights On Afterschool recognizes children affected by Harvey through celebration at Children's Museum**

Oct. 30, 2017 - Children affected by Hurricane Harvey were delivered the ultimate Halloween experience through the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance, a collection of local organizations supporting afterschool on Oct. 26. The event held at the Children's Museum Houston allowed 150 kids enrolled in alliance programs to enjoy the museum, trick-or-treat and participate in a fun science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experiment.

"Harvey was a traumatic experience for children and our afterschool staff, and we recognized the need today for those children to have fun while the adults talk about meaningful issues surrounding the national Lights On Afterschool initiative and our local concerns," said director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

A recent study completed by Harris County Department of Education's Research and Evaluation Institute circulated to local afterschool communities reported 80 percent of afterschool sites said they expect to see changes in enrollment because of Hurricane Harvey. Over half of the respondents provided afterschool programs and services in Harvey's aftermath, and many depleted resources and exhausted personnel during the weeks following the storm. Harvey afterschool relief kits will be distributed to many of the affected sites at the event.

National statistics show that 11.3 million children are alone and unsupervised from 3-6 p.m., and one in five children still don't have afterschool caregivers. Even though more youth than ever before are in afterschool—10.2 million—for every child in a program, two are waiting to get in.

At the celebration, an initiative called Out 2 Learn network, funded through the Houston Endowment and led through United Way of Greater Houston, announced its launch. Out 2 Learn will work strategically with HCDE's CASE for Kids and the City of Houston to implement Out 2 Learn key strategies. The network is aimed at expanding access to high-quality, out of school time services to all families in the greater Houston region through a coordinated, youth-centered approach to professional development, community investment and community awareness of the importance of quality services and youth voice.

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Event highlights included remarks by the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time; an afterschool rally; post-Harvey: Afterschool in Houston discussion; and a STEM interactive science experience called “air blaster” provided by museum staff to demonstrate the power of air mass.

**The alliance is comprised of the following organizations:**

CASE for Kids, Education Foundation of Harris County, Harris County Department of Education, YMCA of Greater Houston, Houston ISD, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department After-School Achievement Program (A.S.A.P.), The Mayor’s Office of Education Initiatives, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston, Harris County Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Jack Morman, United Way of Greater Houston, Children’s Museum of Houston, East Texas After-School Association (SETAA), Harris County Precinct 1, and Harris County Precinct 2.

View statistics about afterschool from TXPOST and the Afterschool Alliance: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4966/statistics-2017.pdf>

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.005195. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**Media Contact:**

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**Carol Vaughn**, Communications Manager  
Communications and Public Information  
Cell: 281.660.9205. or Office: 713.696.0756



April 4, 2017

## **Little free libraries to make big literacy impact through ‘Groomed for Literacy’ collective with HCDE adult learners, City of Houston Public Library**

Fifty little libraries which could make a big literacy impact in needy children’s lives are being painted by adult learners enrolled in workforce development classes at Harris County Department of Education and other volunteers. The event will be held on April 7, from 10 a.m. to noon at 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas.

The collaborative program created by the Houston Public Library, in partnership with Put It In A Book Foundation, called “Groomed for Literacy” provides the wooden little libraries filled with books to barber shops in targeted areas with low-literacy, and low-income youth who have low access to quality books. What/Who: Paint Party with Harris County Department of Education adult learners, staff from Houston Public Library and other volunteers. Fifty little free libraries which will house books for underprivileged youth will be painted by workforce students.

When: Friday, April 7, 10 a.m. to noon (media: prime time for action is 11 a.m.)

Where: 6300 Irvington Blvd. (open parking lot adjacent to building)

Etc.: Contact Carol Vaughn, [cvaughn@hcde-texas.org](mailto:cvaughn@hcde-texas.org), 713-696-0756 for details about event

The little free libraries feature a barber shop storefront décor complete with red-white-and-blue barber poles. The little free libraries were donated by the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation and the Little Free Library organization. Other partners in the project include the Friends of the Houston Public Library, City of Houston Health Department – My Brother’s Keeper, Hott Blocc Barbershop (pilot location) and Franklin Institute.

“Our adult education students involved with this project can connect with this cause to promote literacy among youth as many of them return to school to better themselves,” said Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. “They see the value in this program and are offering to volunteer their time to encourage youth to read.”

This past fall, students in an adult education workforce development class helped to construct the little free libraries at the launch event announcing the program. After painting is completed, the Houston Public Library will work with local barber shops to implement the program. Service areas include Fifth Ward, Third Ward, East Little York, Independence Heights, Clinton Park, Sharpstown, Gulfgate, Hobby and several dozen additional neighborhoods.

Several of the students putting finishing touches on the little free libraries are enrolled in a construction class through HCDE. The basic construction and safety skills class is called Core Curriculum Certification.

Student Leonardo Cordova took the class with a number of other employees laid off from General Electric last December.

“It’s a good feeling to help other people,” said Cordova. “I look forward to volunteering to get the job done.”

Harris County Department of Education Adult Education provides opportunity for adult learners to enroll in GED or English as a second language classes while also preparing them for new careers in the construction industry. For more information about classes, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation) .

**Photo:** (left) Harris County Department of Education teacher Clifton Hypolite helps adult learner Leonardo Cordova with finishing touches on a prototype “little library” which will hold free age appropriate books. The collaborative between HCDE Adult Education and the City of Houston Public Library System provides 50 little libraries for barber shops located in targeted neighborhoods with low-literacy, low-income youth. The workforce class taking on the project provides a combined GED class with Core Curriculum for construction.

**About HCDE Adult Education:** With a 30-year track record, HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to “learn to earn,” including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information, access [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation) .

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**About Groomed for Literacy:** Groomed for Literacy, is an innovative effort being taken by the Houston Public Library, community leaders and organizations to connect youth, specifically boys of color, to literacy, books, positive role models and valuable educational resources in their community to help address the literacy gap. This initiative will help ensure that these youth regardless of their background will have an additional sources of support and opportunity to better their educational outcomes. The goals of Groomed for Literacy are to: increase the number of books in the community, increase the number of books on the home, provide library resources to youth and their families in support of literacy attainment, create a vehicle for community members to partner in support of literacy advancement, support citywide efforts for kindergarten readiness and reading at grade level, increase public awareness regarding the importance of access to books and literacy, and increase the number of Little Free Libraries with the city.

Thirty communities have been identified as meeting the criteria for having high populations of individuals with low literacy, high populations of individuals with low income and low access to quality books. The goal is to place a total of 1-2 Little Free Libraries in select barbershops within the targeted communities. Groomed for Literacy key partners include: Little Free Library, Put it in a Book Foundation, Hott Blocc Barbershop, Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, My Brother’s Keeper, and Friends of the Houston Public Library.

**About Put It In A Book Foundation:** Put It In A Book Foundation was created by two KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program): Houston Public Schools educators whose vision is to change children’s lives through the power of a book. As educators they know the importance of books in the home and they wanted to go Beyond Z for their students and families by free books to them. They are currently in the process of applying for our non-profit and tax exempt status. Our mission is to change the lives of the youth through the power of a book. Their main focus areas are Literacy, College Readiness and Financial Literacy.

**About the Houston Public Library:** The Houston Public Library (HPL) operates 35 neighborhood libraries, four HPL Express Libraries, a Central Library, the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, The African American Library at the Gregory School, and the Parent Resource Library located in the Children’s Museum of Houston. With more than eight million visits per year in person and online, HPL is committed to excellent customer service and equitable access to information and programs by providing library customers with free use of a diverse collection of printed materials and electronic resources, Internet, laptop and computer use, and a variety of database and reference resources with live assistance online 24/7.







## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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281-660-9205

**Longtime HCDE supporter Bates Collision Centers ‘fuels smiles’ by giving away two vehicles to Harvey survivors**  
***Head Start parent, employee to unwrap cars after receiving Responsible Parenting awards***

Dec. 12, 2017 – After losing their cars during Hurricane Harvey and enduring daily transportation challenges, Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga are receiving a special gift from Bates Collision Centers: the gift of transportation.

In its 19th year, HCDE Head Start’s partnership with Bates Collision Centers is giving away cars No. 33 and 34 to two moms who will be recognized with the Responsible Parenting Award. Owners Lee and Leila Bates have made this annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents often make in order to provide for their children.

“We’re fueling brighter futures,” said Lee Bates, president of Bates Collision Centers. “Responsible parenting is so important and it’s a big job in every family. But it becomes even harder when all the pieces aren’t in place, like transportation.”

Rashed and Zuniga were nominated by Head Start Center managers. Bates employees donate time to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donate gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

Leila Bates, vice president, says both she and Lee are proud of their employees who continue to supply time and resources to families they have yet to meet.

HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock believes the partnership is particularly important this year as parents face transportation issues post-Harvey.

“We continue to be thankful for our partnership with Bates Collision Centers,” said Peacock. “These cars make a difference in the lives of families who are already committed to making the world a better place for their children.”

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**About Bahiyah Rashed, HCDE Head Start Tidwell Center, recipient of the 33rd rehabbed car:**

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Bahiyah Rashed is a valued teacher at Tidwell Head Start, single mother of two sons Deon, 10 and Daveon, 9, and guardian to niece Kelsi, 7. Since losing her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey, Rashed has been sharing a vehicle with her mother. While the car has been a blessing, it has occasional mechanical issues and can be unreliable while trying to attend school, work and many extracurricular activities.

**About Vanessa Zuniga, HCDE Head Start Pugh Center, recipient of the 34th rehabbed car:**

Vanessa Zuniga is the single parent of Nathan, 4, and employed full-time. Zuniga lost her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey and shares rides with friends and family. She begins her day early and waits for extended times to be picked up from work. She also relies on family members for Nathan's school rides.



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## **Contracts for bottled water and bread awarded for access through HCDE Choice Partners**

Contracts for bottled water and bread were awarded at the May 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Newly awarded contracts include

**Bottled Drinking Water, Coolers and Related Products:** DS Services of America, Inc. doing business as Sparkletts; Lone Star Coffee, LLC; Nestle Waters North America doing business as ReadyRefresh by Nestle, a division of Nestle Waters North America; and Quench USA, Inc.

**Bread Products:** Kurz & Co.; and

**Dairy and Related Products:** Borden Dairy Company doing business as Borden Dairy Company of Texas, LLC;

Renewed contracts include

**Athletic and Physical Education Supplies and Related Items:** Custom Sportswear, Inc.; Educator's Depot, Inc.; Michele M. Summerall doing business as Getpoms.com; The Prophet Corporation doing business as Gopher Sport/Play with a Purpose/Gopher Performance; North Houston Athletics, LLC; Richey & Son, Inc. doing business as Richey Athletics; School Specialty, Inc.; Sideline Interactive, LLC; Soccer 4 All, Inc.; The Soccer Wall Company doing business as Soccer Innovations and Varsity Brands Holding Co., Inc.; BSN Sports, LLC doing business as U.S. Games;

**Boxes, Packaging Supplies, Freight Services and Related Items:** Cardinal Delivery Service, LLC; and Veritiv Operating Company;

**Chemical Products and Services:** Auto-Chlor Services, LLC; EcoLab, Inc.; Cordell Incorporated doing business as Hygeia Enviro-Clean; Magnus Procurement & Logistic Solution, Inc.; and PortionPac Chemical Corporation;

**Commercial Food Distributor:** Gordon Food Service, Inc.; Jake's Finer Foods, Inc.; and Labatt Institutional Supply Company doing business as Labatt Food Service, LLC;

**Commodity Processing of USDA Foods:** AdvancePierre Foods, Inc.; Alpha Foods Co.; Chinese Food Solutions, Inc. doing business as Asian Food Solutions; Basic American, Inc. doing business as Basic American Foods; Bongards Creameries; Cargill Kitchen Solutions, Inc.; ConAgra Foods, Inc.; Lamb Weston; Goodman Food Product doing business as Don Lee Farms; ES Foods; Foster Poultry Farms doing business as Foster Farms; Pilgrim's Pride Corporation; High Liner Foods USA, Inc.; Let's Do Lunch, Inc. doing business as Integrated Food Service; Smucker Foodservice, Inc.; J R Simplot Company; J.T.M. Provisions Co., Inc.; Jennie-O Turkey Store Sales, LLC; Land O' Lakes, Inc.; M.C.I. Foods, Inc.; Maid-Rite Specialty Foods, LLC; McCain Foods USA, Inc.; Michael Foods, Inc.; National Food Group Inc.; Out of the Shell, LLC doing business as Yang's 5th Taste; Peterson Farms Fresh, Inc.; Calfed Financial Corporation doing business as Red Gold, LLC; Rich Chicks; Rich Products Corporation; Rose & Shore; Schwan's Food Service, Inc.; Tabatchnick Fine Foods, Inc.; Tasty Brands, LLC; The Father's Table, LLC; Trident Seafoods Corp.; Tyson Prepared Foods, Inc.; Wawona Frozen Foods, Inc.;

**Fire, Safety, Security, Surveillance Equipment and Installation Services:** Digital Air Control, Inc. and QSS, LLC doing business as Quality Security Systems;

**Frozen and Chilled Beverages:** Sunny Sky Products, LLC and Trident Beverage, Inc.;

**HVAC Equipment and Service (JOC-IDIQ):** A/W Mechanical Services, LP; Dura Pier Facilities Services, Ltd doing business as Facilities Sources; HVAC Mechanical Services of Texas, Ltd doing business as Hunton Services and Letsos Company;

**Insurance Services:** Tristar Risk Management;

**Modular Buildings:** GroundFORCE Building Systems, LLC;

**Office Supplies and Related Items:** Western - BRW Paper Company, Inc. doing business as Bosworth Papers; Butler Business Products, LLC; Challenge Office Products, Inc.; Jerry LaTour doing business as Hallmark Office Products, Inc.; Reliant Business Products, Inc.; School Specialty, Inc. and Tejas Office Products, Inc.;

**Printing, Copying and Related Items:** Houston Independent School District; Long Plan Printing, Inc. doing business as LP Printing; Color One Systems, Inc. doing business as Texas Litho; and Thomas Reprographics, Inc. doing business as Thomas Printworks; and

**Produce:** Brothers Produce, Inc.; Chefs Produce of Houston, Inc.; Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co.- Houston L.P doing business as Hardie's Fresh Foods; and Scarmardo Produce Inc.

#### **New Members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on May 16 include **Bay City Library Association**, Bay City, Texas; **city of Cerritos**; **Farmersville ISD**, Farmersville, Texas; **city of Harlingen**; **Howard College**, Big Spring, Texas; **Hutto ISD**, Hutto, Texas; **Kennedale ISD**, Kennedale, Texas; **city of Lake Jackson**, Lake Jackson, Texas; **Purple Hearts, Inc.**, Fort Worth, Texas; **Reeves County**, Pecos, Texas; **Riverbend Retreat Center**, Glen Rose, Texas; **Santa Fe Public School District**, Santa Fe, N.M.; **city of Wallis**; and **Washington County**, Brenham, Texas.

New out-of-state members include **Florida Polytechnic University**, Lakeland, Fla.; **Francis Howell School District**, St. Charles, Mo.; **Franklin County**, Columbus, Ohio; **Kenosha County**, Kenosha, Wis.; **Nassau County School District**, Fernandina Beach, Fla.; **Suffolk Public Schools**, Suffolk, Va.; **Thompson School District R2-J**, Loveland, Colo.; and **University of North Florida**, Jacksonville, Fla.

