

# The Connector

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

*From the office of* **JAMES COLBERT, JR. | SUPERINTENDENT**



## Of Note...

It is always a pleasure for me to spend time on school campuses observing instruction. This week, I visited our Academic and Behavior Center-East (ABC East) where I had the opportunity to visit six classrooms. I was impressed with our school administrators, faculty, and staff and their abilities to serve the population of students on campus. I will continue to make regular rounds to all of our facilities.

I have been formally placed on the Executive Committee of All Kids Alliance. I anticipate us having a representation in education from cradle to career on behalf of learners across Harris County. All Kids Alliance is helping communities across Greater Houston build brighter futures for their children and youth. I will keep you apprised of future developments related to our new association with All Kids Alliance.

Please be reminded of Tuesday's Subcommittee Meetings as well as the February Board Meeting at 1:00 p.m. A Policy Committee Meeting will take place at 11:00 a.m. and the Government Relations Committee will be held at noon. Both committee meetings will be held in the Small Board Conference Room on the 4th Floor.

**Important Note:** On Tuesday, prior to the Board Meeting, Trustees Sumners and Wolfe are reminded that the photographer will be onsite to capture their official board photographs to be hung on the Board Portrait Wall. **Trustees Sumners and Wolfe will have their photographs taken at 12:30 p.m. A photograph of all Board Members will be taken at 12:45 p.m.** This new portrait will replace the existing portrait.

On Wednesday of next week, I will be attending a University Interscholastic League (UIL) meeting in Austin where I serve as Vice President of the State Executive Committee. I will also be attending the Texas Association of Black School Educators (TABSE) Meeting where I will be presenting to aspiring head coaches and superintendents. This will be the third year I have presented at this state association of educators' conference.

In closing, I am excited about tomorrow's Board Retreat! The retreat will be held from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Kingwood Country Club, located at 1700 Lake Kingwood Trail in Kingwood, Texas (77339). **Please use the entrance on the right side when facing the building to gain access.**

Again, I look forward to seeing you tomorrow and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

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## The Instructional Leader's Guide to Strategic Conversations

Over 100 instructional leaders from 15 school districts and charter schools came to HCDE February 18 to hear from internationally recognized speaker and author, Robyn Jackson, Ph.D. Jackson presented *The Instructional Leader's Guide to Strategic Conversations*, which was hosted by Instructional Support Services. During the day-long workshop, educators learned how to identify four types of teachers, and how to meet the needs of those teachers in order to make them the most effective in their practice.



## Therapy Services News

- Therapy Services staff has posted a new voice-over Power Point on [www.TxSpot.org](http://www.TxSpot.org) entitled, "5 Secrets for Successful OT and PT Services," an educational piece designed to assist school administrators with recruiting and retaining OTs and PTs.
- Jean Polichino recently attended the Region IV Special Education Directors meeting. Information from TEA is disseminated at these quarterly meetings attended by special education leadership from districts and charter schools in and around Houston (division clients and potential clients).
- Therapy Services continues to receive requests from area districts and charter schools for assistance with filling therapist positions that have been vacated mid-year (usually due to medical or other family reasons). Recent requests have come from the University of Houston Charter School, Dayton ISD, and Magnolia ISD. Because HCDE's Therapy Services division has reached its Full-Time Equivalent ceiling, the division is making an effort to assist these entities from among existing division personnel.

## Teen Scholastic Writing Awardee Featured on Houston Public Media's Houston Matters

Teen writer Sanah Jivani of Klein ISD, winner of our regional American Voices Award, a best in class writing award, is featured through Houston Matters, a Houston Public Media program. Sanah earned a Silver Medal and attended a ceremony last year at Carnegie Hall in New York City. We're proud of Sanah and wish her luck as she advances to national judging!  
<http://www.houstonmatters.org/segments/segment-d/2015/02/11/student-sanah-jivani-writes-about-family-struggles>

## ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

### Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 02.16** | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting
- 02.17** | Early Childhood Leadership Group Meeting: Increasing Parent Involvement with Your School
- 02.18** | Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association
- 02.18** | The Instructional Leader's Guide to Strategic Conversations
- 02.19** | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - MATH Sessions ONLY
- 02.20** | Building a Parent Program from A-Z: Part 2
- 02.21** | Texas Content Standards
- 02.21** | BEST Plus
- 02.21** | English for Civic Life
- 02.21** | ABE Syllabus
- 02.21** | GED 2014 Texas Roadshow Updates for Math and RLA
- 02.21** | Teaching Reading Dynamics to Build a Successful Adult Reader



## ABC-West Students Tour Texas Southern University

High school students at ABC-West toured Texas Southern University this month. At least one student is considering applying to TSU for fall admission. Photo: (left) students Marquise Weatherspoon and Andre Pierson; ABC-West employee Reginald Clark; student Izaya Townsend; ABC-West employee Davietta Ford; university tour sponsor Alexandra Sellers.



## Career Fair held at ABC-West February 12 Inspires Students, Presents Career Options

Students at ABC-West attended an annual Career Fair on February 12 with presenters that included the Sheriff's Department, Houston Fire Department, Barber College, and the Interactive College of Technology and the Art Institute.



Special guest speaker included Selina Locket, a former ABC West student who completed high school and is currently working towards owning her own restaurant. She imparted some of the life lessons she learned at the school and described the positive impact staff had on her life.



"It was very important to show the students that they can have other options so they can make a positive impact and be a productive member of society," said Tayyaba Ali, transition specialist who coordinated the event.



