

Heads Up



WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

TRADUCCIÓN EN ESPAÑOL INCLUIDA - PAGE 7



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Welcome Back

In the midst of these trying times, we recently received some great news! We have been awarded the funds to build a new Coolwood Head Start facility, which we will start construction of this year. Coolwood is one of our older facilities and has been on our replacement plan for 10 years. After Hurricane Harvey dealt the campus considerable damage, we were fortunate enough to qualify for disaster relief funding.

We survived the fall semester and all the challenges it presented – even COVID-19 could not keep us down! As we start the spring semester, there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel. However, we should not let down our guard. I urge everyone to continue to follow the HCDE Head Start guidelines, consistent with CDC's, so we can keep our students, staff and families safe.

Looking ahead, we will start our virtual SuperMENTor program this month. It's a great program that brings value to our students, plus the students are excited about having these SuperMENTors. Mentors will be reading and interacting with students virtually.



Venetia L. Peacock with Journee Rose

I am really proud and excited with the engagement we have had with Policy Council through the Zoom meetings. The meetings have provided an opportunity to connect with more parents. Parents, it's really important to stay engaged for the entire year. We will find ways to keep up the pace and make it fun. We want to encourage parents to continue to connect with us through Zoom at every level, to ensure we meet our program goals

Finally, I would like to thank our leadership team for coming together and creating an awesome COVID-19 plan. A special shout-out to Gulshan Rahman, my COVID-19 Czar, for handling the daily onslaught of calls and communication about the different issues that had to be addressed.

Stay safe so that we can finish the school year STRONG.

— VENETIA L. PEACOCK





And the Responsible Parenting Award goes to ...



Fifth Ward dad John Rose III was the recipient of the 2020 Bates Collision Centers Responsible Parenting Award, which brings with it a refurbished car. Rose, the first dad to receive the annual award, was presented with a 2010 Ford Escape and other gifts Dec. 17 at Bates Collision Centers' Baytown location.

"This'll be my first car," Rose said. "I'm already active in her life, but this means I can be even more active."

Rose said just being able to drive his daughter to school every day will be so much easier for them both, as will the drive to and from his daughter's mom with whom he co-parents.

Sponsored by Lee and Leila Bates, the owners of Bates Collision Centers, the award brings together employees, family, friends and the community who

donate their time and money to refurbish the car and pay for car insurance - courtesy of AMI Insurance, gas cards, oil changes and needed household items.

"One of the things our committee talked about was how transparent he was in sharing with us how he got into some trouble but turned his life around and is trying to be the best father he can be," said Leila Bates about why they selected Rose.

Though he holds down a full-time job as a delivery driver for Amazon, Rose, dad to 4 year-old Journee, finds time to chair the Fifth Ward Parent Committee and is helping to raise funds for technology. Rose admitted to going "off track" when he was younger but turned his life around when his daughter was born.

"I want to express my gratitude to the Head Start family and especially our center," he said. "They have done a whole lot to help me out with this process."

Not content to rest on his laurels, Rose, who lives with his mom, hopes to earn a place on Amazon's truck driving course and work towards getting his own place.

"He has drive and ambition," Bates said "But he's also making his daughter a priority and carving out time to be involved in her education. That demonstrates to her the importance of an education."

The award continues a 20-year tradition of helping families with transportation.

"I'm already active in her life, but this means I can be even more active."

— John Rose III

HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. reads to students at the Humble Head Start Center as part of the SuperMENTor reading program



SuperMENTor literacy program calls for male volunteers



The SuperMENTor program kicks off this month with virtual live readings at all campuses and will continue on a monthly basis through April.

Though the program, which involves male volunteers reading to students to promote literacy, has been adapted to adhere to COVID-19 guidelines, the enthusiasm to read to the children has not been dampened.

"I am honored in this way to be able to have this opportunity to be a positive influence in someone's life," said Antonio Lozano, a SuperMENTor at Barrett Station.

Lozano, District Manager of Field Operations at TRIOSE Inc., is one of several SuperMENTors who will continue with the program this semester, but there is a need for more volunteers. Debbie Jones, Assistant Center Manager who coordinates the program at Channelview, said so far they have two volunteers but need two more.