**About Choice Partners:** Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

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March 8, 2017

## Harris County Department of Education administrator to lead Texas Alliance of Black School Educators

Kimberly McLeod, Harris County Department of Education assistant superintendent for Education and Enrichment, was sworn in as president of the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators, Saturday, Feb. 25 during the organization's 32nd annual state conference held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, Texas.

McLeod's ambitions to lead the organization are enriched by her leadership experience. She currently oversees six divisions in her daily professional capacity at HCDE.

As she begins her three-year term, McLeod said that creating momentum and sustainability within an organization of 1,000-plus volunteers will be challenging yet rewarding.

"Our volunteers remain passionate in their drive to support TABSE as the organization continues to empower educators," she said. "As their leader, their enthusiasm is my inspiration."

As McLeod settles into office, her goals are to extend focus on governance and policy, to help local affiliates strengthen their programs for a more local impact and to focus on leadership preparation and development throughout the state. Her term ends February 2020.

TABSE membership is open to anyone who teaches or serves children of African descent and who shares their mission of empowering those leaders with the skills they need to exact their desired outcome.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

###



## HCDE PRESS ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Carol Vaughn  
Communications Manager  
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281-660-9205

### **Harris County Department of Education Head Start Center Receives School Supplies from Houston-Based Plantgistix**

**What:** HCDE Head Start students at the Sheffield center will receive backpacks full of school supplies donated by Houston-based business Plantgistix. Each classroom will also receive \$100 for additional materials and supplies.

The backpacks, containing essential classroom items such as colored markers, crayons, glue sticks and folders, will fill a need for many families affected by Hurricane Harvey. A recent survey conducted by the HCDE Head Start division showed 48 families at the Sheffield Head Start center saw an impact on their financial situation as a result of the storm.

**Who:** Members of the Plantgistix Community Outreach Committee will deliver backpacks full of school supplies to students at the Sheffield Head Start Center.

**When:** Monday, Sept. 25, 2017 from 10-11:30 p.m.

**Where:** Sheffield Head Start Center located at 14300 Wallisville Rd. Houston, TX, 77049

**Media contact:** Contact Carol Vaughn, Communications and Creative Services manager at 281-660-9205 or Lindsey Sanders, communications coordinator at 903-563-1649.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.005195. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

## **Klein ISD Teacher Mike Keimig Receives HCDE Susan O'Connor Award for Teaching Excellence**

Klein ISD English Teacher Mike Keimig has been actively involved in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for nine years. To him, the Scholastic Awards provide his junior high students opportunities to publish their work, earn scholarships, and most importantly, find their voice and learn to enjoy writing.

This year, Keimig received the 2017 Susan O'Connor Award for Teaching Excellence, a prestigious award highlighting his exemplary work and commitment to expanding opportunities for creative young people through the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

The Susan O'Connor Award, named after writing teacher and Scholastic Awards advocate Susan O'Connor, is presented annually by Harris County Department of Education to one regional teacher who has made an impact on students' lives through the Awards.

"I encourage my students to participate in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards because I've found they show amazing individual voice when presented with an opportunity to be heard," said Keimig.

In addition to expanding opportunities through the Scholastic Awards, Keimig supports and challenges his students every day as their teacher. For Klein ISD parent Karen Dupont, Keimig has also become a mentor for her two boys, ninth grader Jacob and 11<sup>th</sup> grader David.

Keimig taught Jacob in ninth grade at Doerre Intermediate and continues to support him in high school. After being inspired to enter the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards by Keimig, Jacob discovered a passion for writing and received National Silver and Gold Key Writing Medals.

Although he didn't teach Dupont's oldest son David, Keimig tutors him for the English End-of-Course exam. Due to David's Asperger's, a form of autism, he needed additional help with writing. When Dupont reached out to Keimig he offered to tutor David without hesitation.

"Mr. Keimig has allowed David to make incredible strides in his written and spoken communication," explains Dupont. "His help means so much to our family."

Dupont adds that Keimig makes an impact on his students by challenging, motivating and supporting them and is a positive mentor for them at the intermediate age.

Keimig was recognized at the Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Ceremony at the Alley Theater on March 25, where he was presented with a check for \$500 from award namesake Susan O'Connor. He is also invited to attend the National Awards Ceremony along with his students at Carnegie Hall in New York City this summer.

"I'm so thankful for the wonderful opportunities my students have received from Harris County Department of Education and the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards," said Keimig. "It truly does change young adults when they have opportunities to be recognized outside of the school setting."

Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The program has an

impressive legacy of being the first to acknowledge creative talent and is today's largest source of scholarships for creative teens. For more information on the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).



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281-660-9205

### **National Art.Write.Now.DC exhibition showcases work from 33 Harris County students**

September 22, 2017 - The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recently kicked off the Art.Write.Now.DC exhibition at the U.S. Department of Education on Sept. 15 showcasing art and writing from 33 Harris County students. This regional highlight also showcases the efforts of Harris County Department of Education to enrich the local community with the arts and to encourage students to be part of the Scholastic Awards' legacy.

Supported by the HCDE Board of Trustees and their respective school districts, 22 Harris County students traveled to Washington D.C. on Sept. 15 to view their artwork on display and receive recognition for their creativity and talent. Additionally, Aldine ISD art teacher Birgit Langhammer attended the event to represent and pay tribute to her student Freddy Diaz, a senior in Aldine ISD who passed away in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

Each year, the Art.Write.Now program features the year-long exhibition as well as a touring exhibition showcasing original works by teens from across the country. Curated, produced and presented by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the nonprofit which administers the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, each exhibition showcases a selection of inspiring and innovative work by teens from across the country who received national honors in 2017.

### **Exhibition Location and Dates**

Write.Now.DC 2017–18:

– **Washington, D.C.**, U.S. Department of Education, Sept. 15, 2017– July 31, 2018

Write.Now.Tour 2017–18:

- **Tulsa, OK**, Center for Creativity, Tulsa Community College, Oct. 2–Oct. 28, 2017
- **Lexington, KY**, The Living Arts & Science Center, Nov. 10, 2017–Dec. 26, 2017
- **Elmira, NY**, The Arnot Art Museum, Jan. 12–Feb. 24, 2018
- **Youngstown, OH**, The Butler Institute of American Art, April 1–June 3, 2018

The students who attended are **Samantha Kelly**, Houston ISD; **Karen Flores**, Pasadena ISD; **Grace Sanders**, St. John's School; **Emma Pulaski**, Episcopal High School; **Rachel Koch**, Episcopal High School; **Summer Elliott**, Clear Creek ISD; **Allyson Su**, Katy ISD; **Helen Wang**, Pearland ISD; **Sarah Hambly**, Spring Branch ISD; **Allison Maeker**, Klein ISD; **Sri Varanasi**, Katy ISD; **Jennifer Castillo**, Aldine ISD; **Ashley Liu**, Klein ISD; **Edward Bustos**, Cy-Fair ISD;

**Savannah Moore**, Humble ISD; **Franklin Nwora**, KIPP; **Chimi Abuede**, Alief ISD; **Sasha Vermeil**, Episcopal High School; **Mia Sanchez**, Klein ISD; **Alexandra Bellon**, Tomball ISD; **Saranna Zhang**, Spring Branch ISD; and **Jayasurya Dileep**, Klein ISD.