## Chinese New Year Celebration Brings Cultural Awareness Lessons to ABC-West

ABC-West celebrated Chinese New Year on February 19. Students shared information about the significance of the important Chinese celebration and performed the dragon parade. These celebrations traditionally run from Chinese New Year's Eve, the last day of the last month of the Chinese calendar to the Lantern Festival on day 15 of the first month. The festival is the longest in the Chinese calendar. The first day of the New Year falls between January 21 and February 20. This year marks the year of the wood ram. Staff members Shu Nieh and Davietta Ford both spearheaded the festive assembly.



## HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Waller ISD is holding its 3rd Annual Empowering Families Summit on February 28, 2015, from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Schultz Junior High School. All Waller ISD families are invited to join in on the fun. Complimentary breakfast and lunch will be served, and the event is free to all attendees. For more information, and to register, click on the link.

[http://wallerisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/wallerisd/preview\\_message.aspx?app=0&id=1360&-type=notice&source=ViewNews](http://wallerisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/wallerisd/preview_message.aspx?app=0&id=1360&-type=notice&source=ViewNews)

## 25 HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Aldine
- Alief
- Channelview
- Clear Creek
- Crosby
- Cy-Fair
- Dayton
- Deer Park
- Galena Park
- Goose Creek
- Houston
- Huffman
- Humble
- Katy
- Klein
- La Porte
- New Caney
- Pasadena
- Pearland
- Sheldon
- Spring
- Spring Branch
- Stafford
- Tomball
- Waller

## Center for Grants Development

Brinker International has announced an award of \$2,628 for Head Start's Read Excel Achieve Lead (REAL) SuperMENTors Read program. This grant award is the result of collaboration amongst Center for Grants Development, Education Foundation of Harris County, and HCDE's Area I Head Start division.

In an effort to create better outcomes for the future, REAL SuperMENTors Read's goal is to inspire a love for reading at any early age, and increase student reading proficiency and comprehension. Its objective is to build literacy skills in preschool students.

REAL SuperMENTors Read recruits mentors from the Houston corporate community to visit classrooms once a month and read aloud for one hour to 3-5 year old students. As 65% of the children enrolled in the program reside in female-headed households, Head Start focuses on recruiting male mentors who can also serve students as a positive male role model.

Head Start will use the \$2,628 award to purchase age-appropriate, pre-packaged Scholastic Inc. book sets for 73 students at the Humble Head Start Center. Center for Grants Development is pleased that their research, writing, and submission of this proposal will lead to an expansion of the program.

## Texas Health Steps Medical and Dental Providers Workshop held February 20

HCDE Head Start hosted the Texas Health Steps Medical and Dental Providers Workshop to increase awareness and education, to network and to share updates in policy to attendees, including Head Start



staff. The workshop benefits Head Start in working with families who have issues in obtaining access to health services. The program is a benefit of the Texas Medicaid Program. Health coordinators gain firsthand knowledge of policies, procedures, regulations, and requirements of the medical and dental providers. HCDE Head Start coordinators presented about the Head Start Well Child Physical Exam and Individual Care Plan. Thirty exhibitors participated.



## Next Generation Education Models

CPI specialist Winford Adams attended the Houston A+ Global Perspectives on Education Speaker Series on February 12. Guest speaker Tom Vander Ark talked about digital/blended learning initiatives and "next generation" education models. He described standard-based reform as "efforts to improve the factory model (batch processing by birth date). Next generation model reform will be blended (online and face-to-face); personalized (not one-size-fits-all); and competency based (students show what they know and only progress after mastery). Vander Ark cited several working examples of high-performing schools using the alternative models.

## Teen Artist Reception Co-hosted by HCDE, Glassell February 20 Showcases Creations of 300 Area Students

Harris County Department of Education and the Museum of Fine Art's Glassell Junior School invite the Houston community to an artist reception on Friday, February 20 from 5:30-8 p.m. at 5101 Montrose, Houston, Texas. Please plan to attend and meet our amazing, talented artists and writers.



Three hundred Harris County teens from public, private, charter and home schools are being honored as recipients of regional Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key Awards. The teen artists and writers will be on hand to showcase their visionary art entries and to read their award-winning writing entries.

## Silver and Gold Key Art, Writing Celebrations Set for February 24 and February 25 at HCDE

Gold and Silver Key Awards recipients for art and writing are invited to two receptions next week. The Board is invited to attend both of these special events. Special awards will be given, and recipients will each receive their Gold or Silver Key pins.

- An art celebration for Gold and Silver Key Awards art recipients, their families, and teachers is set for February 24 in the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington Blvd. from 7-8:30 p.m.
- A writing celebration for Gold and Silver Key Awards writing recipients, their families, and teachers is scheduled for February 25 in the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington Blvd. from 7-8:30 p.m.



# BOARD SPOTLIGHT



## HCDE BOARD

**BOARD PRESIDENT**  
POSITION 2, PRECINCT 4  
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**BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT**  
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*Position 7, At Large*

**Diane Trautman**  
*Position 3, At Large*

**Michael Wolfe**  
*Position 5, At Large*

**HCDE Board of Trustees Retreat**  
**Tomorrow- February 21, 2015**  
**10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

**Kingwood Country Club**  
**1700 Lake Kingwood Trail**  
**Kingwood, Texas 77339**

## Upcoming Board Events:

**Tuesday, February 24, 2015**

- 11:00 a.m. Policy Committee Meeting
- 12 noon Government Relations Committee Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. February Board Meeting



Contact Theresa Torres at 713.696.0713 regarding travel arrangements. Visit <http://www.nsba.org/conference> for additional information regarding conference details.