The virtual readings last about 30 minutes, after which the class teacher will do an activity related to the book with the children. Jones said a trial run in November with Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services at HCDE, went smoothly. Despite the limitations of the virtual readings, she expects the students will enjoy and learn from this new experience.

"This program allows children to have a connection with men that they might not otherwise get at home," Jones said. "They will see that men play an important role in education, and for the men it gives them a connection to children they might not have had."





COVID response effort wide reaching

Parents should expect all COVID-19 safety practices to continue for the foreseeable future with the exception of class size. When possible, there will be no more than 14 students per room to minimize spread of the virus and enable social distancing.

"We don't know yet when the COVID-19 vaccine will be available for our staff, students and families," said Gulshan Rahman, who heads HCDE Head Start's COVID-19 response effort. "When it is available, it will be very important for everyone to get vaccinated."

In the meantime, it is critical for everyone to continue practicing basic preventative measures: washing hands frequently, wearing a mask, social distancing and avoid ing large gatherings. Each Center has its own COVID-19 team, responsible for screening students, escorting them to and from the classrooms and monitoring them throughout the day.

Rahman's work involves overseeing the federal, state and local requirements regarding COVID-19, the electronic Student Symptom Assessment, contact tracing and follow-up with campus leadership. Contact tracing is key to combatting the spread of the virus. Should a center have a positive case, those identified as a "close contact" are notified, while ensuring reporting requirements are met. Parents and staff at the affected center are also notified.

"We want to provide timelines and information quickly, so that parents can make the arrangements they need to," said Rahman, also the Assistant Director of Compliance and Family Services. "We know that when a child has to stay home, the whole family is impacted."

Lisa Boone, Assistant Director of Education and Operations, and her staff keep on top of staffing levels as the number of students fluctuates due to COVID-19 related absences. Staff and students have to stay out of school between 10 and 14 days, depending on their specific situation.

Parents urged to fill out daily COVID survey

Center Managers want to remind parents that they should continue to fill out the daily COVID-19 survey, now that the spring semester is under way. Coolwood Center Manager Valerie Stephens and Fifth Ward Center Manager Traci Houston urged parents to be honest and accurate when filling out the survey, which must be submitted electronically each day. Paper surveys are only accepted if the system is down.

"We have to be strict and have parents understand that we have a system in place to safeguard all the children and staff," Stephens said.

The survey is designed to speed up entry into the centers; protect students and staff by limiting the spread of the virus; and provide important data. If a child exhibits any of the symptoms listed on the survey parents should not bring their child to school. If a child exhibits any symptoms while at school, parents will be called to pick up their child immediately.

"Parents have to listen to their children and pay attention to their children's symptoms," Houston said. "If they have asthma for instance that's okay, but combined with a light temperature it's a different matter."



Child health screenings more vital than ever

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic seems to have put some parents off from taking their child for regular well-child doctor's visit and dental check-ups, but missing these comes with its own set of risks. EHSCCP Health Coordinator Raul Zavaleta said babies and children need to see the doctor in person for physical exams, lab tests, hearing and vision screenings, immunizations and to ensure they are meeting developmental milestones.

"Now more than ever it is important to stay up-to-date on well-child visits, immunizations and routine dental visits," Zavaleta said. "There's no way to fully prevent the spread of any virus, but there are ways to keep young children safe and healthy during COVID-19."

Zavaleta said children should have their first dental visit by their first birthday, and dental check-ups every six months thereafter. Parents should contact their child's healthcare provider if they have any concerns or questions.

Parent-teacher partnership lays foundation for success

Not only does the parent-teacher partnership have a powerful impact on a child, especially in early education, it also has a powerful impact on parents. Research shows children are more likely to be successful in school; developmental delays and health problems are detected earlier; and parents acquire additional knowledge and skills. But even the most involved parents need guidance on what they can do at home with their child to help reinforce what's happening in the classroom. The monthly School at Home Calendar is one such tool that helps parents in this area.

Introduced 3 years ago, the calendar is a way to document the time parents spend at home working with their child on school readiness goals, and it helps support HCDE Head Start through matching funds. Parents are encouraged to do simple

activities with their child each evening to reinforce what their child is learning in the classroom.