For more information on the Art.Write.Now program, visit [www.artandwriting.org/what-we-do/art-write-now/](http://www.artandwriting.org/what-we-do/art-write-now/). For information on submitting works to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic.services](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic.services), early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.005195. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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## **New contracts for financial reporting software and roofing services awarded**

Contracts for financial reporting software and roofing and waterproofing services were awarded at the October 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

New contracts include

**Financial and Operations Analysis, Evaluation and Reporting Software:** OpenGov Inc.; and

**Roofing, Building Envelope and Waterproofing Services (IDIQ/JOC):** Advantage USAA Inc.; American Contracting USA Inc.; Brazos Urethane Inc.; CR Systems Inc.; CS Advantage USSA Inc.; D7 Roofing & Metal LLC; Duro-Last Inc. doing business as Duro-Last Roofing Inc.; Fusion Trading LLC doing business as Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing; Jaco Roofing & Construction Inc.; John A. Walker Roofing Co. Inc.; LD Tebben Company Inc.; Sea-Breeze Roofing Inc.; Tecta America Corp; The Sithe Group LLC doing business as TSG Industries; Texas Ligua Tech Services Inc. doing business as Ligua Tech and Weatherproofing Services.

## **Renewed contracts include**

**Curriculum, Instructional, Assessment and Intervention Materials and Supplies:** 3P Learning Inc. doing business as 3P Learning; Achieve3000 Inc.; Carnegie Learning Inc.; DLB Books Inc.; DynaStudy Inc.; Eric Armin Inc. doing business as EAI Education a division of Eric Armin Inc.; Frog Street Press Inc.; Imagination Station Inc. doing business as Istation; Lab Resources Inc.; Lakeshore Equipment Company doing business as Lakeshore Learning Materials; Lectorum Publications Inc.; Mentoring Minds; Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA); Pitsco Inc. doing business as Pitsco Education; Saddleback Educational Publishing Inc.; Scholastic Inc.; Scholastic Library Publishing Inc.; and Teacher Heaven Inc.;

**Parking and Street Cleaning Services:** Satco Services Inc. doing business as Southern Care Sweeping and Paving Company;

**Road Products, (Signage, Chemicals, Gravel, and Concrete) Equipment, and Related Items:** Southwest Geo-Solutions Inc. doing business as Geo-Solutions; and

**Student Information System:** Tyler Technologies Inc.

## **New members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Oct. 18 include **Corpus Christi Housing Authority**, Corpus Christi; **East Fort Worth Montessori Academy**, Fort Worth; **Faith Lutheran Church of Georgetown**, Georgetown; and **Texarkana Independent School District**.

Additional out-of-state members include **Charles County**, Md.; **Lehigh County Authority**, Pa.; and **Manatee County School District**, Fla.

**About Choice Partners:** Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and

money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

### **HCDE Head Start Students Receive New School Uniforms Through Operation School Bell**

More than 250 students from the Dogan, Fonwood and Pugh Head Start centers received new school uniforms last week as part of the Assistance League of Houston's signature philanthropic program, Operation School Bell.

Each student received a \$75 voucher to cash in at The Uniform Superstore in Greenspoint Mall on either Saturday, Oct. 7 or Thursday, Oct. 12. Members of the U.S. Coast Guard joined the Assistance League of Houston at both events.

"We want to do everything we can to help children succeed in school," said Stella Evensen, Operation School Bell committee member. "When they start the school year off with new clothing it gives them self-confidence and boosts their self-esteem."

The school uniforms will also fill a need for many Head Start families affected by Hurricane Harvey. A recent survey conducted by the HCDE Head Start division showed more than 60 families at the three participating centers experienced direct damage to their homes or cars and many others saw an impact on their financial situation.

Throughout the years, the Assistance League of Houston has donated more than 10,000 uniforms to HCDE Head Start children. For more information on Operation School Bell, visit [www.assistanceleague.org](http://www.assistanceleague.org).



## HCDE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### HCDE Head Start Students Receive New School Uniforms Through Operation School Bell

**What:** The Assistance League of Houston will provide Harris County Department of Education Head Start students with new school uniforms as part of their signature philanthropic program, Operation School Bell. Students from Dogan, Fonwood and Pugh Head Start centers will receive a \$75 voucher to cash in at the Uniform Superstore in Greenspoint Mall.

“We want to do everything we can to help children succeed in school,” said Stella Evensen, Operation School Bell committee member. “When they start the school year off with new clothing it gives them self-confidence and boosts their self-esteem.”

The school uniforms will also fill a need for many Head Start families affected by Hurricane Harvey. A recent survey conducted by the HCDE Head Start division showed more than 60 families at the three participating centers experienced direct damage to their homes or cars and many others saw an impact on their financial situation.

**Who:** Assistance League of Houston, Harris County Department of Education Head Start, U.S. Coast Guard and 3- to 5-year-old Head Start students and their families

**When:** Saturday, Oct. 7 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Where:** The Uniform Superstore in Greenspoint Mall, 12300 North Freeway, Houston, TX 77060

**Media contact:** Contact Carol Vaughn, Communications and Creative Services manager at 281-660-9205 or Lindsey Sanders, communications coordinator at 903-563-1649.

# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**June 28, 2017**

## **Partnership Project funding through Harris County Department of Education's CASE for Kids provides \$550,787 to fund 24 area programs**

Afterschool is made possible for 600 children across Harris County for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year through \$550,787 in funding to Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. The CASE for Kids Partnership Project is the result of collaboration between HCDE, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Texas Workforce Commission and awarded sites. HCDE commits local funds to supplement comprehensive afterschool programming.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County. Specifically, Partnership Project funding begins as school opens in August and extends through summer. Amounts vary from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for each program.

The following districts and sites gain the funding: Aldine ISD (Goodman Elementary, Raymond Academy and Stehlik Intermediate); Academy of Accelerated Learning (charter); Alief ISD (Kennedy Elementary and Miller Intermediate); Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Houston (Havard, Morefield and Stafford); Houston ISD (Benbrook, Briscoe, Field, Park Place, Port Houston, Sequin, Whidby and Whittier elementary schools); Pasadena ISD (Frazier and Teague elementary schools), Precinct2gether, Inc. (YET II); Sheldon ISD (Carroll, Monahan and Sheldon elementary schools); and Southwest Schools Charter (Bissonnet Elementary).

The goal of Partnership Project is to provide supplemental funding for comprehensive afterschool programs in order to promote several areas of learning. Funding provides increased support for numeracy, literacy, and social and emotional learning, explained Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids.

"At Harris County Department of Education, we remain committed to supporting afterschool as a means to keep kids safe and provide enriching activities before and after school and during the summer months," said HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "Partnership Project is a cornerstone for meeting that goal."

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

## **HCDE Head Start Centers Receive School Supplies from Houston-Based Plantgistix**

On Monday, Sept. 25, Harris County Department of Education Head Start students at the Fifth Ward, Pugh, Dogan, Coolwood, San Jacinto and Sheffield centers received more than \$10,000 worth of backpacks and school supplies donated by Houston-based business Plantgistix.

The Plantgistix Community Outreach Committee, consisting of Darryl Dastous, Felesia Taylor, Tiffani Speller and Scott Skrabanek, delivered the backpacks on Sept. 25 to the Sheffield Head Start Center located at 14300 Wallisville Rd. Plantgistix also donated \$100 to each of the 24 classrooms for additional materials and supplies.

The committee members, along with Plantgistix CEO Marc Levine, understand the importance of early learning and the impact these supplies can make for students. The backpacks, containing essential classroom items such as colored markers, crayons, glue sticks and folders, fill a need for many families affected by Hurricane Harvey.

"I believe everyone deserves an opportunity to grow," said Levine. "We at Plantgistix are honored to be able to help meet the needs of others."

A recent survey conducted by the HCDE Head Start division showed nearly 70 families at the six centers receiving the donation experienced some sort of damage to their homes or cars. Many other families saw an impact on their financial situation as a result of the storm.

