

# THE CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education for the HCDE Board of Trustees

WEEK OF April 26, 2021

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 29

## EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

### TOP STORIES

**Choice Partners Engages Members in Virtual Workshop**  
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**April Board Presentations**  
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**HCDE In the News**  
*p.4*



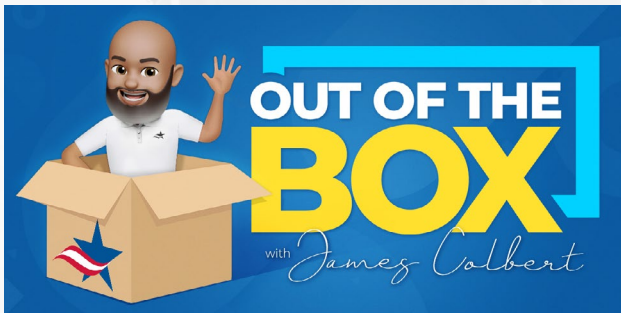


## Of Note...



As you know, every spring our staff participates in a Culture and Climate survey. The results of this survey are always eye-opening and I personally read all the comments. We take these results seriously and use them to inform our future actions and plans.

This year we saw that some of our divisions felt they were not well informed of events, activities and initiatives in the system, despite consistent staff communications. To offset this “silo” effect, this week I am launching a monthly message in our staff newsletter called *Out of the Box*. This message, which will be in the HUB the last Friday of each month, is designed to keep employees informed of not only our ongoing initiatives, but any topics and points of interest in public education.



Communications created a personalized Bitmoji for me for this new endeavor and I look forward to having fun with this character and having him support events and activities through individualized attire and accessories (ie. a pink ribbon for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in February).

I started the week with my Executive Leadership Team and discussions about ongoing initiatives. On Tuesday I met with three representatives from Young Learners, a local charter school program that has partnered with several head start programs, school districts and

non-profit organizations - including HCDE, to provide additional teachers in the classroom. I had a great conversation with these educators about potential future partnerships to support our youngest learners.

On Wednesday I continued with the pre-K theme, reviewing campus schematics for our new Coolwood Head Start building. I am excited to upgrade our current facility to one exemplifies our commitment to high quality programming and instruction.

On Wednesday afternoon I toured CyFair ISD's Berry Center as a possible location for our Convocation in August. As I mentioned last week, I have decided to hold our annual staff meeting in person this year. The location we have held it at previously simply is not large enough to provide for social distancing should we need it. So, to allow for maximum flexibility, we are exploring other venues and the Berry Center arena provides us with a great space that can accommodate spaced out chairs or regular banquet seating, whichever we prefer. I will continue to monitor the conditions of the virus in the county as well as perceptions among staff and will make a decision about the final set up before August.

Yesterday was filled with several meetings and today I met with the board hiring committee regarding the board secretary position. Thank you to the committee for your feedback and involvement in this process. I am confident we have a good pool of candidates who can effectively support the board in your work and communication and I look forward to working with you to select the right person for the job.

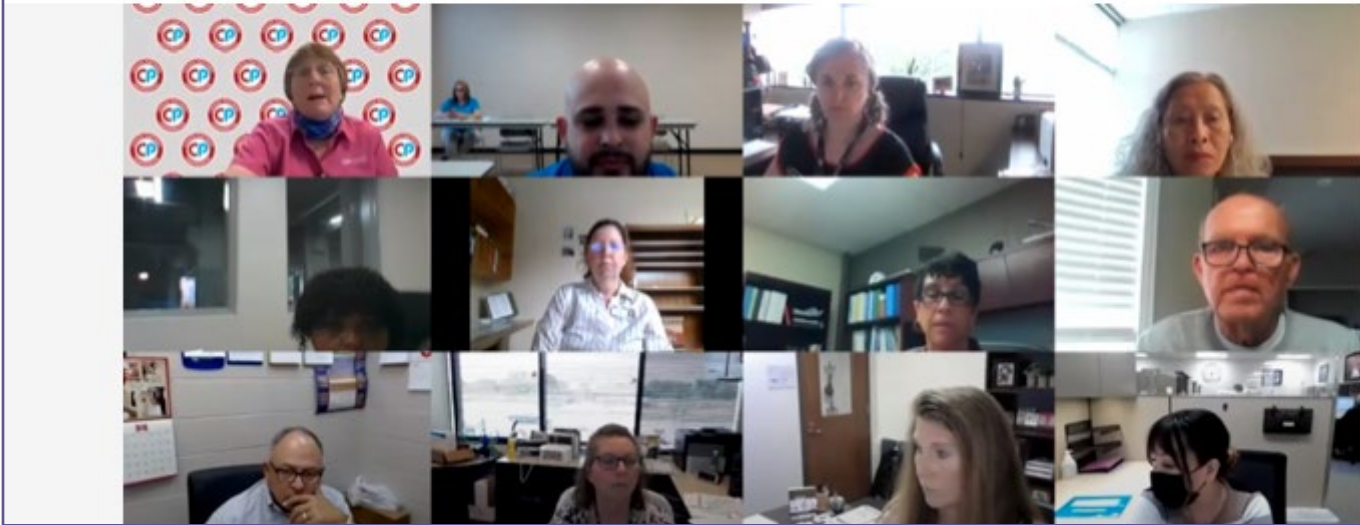
Have a great weekend.



# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### Maximizing Member Benefits



#### Choice Partners engages members nationwide in virtual workshop

The Choice Partners co-op hosted a virtual, members-only workshop on April 14 for its largest recorded audience to date with more than 400 registrants. Training was provided to explore the details of using the job order contracting (JOC) process, navigating the Choice Partners website, and learning how the co-op legally and competitively bids contracts that are compliant with federal, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) requirements.


The information presented in the virtual workshop demonstrated to all members how they could maximize their member benefits for a faster, easier procurement process.

Attendees from across the country represented all membership

venues, from municipalities and counties to school districts, universities, and colleges.

After the presentation, participants were provided with a survey that provided suggestions for future topics such as shortcuts to use the supply catalog, tutorial/instructional videos on various topics, and child nutrition contract information.

Any member that completed the survey had the opportunity to receive CEU credits by requesting them in the comment section of the survey. No-cost credits from training are a win-win for all. If you missed the workshop, you may find the PowerPoint and video on the Choice Partners website at [choicepartners.org/presentations](http://choicepartners.org/presentations). ■



#### HCDE, A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY

Harris County Department of Education

HCDE is located in Harris County, Texas; it is not a County agency.

HCDE is a governmental agency serving Harris County schools since 1889.


Taxing Authority




#### CONTRACTS



FOOD/CAFETERIA | TECHNOLOGY | COMMODITIES | SERVICES | FACILITIES



#### GROWING YOUR BUSINESS



- Where do you begin? What is your target?
- Members vs. nonmembers?
- Get referrals from existing members including within the same organization.
- Can you collaborate with a Choice Partners contract holder?

# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### April Board Presentations

This month you enjoyed the Head Start and Records Management board presentations. To view the presentations, follow the links below. ■

#### Records Management

##### Data Highlights



Number of electronic/web orders completed

**3,700**



Transportation stops

**2,612**



Boxes destroyed

**8,683**



Number of manual work orders completed

**828**



New boxes received

**8,742**



Number of images scanned

**584,985**



Bin rotation

**1,084**

▲ [Click Image to View Records Management Presentation](#)



▲ [Click Image to View Head Start Presentation](#)



# SCHOOL BUS

civil + structural  
ENGINEER

CCHANNELS ▾ CONTINUING EDUCATION ▾ MAGAZINE SUBMISSIONS ▾ EVENTS ENGINEERING DRONE VIDEO OF THE YEAR

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Structures + Buildings

Harris County Department of Education Selects LAN as Program Manager for Three Capital Improvement Projects

April 27, 2021 413

(HOUSTON) The Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) has selected Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc. (LAN) as program manager for three major projects in its capital improvement plan. The \$36.1 million improvements include a new adult education facility, a new middle school, and interior renovations to the existing Ronald Reagan Administration Building.

"HCDE is a world-class organization, and it is important that our buildings reflect the standard and quality of our services," said James Colbert, Harris County Department of Education superintendent. "We are excited to see how these renovated facilities positively impact students, staff and the community."