"I have helped parents in my classrooms understand the School at Home activities by giving examples of the activities and through Parent-Teacher conferences on Teams," said Ruby Blue, a teacher at J.D. Walker.

Education Services Coordinator Patricia Kuskos said parents have welcomed the calendars and have been eager to work on the activities with their child. She said the calendars help build a stronger connection between parents and teachers, since both are working towards the same goal — school readiness. Blue added that especially during this time of virtual meetings it's important that parents and teachers establish regular and meaningful communication.



Parents can stay engaged through virtual connections

Campuses are renewing their efforts to boost Parent Engagement as the spring semester ramps up. Scheduled are Parent-Teacher conferences, home visits, Family Connection meetings and various other opportunities to meet with teachers and other parents. Though they will all be virtual, educators said it's more important than ever to stay connected during these challenging times.

"It's important for parents to be involved in their child's education from the start, so they are aware of how their child is doing in school, and they can advocate for their child now and throughout their education," said Family Services Coordinator Marissol Montalvo.

Sandra Cardenas, whose 3 year-old son Jose attends Pugh, said the virtual Family Connection meetings last

semester informed her about happenings at Pugh and provided ideas for activities to do with her son at home.

"It's been good for us," Cardenas said. "My little boy loves to read — I was learning how to introduce books to him and read to him, so that he is engaged."

Montalvo acknowledged the challenges parents face in staying connected virtually. Some parents lack access to reliable technology, or don't have time because of work schedules, or are dealing with older children at home, not to mention say the stress of job loss. Montalvo is hopeful that parents will plug in when they can. She said Parent Engagement is a win-win. Children with involved parents are more likely to be successful in the classroom, and involved parents help increase enrollment in the Head Start program.



Recruitment for 2021-22 poses challenges

Recruiting families for the 2021-22 school year has its challenges, but the hope is to boost enrollment by reaching out to families in other ways.

Family Services Coordinator Michele Nwokobia said they are sending mail-outs and using virtual platforms to let everyone know about Head Start. She said they are connecting with current and former parents and enlisting the help of Policy Council and community members to spread the word about the program, including the newly opened Early Head Start programs at La Porte and Tidwell.

“The solution is to remain optimistic and flexible, while searching continuously for creative ways to inform families about the program,” Nwokobia said.

Nwokobia said they have reduced class size to accommodate COVID-19 safety measures, and concerns about safety have reduced enrollment.

“Our goal is to have 14 students per classroom when possible,” she said.

Nwokobia hopes to assuage the fears of parents. She said centers are adhering to CDC safety guidelines, have fewer students in class, practice social distancing and conduct all parent meetings virtually. Only students and staff are allowed on the campuses. Sanitation stations are outside each classroom, and most classrooms have sinks.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 18Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (ALL CAMPUSES CLOSED)
- 19-31Teacher Home Visits
- 26Policy Council meeting

FEBRUARY

- 1-4Parent/Child Food Science Fair
- 1-8Teacher Home Visits
- 15Staff Development day (ALL CAMPUSES)
- 22Policy Council meeting
- 26Staff work day

MARCH

- 5Staff work day
- 8-12Baytown & JD Walker Spring Break
- 15-19Spring Break (ALL OTHER HEAD START CAMPUSES)
- 23Policy Council meeting
- 29Staff Development day



APRIL

- 2Spring Holiday (ALL CAMPUSES CLOSED)
- 9Early dismissal (HEAD START CAMPUSES)
- 12-16Week of the Young Child
- 15Art Show
- 19-30Frog Street Press Student Assessment
- 20Policy Council meeting

MAY

- 7Staff work day
- 13SuperMENTor celebration
- 10-25Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 18Policy Council meeting
- 28Early dismissal (HEAD START CAMPUSES)
- 28Last day of school (HEAD START CAMPUSES)
- 31Memorial Day

Check with each Center Manager for details of these and other happenings, as dates may vary for each center

HeadsUp



WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

ESQUINA DEL DIRECTOR

Bienvenidos

En medio de estos tiempos difíciles, ¡hemos recibido una gran noticia! Hemos recibido los fondos para construir una nueva instalación de Head Start in Coolwood la cual comenzaremos a construir este año.