"This donation from Plantgistix is even more necessary for the success of our students in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey," said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. "We're thankful to our community partners for filling a vital need in the Head Start community."

HCDE is currently recruiting students for all 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343 or visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart). For more information on Plantgistix, visit [www.plantgistix.com](http://www.plantgistix.com).

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April 18, 2017

## Harris County Department of Education Board approves plans for first public recovery school in Harris County

The Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees voted 4-0 on April 18 to approve the budgeting and implementation of a recovery high school, the first public Harris County substance-use prevention high school. The Texas Education Agency reported that in 2014-2015, there were approximately 11,000 Harris County students that had drug offense issues, according to TEA Disciplinary District Data.

The school will be available to all 25 school districts in Harris County on a contractual basis and will serve 30 students as it is opened with a target date of September 2017. HCDE will renovate a 20,000-square-foot HCDE school facility located in the Greenspoint area in north Houston at 11902 Spears Road. The HCDE Board of Trustees approved \$950,000 in start-up funding for the project.

“It’s a good thing we are doing this because it’s a chance to help students in a revolutionary way,” said HCDE Board Vice President Eric Dick. “I had a troubled youth and am glad to be a solution to the problem.”

The goal of the recovery high school is to provide support and assistance to students after successful completion of a rehabilitation program. Students continue to receive counseling and support as they attend their school.

A low student-to-teacher ratio will be implemented as the school provides an academic curriculum along with life skills and recovery coaching. Staff at the school will include teachers, recovery coaches and counselors. The school will accept students from all areas of Harris County.

“We recognize those who struggle each day in the fight against addiction—the students, parents, teachers and community,” said Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. “This school represents a big step in recovery for students in Harris County.”

**Photo:** HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. and HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker along with HCDE Board of Trustees Vice President Eric Dick and trustees Erica Lee Carter and Diane Trautman met with Recovery School supporters who spoke in favor of the school at the April 18 board meeting.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state’s largest count meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county through its HCDE Schools division. [Two schools support students with intellectual or behavioral disabilities](#) and two alternative schools provide education for adjudicated or expelled youth. [View our video](#) and learn more about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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**For immediate release**

April 13, 2017

## **Rookie English teacher finds fulfilling niche with pre-teens through HCDE teacher alternative certification program**

Rookie middle school teacher Jennifer Siger works with students she calls “inbetweeners.” The often misunderstood middle schoolers can be a challenge, she acknowledges, but they’re also a joy to be around.

The teacher-in-training enrolled in the Harris County Department of Education teacher alternative certification program gets plenty of support from teacher veterans who are her instructors. Siger began preparing for her new career through evening, weekend and online classes at HCDE last year and is already working as a teacher.

The HCDE educator preparation program provides a personalized training experience for aspiring teachers as qualified college graduates enter the program and spend seven to 10 months in pre-service training taking teacher preparation courses. The next 12 months are spent teaching. Small group instruction is hallmark to the program, with a range in classroom size of eight to 20 students in the teacher prep course.

Since 2011, the program has recorded a 100 percent pass rate for students completing the courses and taking the certification exams, said Lidia Zatopek, director for HCDE’s Educator Certification and Professional Advancement. Assistance is provided in securing teaching assignments in elementary or secondary education classrooms.

Siger chose English language arts and reading 4-8 as her teaching discipline and teaches sixth grade English language arts at Frank Black Middle School in the Houston Independent School District, a partner with HCDE in the program. Because of the brain changes teens undergo through puberty, the teacher prep program includes adolescent psychology and brain development discussions for teachers that aspire to teach these budding adolescents.

“They’re very unsure of themselves and make a lot of poor choices because of it,” said Siger, a mother of two from Klein.

She enrolled in the HCDE alternative certification program to make the switch from private to public school teacher, a move which requires Texas Teacher Certification. “On the other hand, they are so ready and excited to learn about the world at large.

“They are starting to envision themselves as individuals and are hungry to explore the possibilities available to them.”

Along with teaching the writing, technology, hands-on activities and teamwork are prominent in her classroom. During a bottle-flipping persuasive writing exercise, student teams weigh the pros and cons of flipping water bottles which should land upright. It’s currently trending, but schools don’t like the menacing noise and mess that results in student grandstanding.

-more-

A video shows the principal giving his take on why he doesn't like the practice. She hands out laptops for students to use to get their research to support the side they take. Collaboration is rampant. Siger watches for attention-deficit behaviors and redirects students to the assignment.

"One, two," she says. "One, two, eyes on you," the class choruses, returning to their lists of pros and cons.

Best teaching practices are at the heart of the alternative certification program at HCDE, Siger said. Keeping teens engaged in their studies means exploring what works and doesn't.

"Most (teacher prep) programs would give you tools and say here, now go do it," she explained. "HCDE helps its teachers every single step of the way. The facility and staff are top notch, and they are very invested in us. It's cliché to say it's a big family...but I know they care about me, and that's important to me."

Siger was inspired to enter the teaching profession by a teacher who made a difference in her life. She was a sixth grade English teacher and instilled a love for books.

While she doesn't expect to make a difference in all her students' lives, she knows she is making a difference with many. That's good enough, she says.

"I smile all day at work," Siger said. "These kids are truly a joy to be around."

(Siger was recently nominated for the Texas Alternative Certification Association Intern of the Year Award. Winners will be determined by the association by June.)

(For information about the HCDE teacher alternative certification program, call 713-696-1348, email [hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org](mailto:hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org) or go to [www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep](http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep).)

**Photo:** Jennifer Siger teaches sixth grade at Frank Black Middle School in Houston Independent School District through the Harris County Department of Education teacher alternative certification program. Her student Valeria Martinez shows off a poster she is using in her persuasive writing exercise about a new teen craze called "bottle flipping."

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state's largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) .

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# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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March 6, 2017

## **HCDE hosts 4 celebrations with fine arts supporters to celebrate teen Scholastic Art & Writing Awards talent**

Harris County Department of Education stages four events to highlight the talents of more than 1,000 local teens who earned Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Gold and Silver Key Awards. Regionally sponsored by HCDE, the Awards showcase art and writing from Harris County students in grades 7-12 in public, private and home schools. For the complete list of Awards recipients and for more details, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic) .

Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Award events span throughout March. Here is a list of events:

**Artist Reception at Spring Street Studios , Saturday, March 11, 2-4 p.m.** Join us for a gallery full of art in a festive celebration of talent as we honor both students in grades 9-12 who earned Gold and Silver Keys for their art and writing. This come-and-go event includes readings from teen writers. Light refreshments are served. Location: 1824 Spring St., Houston, TX 77007

**Artist Reception at Texas Art Supply, Thursday, March 23, 4:30-6:30 p.m.** View a gallery full of art and hear selections from writers as we honor both students in grades 7-8 who earned Gold and Silver Keys for their art and writing. This is a come-and-go event. Light refreshments are served. Location: 2001 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77006

**Artist Ceremony at Alley Theater, Saturday, March 25 for 9-12 grade students.** Students receive Gold and Silver Key Awards at the Alley, 615 Texas Ave., Houston, TX 77002. Silver Key Art: 8:30-9:30 a.m. Gold Key Art: 10-11 a.m.  
Gold and Silver Key Writing: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Artist Ceremony at Midtown Arts and Theater Center Houston, or Match, Thursday, March 30 for 7-8 grade students.** Location: 3400 Main St. Houston, TX 77022. Silver Key Art and Writing: 5:30-6:30 p.m. Gold Key Art and Writing: 7:30-8:30 p.m. (Parents/guests and educators must RSVP through the MATCH website.)

