

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...

As you can imagine, this was a busy week as we prepare to close out business prior to Spring Break. Many of our client districts were on Spring Break this week while our larger districts will be on break next week. I had the opportunity to meet with the Sheldon ISD superintendent earlier this week and that exchange was informative. The meeting gave us the opportunity to share information about our respective entities and the additional ways we can partner. I will continue to shore up relationships with our client school districts as the year progresses.

I am pleased to introduce to you our new Director of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, Ecomet Burley. Mr. Burley brings a wealth of experience in the area of school district operations as a longtime administrator at both the campus and school district levels. He has already participated in a district-wide training hosted by the Center for Safe and Secure Schools for our member districts, and he has a plethora of ideas that will take the division to the next level of success. I invite you to learn more about Mr. Burley by seeing the article on page 2 of this issue of **The Connector**.

As you are already aware, we are in the midst of budget planning for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Shortly after Spring Break, budget hearings will commence and those will continue for the next four to six weeks. Our budget process is comprehensive, including in-depth reviews of Department trends, economic impacts, legislative changes, and other financial and program analysis. That said, I think this is an appropriate time to offer an impressive reflection as it relates to HCDE and our ability to leverage dollars on behalf of the school districts and learners of Harris County. Since September of 1998, HCDE has been awarded over \$460 million in grant awards. These awards have allowed us to serve over 360,000 infants, children, youth, and adults. Because of HCDE's unique ability to leverage dollars, our school districts are able to provide, and parents and students are able to receive crucial services that would be otherwise cost-prohibitive.

Please be reminded of the next Board Training session that will take place here at HCDE. It is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24th from 2-5 p.m. I look forward to seeing you there.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Please know that I will be accessible next week in the event you should need to reach me. Have a great weekend!

IN THIS ISSUE:

2-3 Program Connections
3 Campus Connections

4 Community Connections
5 Business Connections

6 Board Spotlight

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Longtime Administrator Ecomet Burley Named Director of Center for Safe and Secure Schools

Ecomet Burley, the new director for the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, officially started in his new post on March 9. He has 26 years of experience in school administration and is the former, six-year superintendent of La Marque Independent School District.



After earning a bachelor's degree in political science from Texas Tech University, he went on to graduate with a master's degree in public administration from Stephen F. Austin University. Burley and his wife Frances reside in Pearland, where she is an elementary school principal. The Burleys have four children.

Burley said a goal for the Center for Safe and Secure Schools is to continue to be viewed as the best-in-class service provider for school safety and security training. The Center was established in 1999 at the request of area school superintendents to provide school safety and security training for school districts in greater Harris County. It serves districts through school safety audits, a website for emergency school closures and workshops and networking on emerging security concerns.

"Our training assists school districts in accomplishing their goal of having effective teaching and quality learning environments," Burley said. "We will continue to endeavor to provide relevant services and products that are needs based as a result of member district feedback."

Special Schools Video Promotes Services

Special Schools collaborated with Technology to create a new video which will be used to promote its services. The video features footage from all the campuses and communicates the benefits and goals of our schools. View the video: <https://youtu.be/XZ8cAgnOjW0>.

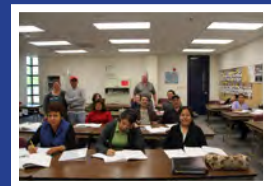


ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 03.09** | Online Instructor's Training - Part II
- 03.10** | The Quest for Grants Training Series Workshop- Finding Funding to Support Your Programs
- 03.12** | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting
- 03.13** | School Finance Council

New York Times Reporter to Visit Adult Education English Language Civics Class



New York Times reporter David Kirp will visit our English language civics class at our community partner location with Community Centers, Inc. on March 13. Kirp is including the class as part of his series on community concerns and early childhood education. The EL civics classes help students prepare to become U.S. citizens through studying for the citizenship exam while learning English. The reporter will be talking to our students about how they feel about the class as they make their way to becoming U.S. citizens. About 400 students attend classes at the center located at 720 Fairmont in Pasadena.

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Kids Learn to Make 'space goo' from CASE for Kids AmeriCorps

CASE for Kids AmeriCorps members visited HCDE's San Jacinto Head Start center as part of their AmeriCorps Service Project. Recently, the members have visited a different Head Start center to read to the 3- to 4-year-olds and host an interactive activity making 'space goo'. In addition, AmeriCorps provides a book for each Head Start child to take home.



CASE for Kids is currently accepting applications for summer-time AmeriCorps members. Members work in summer after-school programs to provide direct services to Harris County after-school youth in grades elementary through high school.



Summer AmeriCorps members must fulfill a 10-week commitment during May, June and July.

For more information, visit www.afterschoolzone.org.



HCDE Receives Award from ESC Region 10

HCDE Technology Services responded to an RFP from ESC Region 10 for their Technology Services Catalog and received notification of the award on February 18th. As a result, HCDE will be providing technology services for ESC Region 10 and their surrounding districts.



The collaborative submission process included staff from Technology Services, the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN), and Resource Development.

Services included in the RFP from HCDE included infrastructure support and security, storage solutions, help desk support, content management system management and support, web-based system design and development, website and web tool hosting, technology integration training and support, and email security and support.

Dr. Vida Avery (Resource Development) was a key resource in compiling the information into a clear and succinct proposal.

HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Pasadena ISD's Dr. Kirk Lewis Career and Technical High School (CTHS) is one of only 52 schools in Texas offering Teen Court. This innovative program offers students in the school's law enforcement program the opportunity to experience the judicial system acting as jurors, attorneys and judges in a legal environment, handling real-life cases involving their peers. For more details on this program check out this link, <http://www1.pasadenaisd.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=80772&pageId=4691683>

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

ABC West Students' Accomplishments Celebrated



ABC West staff and students celebrated six students who made honor roll or had perfect attendance in the fourth six-week period. Principal Victor Keys reminded students that hard work pays off and encouraged them to keep working to achieve all their life goals.

Houston Public Media Spelling Bee

HCDE is one of the sponsors of The Houston Public Media Spelling Bee, the nation's second largest local spelling bee, with spellers from 1,000 schools in 42 Texas Counties representing more than 100,000 students. In return, our HCDE logo is on the spelling bee webpage [<http://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/education/spelling-bee/>], HCDE will be included in the list of sponsors aired during the event, plus two spots will be broadcast during the Bee on March 28, and 23 spots over the following three weeks. The Education Works video [<https://vimeo.com/92673533>] that the Davis High School students produced with Client Development Services, will be broadcast.

Trustees are invited to the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee on March 28 at noon. Lunch is provided, then trustees may view the spelling bee, which begins at 2 p.m. and usually concludes by 5:30 p.m. There is no opportunity for trustees to be introduced, but they will be able to meet some of the people behind the scenes. It will also be broadcast on the Houston Public Media local TV channel 8.

713 Ministries Awarded \$15,000 in Afterschool Funding from City Connections Grant from City of Houston, CASE for Kids

Council Member Larry Green's Chief of Staff, Donald Perkins and CASE for Kids' Field Specialist Mary Glover present a \$15,000 check to Audra and Lloyd Anderson of 713 Ministries. 713 Ministries is one of eight organizations awarded the first wave of grants in afterschool funding from the City Connections initiative with the City of Houston and CASE for Kids. 713 Ministries provides musical instruction, education and mentorship to underserved youth at Peterson, Hobby and Reagan Elementaries in Houston ISD.



\$10,000 in afterschool funding awarded to Boys & Girls Club of Houston through City Connections grant from City of Houston, CASE for Kids

D'Jomme Adia, Boys & Girls Club of Houston's Coordinator of Programs and Quality accepts a check for \$10,000 from Council Member Larry Green's Chief of Staff, Donald Perkins and CASE for Kids' Field Specialist Mary Glover. Boys & Girls Club is one of eight organizations awarded the first wave of grants in afterschool funding from the City Connections initiative with the City of Houston and CASE for Kids. Boys & Girls Club provides afterschool programs to at-risk youth. Their program is designed to raise graduation rates, increase college readiness and provide job training through technology education. They plan to use the funding to support their Fort Bend Club located in city council district K.



Science Curriculum Director Felske Featured Speaker at Naturefest

Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske was featured speaker at the Jesse Jones Park & Nature Center "Naturefest 2015" on March 7 in Humble. Felske's hour-long presentation focused on "Targeting Student Misconceptions in Life Science." The event attracted several hundred participants of all ages and highlighted local nature-related topics. Naturefest included live outdoor performances along with booth activities such as bird banding, live animal exhibits, catch-and-release fishing, and various crafts and games.



KHOU Interviews Math Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan About STAAR

KHOU reporter Lauren Talarico and cameraman Chris Carr came to HCDE to interview Instruction Support Services' Math Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan about the new state TEKS standards and the STAAR test. After the interview with our expert, the crew took to the streets to ask random citizens math STAAR questions. The story will air soon, and we'll be sure to share.



BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Audit Activity

ECI Closeout and Cost Report

HCDE has received notice that the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) closeout will be conducted on April 8 & 9, 2015 for the grant that ended December 31, 2014. The closeout will include reviewing of documents, charts and accounts, supporting documentation, revenues, and collections for the program. The ECI Cost Report is also underway and it is expected to be submitted by April 15, 2015.

This cost report is a requirement of the ECI grant for FY 2014.



Adult Education Program

The report for the Adult Education Program was received after several months from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The report outlines the review process and the observations made. HCDE will be providing the TWC with our review response and our proposed implementation of program improvements.

Budget Dollars and Cents

Budget review sessions with division managers are scheduled for the next four to six weeks. The review process will include review of SWOT analyses, trend analysis, economic impact, legislative changes (if any), financial analysis and program analysis.



Planning

Agenda items for April include the renewal of our depository contract and audit contract. The Purchasing division is working on many RFPs and also providing services to Harmony Charter Schools.



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

REMINDER

HCDE Board Training
Tuesday, March 24, 2015
6300 Irvington Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77022
2:00-5:00 p.m.

Small Board Conference Room

HCDE BOARD

BOARD PRESIDENT
POSITION 2, PRECINCT 4
Angie Chesnut

BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT
POSITION 4, PRECINCT 3
Kay Smith

Erica Lee Carter
Position 6, Precinct 1

Marvin W. Morris
Position 1, Precinct 2

Don Sumners
Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman
Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

Upcoming Board Events:

**HCDE Board of Trustees
April Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 21, 2015
1:00 pm**

6300 Irvington Blvd.
Houston, TX 77022

**Together
Everyone
Achieves
More**