Mientras tanto, aunque hay luz al final del túnel en el frente de COVID-19, animo a todos a que continúen siguiendo las pautas de HCDE Head Start para que podamos mantener seguros a nuestros estudiantes, personal y familias.

Comenzaremos nuestro programa de SuperMENTor virtual este mes. Los mentores leerán e interactuarán con los estudiantes virtualmente. El compromiso con el Consejo Político a través de las reuniones de Zoom ha ido bien. Esperamos que más padres se conecten con nosotros este semestre a través de Zoom, para garantizar que logremos los objetivos de nuestro programa.

Finalmente, me gustaría agradecer a nuestro equipo de liderazgo por crear un increíble plan COVID-19. Cuidense para que podamos terminar el año escolar FUERTES.

— VENETIA L. PEACOCK



Venetia L.
Peacock y
Leila Bates





Y el Premio a la Crianza Responsable es para ...

El padre de Fifth Ward, John Rose III, recibió el premio Bates Collision Centers Responsible Parenting Award 2020, que trae consigo un automóvil renovado. Rose recibió un Ford Escape 2010 y otros obsequios el 17 de diciembre en la ubicación de Bates Collision Centers Baytown.

Patrocinado por Lee y Leila Bates, propietarios de Bates Collision Center, el premio reúne a empleados, familiares, amigos y la comunidad que donan su tiempo y dinero para renovar el automóvil y pagar el seguro del automóvil, cortesía de AMI Insurance, tarjetas de gasolina, cambios de aceite y artículos domésticos necesarios.

Aunque tiene un trabajo de tiempo completo como conductor de entrega para Amazon, Rose, el padre de Journee, de 4 años, encuentra tiempo para presidir el Comité de Padres del Quinto Distrito y está ayudando a recaudar fondos para la tecnología. Rose admitió haberse "descarriado" cuando era más joven, pero cambió su vida cuando nació su hija.

"Una de las cosas de las que habló nuestro comité fue lo transparente que fue al compartir con nosotros cómo se metió en problemas, pero cambió su vida y está tratando de ser el mejor padre que puede ser", dijo Leila Bates sobre por qué seleccionaron a Rose





Gary Whitt, Bank of Texas, leyendo a los estudiantes el año pasado en el Campus Head Start de Fifth Ward



El programa de alfabetización SuperMENTor convoca a voluntarios masculinos

El programa SuperMENTor comienza este mes con lecturas virtuales en vivo en todos los campus y continuará mensualmente hasta abril. Sin embargo, para llegar a todos los estudiantes necesitamos que más voluntarios masculinos se inscriban en el programa, el que implica leer a los estudiantes para promover la alfabetización.

Debbie Jones, directora asistente del centro que coordina el programa en Channelview, dijo que ya tienen dos voluntarios pero necesitan dos más. Se espera que las lecturas virtuales duren unos 30 minutos. Tras la lectura, el maestro encargado realizará una actividad relacionada con el libro. Jones dijo que una prueba en noviembre con el Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Asistente de Superintendente de Servicios Comerciales de HCDE, se logró sin problemas.

A pesar de las limitaciones de las lecturas virtuales, Jones espera que los estudiantes disfruten y aprendan de esta nueva experiencia.

“Este programa permite que los niños tengan una conexión con los hombres de la familia que de otro modo no tendrían en casa”, dijo Jones. “Verán que los hombres desempeñan un papel importante en la educación y para los hombres, esto les da una conexión con los hijos que tal vez no hayan tenido”.





El esfuerzo para responder al COVID es de amplio alcance

Con el semestre de primavera en marcha, los padres verán que todas las precauciones de seguridad contra el COVID-19 continuarán en el futuro previsible con la excepción del número de estudiantes por clase. No habrá más de 14 estudiantes por salón para minimizar la propagación y permitir el distanciamiento social para los estudiantes y el personal.