**About Scholastic Art & Writing:** Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The program has an impressive legacy of being the first to acknowledge creative talent and is today's largest source of scholarships for creative teens. [www.artandwriting.org](http://www.artandwriting.org)

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## **Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards encourage Harris County students to pursue talent**

Each year, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards inspire a love of the arts and encourage students to pursue their passions. This year, in addition to receiving National Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Medals, two Harris County students were honored as the Best-in-Grade.

Urvashi Deshpande from Village High School won the award for 9<sup>th</sup> grade and Alec Martinez from Cypress-Fairbanks ISD received the award for 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Deshpande and Martinez were two of only a handful of students chosen as the Best-in-Grade by a special panel of national jurors. The students were honored onstage at the National Awards Ceremony at Carnegie Hall in June and will each receive \$500 cash.

Deshpande, who won for her writing piece, said the award gave her confidence in her abilities as a writer.

“Sometimes I have doubts about my abilities, but winning this award made me absolutely sure that writing is something I’m good at,” said Deshpande. “It has motivated me to keep writing and keep sharing it with others.”

Martinez, who has always had an interest in film and photography, entered his first photograph into the contest this year, believing it would open up opportunities for his future. Martinez was surprised to receive a National Gold Medal and Best-in-Grade Award, encouraging him to pursue his passion.

“I love photography, but I didn’t realize I had talent until I received this award,” said Martinez. “It’s motivated me to pursue it further.”

Martinez hopes to one day use his photography talent as a film director, since photography and film go hand-in-hand. Although Deshpande isn’t sure she’ll be a writer, she knows her writing ability will benefit her in any career she chooses.

For more information about the Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards, visit <http://www.artandwriting.org/scholarships/sponsoredawards/best-in-grade/>.

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May 24, 2017

## 2017 School Safety Summit highlights community-minded approach to protecting schools

Harris County Department of Education is partnering with Crime Stoppers of Houston for the 2017 School Safety Summit, a free event to be held Monday, June 12, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The annual event will bring school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and those interested in school safety together for a summit about the issues facing schools in 2017-2018.

This year's theme, "I PLEDGE TO KEEP MY SCHOOL SAFE," emphasizes the ways that the combined work of individuals leads to a community-minded culture and increased safety.

Keynote speaker will be Juliet Stipeche, City of Houston director of education. Along with representatives from a variety of local, statewide and national agencies, Stipeche and other presenters will touch on critical school safety issues including mental health, human trafficking, internet crimes, police-student interactions, restorative discipline and updates to juvenile law.

Breakout sessions on these topics will be led by representatives from the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Love 146, Restorative Justice Collaborative of Houston, The Harris Center, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and the Klein ISD Police Department.

For the third consecutive year, the School Safety Summit will take place at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas. Those interested in attending may pre-register online at <http://www.hcde-texas.org/register> at no cost. Participants who pre-register will receive a free breakfast and lunch at the event. TCOLE credits are available for registrants.

**About the Center for Safe and Secure Schools:** Developed at the request of local superintendents in the spring of 1999 to advance safe and secure environments for learning and teaching, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools is a leader in the development of increased safety and security strategies in school environments for students and educators. Learn more about the trainings and other opportunities we offer at [www.safeandsecureschools.org](http://www.safeandsecureschools.org).

**About Harris County Department of Education (HCDE):** Serving students, teachers, schools and communities throughout Harris County, HCDE is a local governmental organization providing value for school districts while supporting educational opportunity. Partnering with Harris County school districts, HCDE maximizes local resources and respond to the needs of locally elected school boards and education leaders. HCDE services include school-based therapy for students, afterschool programs, Head Start, educator training, adult education and programs to promote safe schools. To learn more about how your county department of education can help you: [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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**June 8, 2017**

## **School Safety Summit with HCDE, Crime Stoppers to address drug trends, human trafficking, suicide prevention June 12**

Harris County Department of Education is partnering with Crime Stoppers of Houston for the 2017 School Safety Summit, a free event to be held Monday, June 12, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The annual event will bring school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and those interested in school safety together for a summit about the issues facing schools in 2017-2018.

The event begins with breakout sessions on school safety topics throughout the day. Keynote speaker will be Juliet Stipeche, City of Houston director of education.

School safety concerns range from juvenile law updates to current drug trends. Restorative Justice is introduced to help educators build relationships with students throughout the school day as a means to hold students accountable. Other breakout sessions beginning at 9:45 a.m. address Internet crimes against children, suicide prevention and human trafficking.

This year's theme, "I PLEDGE TO KEEP MY SCHOOL SAFE," emphasizes the ways that the combined work of individuals leads to a community-minded culture and increased safety.

For the third consecutive year, the School Safety Summit will take place at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas.

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## **Contracts for electrical services and temporary personnel awarded**

Contracts for electrical services and temporary personnel services were awarded at the September 2017 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Newly awarded contracts include

**Electrical Services, Minor Construction, Maintenance and Other Related Services (IDIQ/JOC):** Trio Electrical LLC and Turner Power and Construction LLC doing business as Turner Power Systems and Contractors LLC; and

**Temporary Personnel Services:** 22nd Century Technologies Inc.; A-1 Personnel of Houston Inc.; ExecuTeam Staffing, LP; LaneStaffing Inc.; ObjectWin Technology Inc.; PESG of Texas LLC; Silver & Associates Consulting Inc.; Staffmark Investment LLC doing business as Staffmark/CBS Personnel Services; Superior Talent Resources Inc.; Atterro Inc. doing business as Technical ProSource; Tempower LLC; The Spearhead Group Inc. and vTech Solutions Inc.

Renewed contracts include

**Affordable Care Act (ACA) Auditing/Reporting Service:** Eligibility Tracking Calculators LLC;

**Elevators and Other Related Services:** EMR Elevator Inc.;

**Energy Conservation Services:** Ameresco Inc.;

**Furnish and Install Integrated Technology Learning Laboratories:** Learnscapes Inc. doing business as Creative Learning Systems;

**Janitorial Products and Services:** Buckeye International Inc. doing business as Buckeye Cleaning Center-Houston; Complete Supply Inc. and Cordell Inc. doing business as Ridley's Vacuum & Janitorial Supply Rental, Lease, and Purchase of Copiers and Related Items; Bob Peckham & Associates Inc. doing business as Office Systems of Texas;

**Security Officers and Related Items:** Executive Threat Solutions LLC;

**Student Information System:** Focus School Software; and

**Third Party Code Inspection Services:** Bureau Veritas North America Inc.

## **New members**

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Sept. 20 include **Alto Independent School District; town of Argyle; Capital Area Council of Governments**, Austin; **Cen-Tex Family Services Inc.**, Bastrop; **Full Filled Project Inc.**, Plano; **Hallsville Independent School District**, Plano; **International Leadership of Texas**, Richardson; **Palominas Elementary School District**, Hereford, Ariz.; **Panfork Baptist Encampment**, Wellington; **Port of Longview**, Longview, Wash.; **Refugio County; Seattle Colleges**, Seattle, Wash.; **Texarkana College**, Texarkana; **University of Texas Southwestern (Medical Center)**, Dallas; and **city of Whitesboro**, Texas.

Additional out-of-state members include **city of Chesapeake**, Va., **Durham County**, N.C., **Golden State Bridge, Highway and Transportation District**, San Francisco, Calif., **Mobile County Commission**, Mobile, Ala.; **New Paradise Church**, Los Angeles, Calif.; **Ohio State University**, Columbus, Ohio; **city of Raleigh**, N.C.; **Valencia College**, Orlando, Fla.; and **Winnebago County**, Rockford, Ill.

## Strife in Life: Adult Education Graduation Snapshot with Infant Eggleton

*(Harris County Department of Education's GED Graduation 2017 is scheduled for May 20 at 11 a.m. at 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas, 77022 in our conference center. This story is part of a series of interviews with our adult students called "Strife in Life." For class information, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).)*

At just 27 years old, 2017 GED graduate Infant Eggleton has faced more hardships than most. Through her determination and positivity, and support from teacher Rosie Coleman, she will walk the stage and receive her GED on May 20 with approximately 79 other adult learners.

