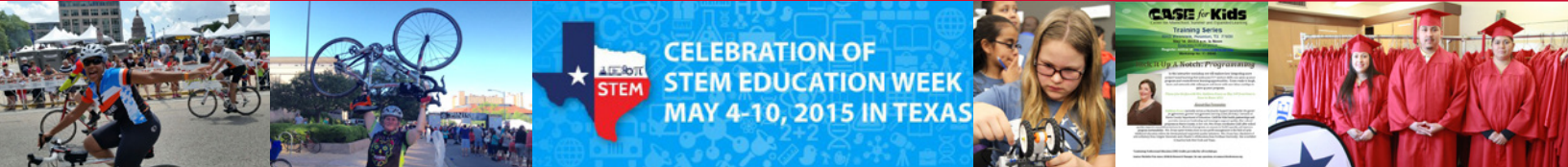


The Connector

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 are aware, I spoke to the Senate Education Committee on behalf of HCDE with respect to Senate Bill 1216 (SB1216) on Tuesday of this week. The hearing, which was broadcast via the following URL-http://tlcSENATE.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=5&event_id=1289-was a spirited discussion regarding the recently-filed amendment to SB1216 that calls for a Sunset Review of HCDE. There was brief, yet potent, exchange between the members of the Senate Education Committee. Likely, the most contentious point was the dialogue between Senator Bettencourt and me. As I explained to him and the members of the committee during the hearing, while I am pleased that the bill has been modified and no longer includes language calling for the abolishment of HCDE, I do not believe that HCDE should be placed under a Sunset Review. Unfortunately, the hearing ended abruptly due to legislative timing protocol. We will continue, however, to follow this bill.

The remainder of the week has been hectic and busy as usual. We continue to move forward through the budget process. With the arrival of the month of May, our campuses are readying for close-out of the school year, and our client districts' needs continue to evolve as we close in on the end of another academic session. Today, I had the opportunity to meet with the superintendents from both Stafford MSD and Wharton ISD. I will continue to further cultivate relationships between HCDE and area leaders in public education.

As of this week, the auditors are no longer onsite; however, our staff continues to work with them in fulfilling their requests for additional information as they begin the process of reviewing our data offsite. We anticipate that this process will continue through the month of July, and we expect them to issue a report during the month of August. I will apprise you of any new developments associated with the audit.

HCDE continues to serve as a beacon of light for La Marque ISD. We continue to manage their financial reporting processes, and also supervise their business functions.

Next Thursday, May 7th, I will be the keynote speaker at the local chapter of the Women Professionals in Government luncheon. I look forward to enlightening this group of government professionals on HCDE. This offers yet another platform to further increase our visibility.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a great weekend. And remember, HCDE is **Always Educating!**

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'Kick it Up a Notch' Training Helps Afterschool Coordinators Create Project-Based Learning

Kathleen Evans, CASE for Kids' Quality Support Manager, presents the "Kick It up a Notch" training. This interactive workshop explores how integrating more project-based learning can enhance afterschool programs and create diverse learning opportunities for your students. Project-based learning helps students work together with problem-solving strategies to have a greater depth of understanding of concepts. Workshop is scheduled for May 14 at HCDE at North Post Oak.



Save the Date for Kids' at Day HP May 15, 2015

Kids' Day at Hewlett-Packard is a daylong event where participating students have the opportunity to design and market their own fictional robots and build robots capable of surviving various challenges. Students have been working with this curriculum in their afterschool programs. At this culminating event, students visit an HP facility where they present their marketing campaigns and maneuver their robots through obstacles designed by HP engineers.



AmeriCorps Quarter-Time Members Begin Service May 11

CASE for Kids will welcome 21 new Quarter-Time AmeriCorps members on May 11, 2015. The new quarter-time members will join the current full-time members in serving youth enrolled in out-of-school time programs for the summer term.

CASE for Kids End of the Year Celebration set for May 21, 2015

The Case for Kids 2015 End of Year Celebration begins at 10 a.m. on May 21. The celebration recognizes the accomplishments of coordinators, principals and district administrators. Awards are given and praises are abundant during this energy-charged event held in the HCDE Conference Center. RSVP to caseforkids@hcde-texas.org.



Health and Fitness Month Activities Slated for May through Human Resources

Several activities are planned for HCDE employees during our annual Health and Fitness Month. Health and Fitness Month raises awareness about being healthy and having a balanced lifestyle.

HCDE employees will be taking the "drink more water" challenge. Employees are asked to be conscious about water intake throughout two weeks and to chart their water intake. Promotional health and fitness items are given out to employees through a drawing.



In addition, HR promotes two health improvement workshop webinars being offered through our benefits partner Alliance Work Partners.