Cada centro tiene su propio equipo COVID-19, responsable de la selección y seguimiento de los estudiantes. Gulshan Rahman, Subdirector de Cumplimiento y Servicios Familiares, encabeza el esfuerzo de respuesta COVID-19 de HCDE Head Start. El trabajo implica supervisar los requisitos federales, estatales y locales relacionados con COVID-19, la Evaluación electrónica de síntomas del estudiante, el rastreo de contactos y el seguimiento con los líderes del campus. Rahman dijo que es vital que los padres estén informados para que sepan cuánto tiempo deben mantener a sus hijos fuera de la escuela si han sido afectados por el virus.

Lisa Boone, Subdirectora de Educación y Operaciones, y su personal se mantienen en los niveles más altos de personal a medida que la cantidad de estudiantes fluctúa debido a las ausencias relacionadas con COVID-19. El personal y los estudiantes deben permanecer fuera de la escuela entre 10 y 14 días, dependiendo de la situación.

Para rastrear contactos, si un campus tiene un caso positivo, Rahman trabaja con el personal para determinar quién está involucrado. Aquellos identificados como "contacto cercano" son notificados, al igual que los padres y el personal del centro afectado.

Se anima a los padres a completar la encuesta de COVID diaria

Se insta a los padres a completar la encuesta de COVID diaria con honestidad y precisión a medida que avanza el semestre de primavera. La encuesta debe enviarse electrónicamente. Las encuestas en papel solo se aceptan si el sistema no funciona.

La encuesta está diseñada para acelerar la entrada a los centros, proteger a los estudiantes y al personal y proporcionar datos importantes. Si un niño presenta alguno de los síntomas enumerados en la encuesta, los padres no deben traer a su hijo a la escuela. Si un niño presenta algún síntoma mientras está en la escuela, se llamará a los padres para que recojan a su niño inmediatamente.

Los administradores del centro se comprometieron a continuar comunicándose con los padres y a educarlos sobre la importancia de completar la encuesta todos los días para cumplir con las pautas del CDC y mitigar la propagación del COVID-19.



Los exámenes de salud infantil son más importantes que nunca

El no llevar a sus hijos a las visitas regulares al médico y a chequeos dentales debido a la pandemia de COVID-19 tiene sus propios riesgos. El coordinador de salud de EHSCCP, Raúl Zavaleta, dijo que los bebés y los niños deben ver al médico en persona para exámenes físicos, pruebas de laboratorio, exámenes de audición y visión, vacunas y para asegurarse de que están cumpliendo con los hitos del desarrollo. Es importante mantenerse al día con todas las vacunas recomendadas, así como con la vacuna opcional contra la influenza. Zavaleta dijo que los niños deben tener su primera visita dental antes de su primer cumpleaños y chequeos a los 6 meses a partir de entonces. Si los padres tienen alguna inquietud o pregunta, deben comunicarse con el proveedor de atención médica de su hijo.

Montalvo reconoció los desafíos que enfrentan los padres para mantenerse conectados virtualmente. Algunos padres no tienen acceso a tecnología confiable, no tienen tiempo debido a los horarios de trabajo o están tratando con niños mayores en casa que tienen tareas escolares más complejas. Eso sin mencionar el estrés de la pérdida del trabajo.

La asociación de padres y maestros forma las bases para el éxito

La asociación entre padres y maestros no solo tiene un impacto esencial en un estudiante especialmente en la educación temprana, sino que también tiene un impacto esencial en los padres. Las investigaciones muestran que los niños tienen más probabilidades de tener éxito en el aula a largo plazo cuando los retrasos en el desarrollo y los problemas de salud en los niños se detectan temprano y los padres adquieren conocimientos y habilidades adicionales para reconocerlos.

Incluso los padres más involucrados quieren orientación en las actividades que pueden hacer en casa con su hijo, para

reforzar lo que aprenden en el aula. El Calendario de la Escuela en Casa es una de esas herramientas que ayuda a los padres en esta área. Introducido hace 3 años, este Calendario es una forma de documentar el tiempo que los padres pasan en casa trabajando con sus hijos en las metas de preparación escolar y ayuda a apoyar a HCDE Head Start a través de fondos de contrapartida. La coordinadora de servicios educativos, Patricia Kuskos, dijo que los calendarios ayudan a construir una conexión más fuerte entre padres y maestros ya que ambos están trabajando hacia el mismo objetivo: la preparación escolar de los estudiantes.