Earning her GED is a crucial step for Eggleton, who is trying to make life better for her three children. In May 2016, Eggleton's youngest child was diagnosed with meningitis and they spent two months in the hospital. Eggleton wasn't financially stable at the time and didn't know where to turn for help. Her three children were taken from her, and this pushed Eggleton to make a change.

"Ultimately, I'm grateful for the push because I get to be a better mom," said Eggleton. "Getting my GED proves that I can complete something positive. I know I'm going to make my kids proud of me."

Eggleton found the support system she needed at Memorial Assistance Ministries through HCDE's Adult Education program and completed the program in just three months.

"Rosie Coleman is the best teacher I've ever had," said Eggleton. "She pressed me to keep going. She is the support system I always wanted and needed."

Eggleton is optimistic about her future and plans to continue school in June to become a dental hygienist.

"Earning my GED is not the end of what I can do, it's the beginning of what I'm going to do."

### **Students in HCDE special schools use chess to strengthen socialization, academic skills**

The game of chess is more than simply moving rooks and knights on a board, as students at Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior Schools know well. After weeks of preparation culminating in a chess tournament, students gained countless social and academic skills. These strategies can be applied to the classroom and beyond.

Through a partnership with nonprofit organization Perfect TeamPlay Inc., nearly 30 students at AB School East and West joined the Chess Club, where Coach James Hudson taught them more than just the rules of the game.

"Perfect TeamPlay Inc. is a nonprofit that uses chess and other activities to mentor and motivate students," said Hudson. "In addition to academic benefits, chess provides students with skills to become productive citizens."

Since many students at HCDE's AB Schools deal with intellectual or behavioral challenges, chess offers benefits that can be applied to any situation in life. From critical thinking and strategy, to patience and time management, chess can be used as a fun education and socialization tool. Since chess is a game that expands the mind, it can also improve overall behavior and self-esteem. AB School West Principal Dr. Victor Keys also notes that students "practice following directions and accepting consequences and criticism – qualities that are important in the real world."

HCDE staff and parents have also noticed the students are using these skills in their every-day life.

"We've noticed the skills our students gained through chess – time, attention, patience and strategy – have transferred into the classroom and throughout the school community," said AB School East Principal Mindy Robertson.

During the chess tournament, students were encouraged to participate in a Chess Math challenge, a new aspect of the Perfect TeamPlay Inc. tournaments. The challenge involved giving each chess piece a corresponding number and incorporating that into various mathematical equations. Several students excitedly volunteered to participate in the challenge while being cheered on by their peers. The exercise further advances student math skills; and it also works to build self-confidence.

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June 27, 2017

## **Students representing HCDE, local schools travel to Carnegie Hall to accept National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals**

Twenty-five of the best artists and writers from Harris County traveled to New York City this month to be honored with National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Gold Medals at Carnegie Hall. Harris County teens received 28 National Gold Medals for 2017, more than double the 12 earned last year, and 59 national medals in total. The Awards are sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education.

Students traveling to New York City's Carnegie Hall represent HCDE and the following school districts and private schools: Aldine, Klein, Deer Park, Clear Creek, Pasadena, Katy, Cy-Fair, Pearland and Spring Branch independent school districts and private schools River Oaks Baptist, St. John's School and The Village School.

"For more than 90 years, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards has recognized the vision, ingenuity and talent of our students and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated," said Andrea Segraves, Harris County Department of Education coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing. "With more than 330,000 entries nationally, we are proud of our Harris County medalists."

During the National Ceremony on June 8, hundreds of teens from across the U.S. were honored by actress and comedian Amy Schumer, Scholastic CEO and President Richard Robinson, actress Ellie Kemper, artist Paul Chan and more. Among those students was Saranna Zhang, Spring Branch Independent School District student and winner of a National Gold Key award for her artwork, "My Journey."

"This experience has really encouraged me to be more creative and open with my work," said Zhang. "It has definitely given me the motivation to keep making art and to share my views on what is important to me and the future of the world."

The Harris County writers who traveled to New York City for the Awards were Jacob DuPont, Klein ISD; Taylor Gleason, Deer Park ISD; Mary Ann Hurtado, Klein ISD; Shania Hurtado, Klein ISD; Tyler King, St. John's School; Vivian Tsao, The Village School; Peyton Vasquez, Deer Park ISD; Elizabeth Willms, Deer Park ISD; Julia Smith, St. John's School; and Urvashi Deshpande, The Village School.

The artists were Alexis Cazares, Pasadena ISD; Alexis Castillo, River Oaks Baptist; Alliemarie Crochet, Katy ISD; Fatemeh Ebrahimi, Katy ISD; Nallely Garza, Clear Creek ISD; Connie Lau, Katy ISD; Mackenzie Lopez, Klein ISD; Alec Martinez, Cy-Fair ISD; Asma Mashal, Katy ISD; Melissa Sosa, Pasadena ISD; Akhil Thadani, Aldine ISD; Bryce Williams, Cy-Fair ISD; Wendy Xie, Pearland ISD; Juwon Yoo, Spring Branch ISD; and Saranna Zhang, Spring Branch ISD.

For more information on the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and the complete list of national medalists from Harris County, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

**Photo:** Harris County students attending the 2017 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards pose on a bridge in Central Park.

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## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Choice Partners Annual Nutrition Expo debuts new products to area schools**

**View photos:** <https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20171025-Food/G0000XWrt7j1VCzl/C0000aw4qJJICG0M> (password is hcde1889)

Oct. 26, 2017 - Choice Partners, Harris County Department of Education's purchasing cooperative, hosted its annual School Nutrition Expo on Wednesday at Humble Civic Center. The event featured more than 130 food and equipment vendors, making it the largest in the program's history.

"We're proud to see this event growing so that we can continue to give students and nutrition directors broader choices that meet all guidelines and taste great," said Trisha Jensen, assistant director, HCDE Choice Partners.

More than 230 students from area school districts showed up to taste-test foods, letting school district nutrition directors know what they liked for the school cafeteria. Students came from Katy, Spring Branch, Columbia-Brazoria, Galena Park, Crosby and Cleveland.

"I come every year to find out about new products," said Gail Stotler, nutrition director, Fort Bend ISD. Stotler added that this year she sampled some new chicken products that "look very good."

D'gusto Foods sent a representative for the second year in a row, this time to debut its new line of empanadas in corn dough.

"I came to introduce a new product: the empanadas, which come in beef, chicken and veggie," said Oscar Velsasquez, CEO, D'gusto Foods.

New products on display also included the "Selfie Pizza" from Alpha Foods, a locally-owned company based in Waller, Texas. Tasty Brands, a supplier of great-tasting school food that meets USDA regulations, also showcased its new mini ravioli dish.

-more-

As school nutrition directors evaluated quality, nutritional value and student tastes, Choice Partners gathered info needed to plan for future food contract purchases for school districts. Food is purchased annually by school districts in the Harris County area for more than 100 million student lunches through contracts available through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Choice Partners next event, its annual Vendor Exhibit featuring a variety of facilities, technology, supplies and services vendors, will take place from 10 a.m to 1 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27, at Norris Events Center at City Centre. For more information about Choice Partners, go to [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.005195. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org)

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June 15, 2017

## **Summertime is showtime, fun time for 10 area schools at annual Kids' Day at Hobby Center Event June 22**

Kids hit the big stage at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts at Zilkha Hall for the annual Kids' Day at Hobby Center June 22, 800 Bagby St. Rehearsals for 150 students begin at 1:30 p.m. and the curtains rise at 6 p.m. for the hour-long performance. The students in elementary and middle school attend afterschool programs funded through Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

The event gives students opportunities to learn from local professional artists in CASE after-school summer programs. Kids' Day at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts is the culminating event. Students perform or display their artistic works ranging from movie-making to stage combat to theatre at the Hobby Center.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. says the longstanding, fine arts, summer program helps bring attention to the importance fine arts plays in shaping a well-rounded individual, giving kids exposure to experiences with music, theatre, art and dance.