The following are the health and fitness workshops for employees. Board members are welcome to enroll and participate through the registration links below:

Keeping Your Cool, Even When Others Don't (Webinar)

Gain ways of managing your anger. Harness your impulse to react. Gain tips for de-escalating tense situations. Register

Assertive Communications (Webinar)

You are the rightful advocate for your own thoughts and desires. However, assertive and aggressive are commonly confused. Our training clearly defines the difference... Register

GED Graduation 2015 Features Stories of Struggle, Success on May 9

GED graduation 2015 scheduled for May 9 features the struggles and triumphs of several dozen students who gained their GED under the new, more rigorous testing standards and computerized testing. Student stories of struggle and success are



those of Jesus Turrubiarres, a young man who worked fulltime and attended class while also supporting his family. He will become a mechanic helper for HISD with the attainment of his Student Elizabeth Urible works as a dental assistant and will go to technical school to become a radiation technician as she gains her GED. A third student, Jeanet Pina, attended our new integrated education classes. She worked to attain her GED and certified nurse assistant certification simultaneously. She succeeded and will continue to go to school to become a registered nurse. Finally, Cynthia Mendoza is a young mother who works as a nanny. She will go to college to be a better role model for her children.

You're invited to hear these stories from the students and their teachers on May 9 at 11 a.m. at the HCDE Adult Education GED graduation 2015 at 6300 Irvington in the Conference Center.

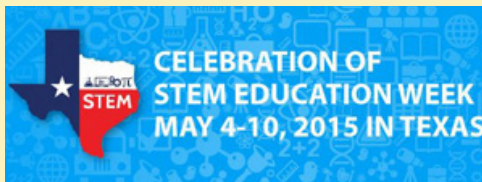
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Hosts Houston Urban Area Security Initiative's Regional Technology Seminar/Fair

HCDE hosted the Houston Urban Area Security Initiative, or UASI, Regional Technology Seminar and Fair at HCDE on April 28. The daylong event allowed member emergency response agencies to come together in a vendor-free environment. Members asked questions about tools, learned about new applications and found new and creative ways to ensure their information needs are being met in an emergency. The Houston area is one of the highest-threatened communities in the U.S., but it also has access to a myriad of technologies to help reduce risk and quickly respond to the needs of area residents.

HCDE sponsors STEM Education Day at George R. Brown May 8

HCDE is helping to sponsor the daylong STEM Education Day in Houston on May 8 at George R. Brown Convention Center. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math. The day was created by the former Gov. Rick Perry to bring attention to the future need and shortage of professionals in these fields. Alternative Certification will be recruiting professionals for both its teaching and principal certification programs by hosting a booth at the conference. Read more details, including registration info through our HCDE blog, School Bell: <http://blog.hcde-texas.org/2015/04/27/free-is-good-attend-stem-education-day-in-houston-may-8/>



HCDE employees complete MS 150, support those living with MS

Congratulations to Alternative Certification's Amy Thompson, and Adult Education's Angela Johnson for completing the MS 150 bike ride from Houston to Austin on April 18-19. The BP Multiple Sclerosis 150 is a two-day fundraising bike ride organized by the National MS Society South Central Region.



After training for a year, Thompson rallied supporters and raised over \$2,100 for the charity. In her inaugural year to the challenge, Johnson rode with Blue Line Bike Lab and raised a total of \$1,115.



ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 04.27 | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting
- 04.28 | ELA Leadership Group Meeting
- 05.01 | Teaching Methods for Diverse Learners: May 1, 2015 - June 1, 2015
- 05.01 | Librarian Leadership Meeting
- 05.01 | Health Children Healthy Families

HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Cypress-Fairbanks ISD high school students participated in the 21st annual CFISD Board Shadowing Project during the regularly scheduled board meeting on April 20. The project pairs students with board members or administrators so that students observe firsthand the functions of the school board and administration. Details: <http://www.cfisd.net/en/news-media/district/shadowing-project-pairs-trustees-administrators-students/>

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

The Business Services division continues to work closely with La Marque ISD. The budget process remains underway, and the state audit continues to move forward.

Jesus Amezcua has been invited to serve on the Professional Services Committee for the Society of Texas CPAs. The committee is responsible for reviewing the professional standards for members within the profession.

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

MOTTO

HCDE...Always Educating

MISSION STATEMENT

Harris County Department of Education supports Harris County by enriching educational opportunities and providing value through services.

GOALS

GOAL 1:

Impact education by responding to the evolving needs of Harris County

GOAL 2:

Deliver value to Harris County by utilizing resources in an ethical, transparent, and fiscally responsible manner

GOAL 3:

Advocate for all learners by using innovative methods to maximize students' potential.

GOAL 4:

Provide cost-savings to school districts by leveraging tax dollars

GOAL 5:

Recruit and maintain a high-quality professional staff

Adopted by the HCDE Board of Trustees at its April 21, 2015 meeting.

HCDE BOARD

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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

Upcoming Board Events:

**Tuesday,
May 19, 2015
May Board Meeting**