La participación virtual de los padres es vital

Los centros están renovando sus esfuerzos para impulsar la participación de los padres a medida que avanza el semestre de primavera. Están programadas conferencias de padres y maestros, visitas domiciliarias, reuniones de Conexión familiar y varias otras oportunidades para reunirse con maestros y padres. Aunque todas las reuniones serán virtuales, es más importante que nunca permanecer conectados durante estos tiempos.

“Es importante que los padres se involucren en la educación de sus hijos desde el principio, para que estén al tanto del avance de sus hijos en la escuela y puedan

apoyar a su hijo ahora y durante toda su educación”, dijo la Coordinadora de Servicios Familiares Marissol Montalvo.

Montalvo reconoció los desafíos que enfrentan los padres para mantenerse conectados virtualmente. Algunos padres no tienen acceso a tecnología confiable, no tienen tiempo debido a los horarios de trabajo o están tratando con niños mayores en casa que tienen tareas escolares más complejas. Eso sin mencionar el estrés de la pérdida del trabajo.

“Tenemos que unirnos para ayudar y apoyar a los estudiantes tanto como podamos”, dijo Montalvo.



La inscripción para el año 2021-22 viene con desafíos

Integrar nuevas familias al programa para el año escolar 2021-22 tiene sus desafíos. La esperanza es aumentar la inscripción usando otros medios. La coordinadora de servicios familiares, Michele Nwokobia, dijo que se están enviando correos y utilizando plataformas virtuales para dar a conocer a Head Start. También nos estamos conectando con todos los padres actuales y quienes ya se han retirado del programa, igualmente estamos solicitando la ayuda del Consejo Político y miembros de la comunidad para difundir el programa e incluir los programas Early Head Start recientemente abiertos en La Porte y Tidwell.

El tamaño reducido de las clases para adaptarse a las medidas de seguridad COVID-19 y las preocupaciones sobre la seguridad han afectado en gran medida la inscripción, pero Nwokobia espera aliviar los temores de los futuros padres. Ella dijo que los centros se están adheriendo a las pautas sugeridas por el CDC, tienen menos estudiantes en clase, practican el distanciamiento social y realizan todas las reuniones de padres de manera virtual. Las estaciones de saneamiento están fuera de cada salón de clases y la mayoría de los salones tienen lavamanos.



MARQUEN SUS CALENDARIOS

- ENERO**
 18Dia de Martin Luther King, Jr. (**Centros cerrados**)
 19-31Visitas de Maestros
 26Reunión del Consejo Político

- FEBRERO**
 1-4Feria de Ciencia de Comidas para padres/estudiantes
 1-8Visitas de Maestros
 15Dia de Desarrollo profesional (**Centros cerrados**)
 22Reunión del Consejo Político
 26Dia de Trabajo del Personal

- MARZO**
 5Dia de Trabajo del Personal
 8-12Baytown & JD Walker Vacaciones de Primavera
 15-19Vacaciones de Primavera (**ALL OTHER HEAD START**)
 23Reunión del Consejo Político
 29Dia de Desarrollo profesional



- ABRIL**
 2Dia Festivo de Primavera (**Centros cerrados**)
 9.....Dia termina temprano (**HEAD START CAMPUSES**)
 12-16Semana del niño pequeño
 15Show de Artes
 19-30Frog Street Press Evaluaciones de estudiantes
 20Reunión del Consejo Político

- MAYO**
 7Dia de Trabajo del Personal
 13Celebración de SuperMENTor
 10-25Conferencia de Padres y Maestros
 18Reunión del Consejo Político
 28.....Dia termina temprano (**HEAD START CAMPUSES**)
 28Ultimo día de escuela (**HEAD START CAMPUSES**)
 31Memorial Day

Revise los detalles con su centro ya que las fechas podrían variar.

CENTER DIRECTORY

AREA I HEAD START

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HCDE Head Start Mission and Vision: To improve school readiness for children, families and the community | To create a learning environment of excellence dedicated to positively impacting our children, families, employees, community partners and society | Para mejorar la preparación para la escuela para niños, familias y la comunidad | Para crear un ambiente de aprendizaje excelente dedicado a impactar a los niños, familias, empleados, socios de la comunidad y la sociedad.

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