Artist professionals like Samuel Dinkins of Dinky Drums work with the students for several weeks in their summer afterschool programs. Other artists come from nonprofits such as FotoFest, Puppet Pizzazz, Ensemble Theatre and the Brazilian Arts Foundation.

School districts participating include Pasadena, Alief, Aldine, Clear Creek, Galena Park and Spring Branch.

"Hobby Center is a state-of-the art facility and the staff there allows our students to see the nuts-and-bolts as well as the glitz that accompanies theater and performance," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director. "Fine arts are an essential element in education, and by working with these afterschool fine arts vendors, students are able to explore the fine arts."

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May 4, 2017

## Teacher Appreciation: Retired lawyer Hubacker finds second career teaching ESL to adult students at Harris County Department of Education

English as a second language teacher Harriet Hubacker found her second calling 20 years ago after retiring as a lawyer. Realizing she wasn't ready for retirement, she returned to school for her linguistics degree with a goal to teach adult learners. On May 3, 2017, the Harris County Department of Education teacher received a bundle of bright flowers and a huge thank-you balloon from 30 of her students.

These are the moments teachers live for and remember forever.

Homemade cards of thanks tell the story of student gratitude. Her students knew few words in English before entering her classroom in the Spring Branch Community Center. Those once-foreign words are made familiar with each lesson. Slowly the words flow and sentences are formed, with subject-verb transition still a little unpolished.

"Been best teacher," said one card crafted by an older learner. "Teach me English and been patient," said another from student Fabiola Quintanilla. Other messages included "love my teacher" and "I am learning English."

A second surprise came as Telemundo 47 reporter/anchor Antonio Hernandez visited the classroom to televise the story about the students' appreciation for their teacher.

"I don't know where you are at right now, but I know where you can be," Hernandez said, relating a story of his struggles earlier in life.

"I don't know what your past is, but your future starts today," said Hernandez, "Come to school, learn a lot, and read everything. The more you learn, the better your life can be, and it starts right here."

**About HCDE Adult Education:** With a 30-year track record, HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to "learn to earn," including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties as HCDE serves over 8,000 adult learners. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information, access <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation> or 713-692-6216.

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## **Harris County Department of Education Tidwell Head Start program recruits students ages 3-5 for immediate openings**

Harris County Department of Education Head Start Tidwell Center located at 8302 John Ralston Rd. is recruiting students ages 3 to 5 years. The program ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

For Tidwell Head Start parent Kimberlly Coutino, the HCDE Head Start program is a blessing in a variety of ways. Coutino, a full-time college student, knows her daughter Kaily Morales is in good hands while she attends classes. In addition to the logistic help the program provides Coutino and her family, Kaily gains social and academic skills that prepare her for elementary school.

“Kaily has grown so much since being enrolled in Tidwell Head Start,” said Coutino. “Head Start has given her the opportunity to explore her creativity and take part in activities that will eventually transition into a solid foundation for the future.”

The Head Start program also emphasizes the important role parents play in their child’s education. In addition to being a full-time student, Coutino attends all parent committee meetings, family connection events and is the Policy Council Representative for the Tidwell center.

HCDE provides services through 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. Additional locations include Baytown, J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, La Porte, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto and Sheffield.

For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343. For information about community partnerships or donations, call Armando Rodriguez at (713) 696-2179 or email [arodriguez@hcde-texas.org](mailto:arodriguez@hcde-texas.org). Visit [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) for general information about HCDE Head Start and locations.

**About the HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership:** Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,330 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at seven community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and foremost teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE helps school districts in the state’s largest county meet the needs of uniquely challenged learners, directly serving students at their schools or one of four HCDE-operated campuses across the county. Learn about these services and more at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

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## HCDE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Carol Vaughn  
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281-660-9205

July 18, 2017

### **For third consecutive year, Harris County Department of Education trustees approve budget with tax rate below effective rate**

Working together with administration to keep property taxes low, Harris County Department of Education trustees on Tuesday approved a \$114 million total budget that will reduce the tax rate to \$.0051. The 2017-2018 budget supports HCDE's core services such as school-based therapy, special schools, after-school programming, Head Start, and adult education.

"I'm proud of this budget because it puts students first while maintaining our commitment to keeping property taxes low for the homeowners of Harris County," said Board President Louis Evans. "Our annual budget is an expression of our values as an elected board and as an administration. That's why it includes funding for three new projects: a ground-breaking recovery high school, a debate program for at-risk teens, and site improvements for Head Start and Adult Education facilities."

Property tax revenue, which amounts to about \$10 for the average homeowner annually, generates \$22.6 million of the overall budget. The rest of the budget is funded by grants, fees, and revenues from HCDE's purchasing cooperative.

This year, HCDE's budget includes funding for three new initiatives while holding the tax rate, which is officially adopted in September, below the effective rate for the third consecutive year:

- **County's first public recovery high school:** The budget includes funding for a public recovery high school to help students who have completed a substance abuse or dependency rehabilitation program. The school will be available to all 25 school districts in Harris County on a contractual basis and will serve 30 students when it opens in late 2017. HCDE will renovate a 20,000-square-foot HCDE school facility located in the Greenspoint area in north Houston at 11902 Spears Road.

- **CASE Debates, in partnership with Houston Urban Debate League:** The CASE Debates Initiative is a joint project between HCDE's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, and the Houston Urban Debate League, or HUDL. HUDL currently operates solely within Houston Independent School District, where the organization has a successful track record providing debate programs and camps. The HCDE partnership expands the HUDL model to serve at-risk teens from 20 high schools in five Harris County school districts.
- **Capital improvements:** The budget includes facility improvements needed at the Baytown Head Start center, which served 176 students in 2016-2017. Also included are improvements to the Adult Education Crosstimbers center, which is expanding its focus to include workforce development.

Several of HCDE's core services support special needs students from 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE school-based therapists provide 100 percent of therapy services to special needs students in eight area school districts, including Cy-Fair ISD, Houston ISD, Katy ISD, Spring Branch ISD, and Spring ISD. Fees to school districts have not increased for three consecutive years and remain below the industry average, made possible by the property tax allocation. In all, more than 7,700 special education students are served on 550 campuses throughout Harris County.

Additionally, HCDE operates four schools designed for students with severe emotional disturbances and impairments, and adjudicated youth who need intensive counseling. One-hundred percent of Harris County school districts pursue HCDE contracts, whether through tax-revenue-subsidized seats in special schools, therapy services, or the Choice Partners purchasing cooperative.

**About Harris County Department of Education:** HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax rate of \$.0052. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. HCDE also operates four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated youth who require a low student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. The organization is governed by an elected board of seven trustees and has 1,060 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).



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## **Whole Kids Foundation Grant of \$2,000 to Fund Veggie/Fruit Garden at AB School West**

Gardening is in the works for AB School West as it was recently awarded a \$2,000 School Garden Grant from Whole Kids Foundation through the Education Foundation of Harris County. The funds will be used for food and nutrition education at the school and provides for plants and tools for gardening. The goal of the program is to promote health literacy and healthy lifestyles for 50 students and families, along with school staff. By growing fruits and veggies, the students gain a better understanding of where their food comes from. They also gain positive food attitudes, says Dr. Victor Keys, AB School West principal.