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**Education**

## New Harris County adult, alternative education facilities to be added as buildings age

Email Share in Share Tweet Print Order Reprints



The new Harris County Department of Education adult education facility.  
CRE8 ARCHITECTS

 By **Laura Gillespie** – Reporter, Houston Business Journal  
Apr 27, 2021, 2:29pm EDT

**IN THIS ARTICLE**

**K-12 Education**  
Topic

The Harris County Department of Education, which handles adult education, after school care and other alternative education, will build two new schools and



**VENETIA PEACOCK**  
DEPARTAMENTO DE EDUCACIÓN DEL CONDADO HARRIS

TELEMUNDO HOUSTON KATY 84° 5:05

Senior Director of Head Start Venetia Peacock was featured in a Telemundo Houston news story on Wednesday regarding President Biden's proposal for universal Pre-K, which he announced during his address to Congress.

**◀ Click Image to View Story**

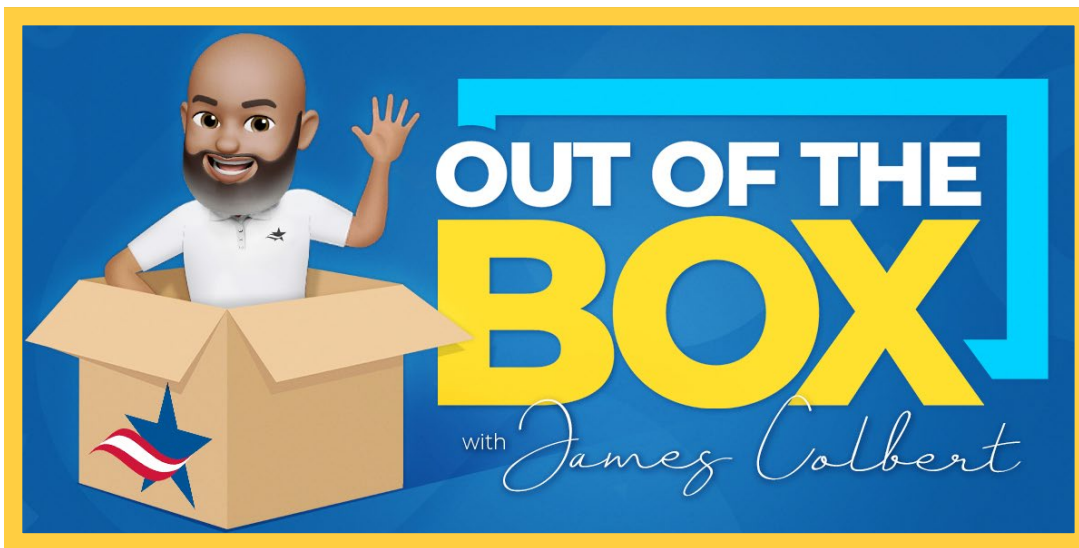
# SYSTEMIC

## ACHIEVEMENT...*WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT*

This week the following Board expectations were met:

**Superintendent Objective B: Organizational Morale**

- Creates an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate.
- Seeks systematically to improve the climate by obtaining and utilizing feedback from employees of the Department.



This week I launched, “Out of the Box,” a monthly message that will be included in the HUB, our weekly newsletter that informs staff about what’s going on in HCDE. Feedback from our annual Culture and Climate Survey indicated employees’ desire to be well informed on all things concerning HCDE, regardless of whether it was related to their content area. This will be a great opportunity for me to directly provide updates to major initiatives within the organization and give them a peek at upcoming events and activities. The message will appear in The HUB on the last Friday of each month and may be in written or video format.

I am using the first installment to share my decision to hold our annual staff meeting, scheduled for August, in person. The importance of bringing employees together in celebration of their service and accomplishments cannot be underestimated. One of the highlights of the year is recognizing employees for their years of service and it is always more meaningful to do that face-to-face. The fellowship Convocation provides sets a positive tone for the year and is instrumental to the success of HCDE.

By maintaining an open and transparent environment for the exchange of ideas and direction, I am meeting the expectation to systematically improve the culture and climate of HCDE.

### HCDE BOARD

#### Board President

Eric Dick

#### Vice President

Danny Norris

#### Board Members

David W. Brown

Richard Cantu

Erica Davis

Andrea Duhon

Amy Hinojosa

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### May 14

Young Women’s  
Leadership  
Conference

May 14

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

#### May 18

Board Meeting

1 p.m.