

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...

Events and activities are both gearing up and winding down as we approach the end of the year. The same is true within our client school districts. As we close in on the academic year's end, testing is underway as well as closeout activities. Concurrently, recognition of staff and students alike is appropriate, and in full gear, at this time of year.

This week, teachers and nurses across the country were celebrated for the tremendous work they do in our schools and communities. I extended personal thanks to the teachers and nurses at all of our locations and on all of our campuses including Head Start, Adult Education, both Academic and Behavior Centers, and both Highpoint campuses. These professionals deserve to be saluted for their daily contributions. They are making positive impacts in the lives of our students. I recognize their accomplishments, I applaud their efforts, and I appreciate them immensely.

Yesterday, I was the guest speaker at the Women Professionals in Government (WPG) organization's monthly luncheon. The question and answer session following my keynote remarks was engaging and most importantly, I shed bright light on the programs and services HCDE provides to the 25 Harris County school districts. I also explained the great need for our role as an essential support system and invaluable resource to hundreds of thousands of students in Harris County. Trustee Trautman, who is a member of the organization, was also in attendance. HCDE will further benefit from yesterday's event by way of a small donation to the Education Foundation. It is the tradition of the organization to make a contribution to the non-profit of the luncheon speaker's recommendation. I suggested that the Education Foundation be the recipient of the donation for this month.

Tomorrow morning, our Adult Education division is hosting its 2015 GED Graduation. It will be held in the HCDE Conference Center. While your attendance isn't required, you are invited to attend. We look forward to 34 students receiving their GED during the commencement exercises. The graduation will begin at 11:00. On that note, earlier this week, KHOU Channel 11 featured one of our GED graduates in a news story that aired during the 6:00 p.m. broadcast Wednesday evening. The story also discussed the recently-implemented rigors associated with the new test format. The following URL contains the video clip and news article located on the KHOU website. <http://www.khou.com/story/news/local/2015/05/06/new-ged-exam-tougher-more-expensive/70917146/>

Next week, I will be attending a dinner with the state Commissioner of Education Michael Williams, followed by a Superintendent's Think Tank the next day with education leaders from across the state. This is yet another opportunity to have HCDE at the forefront of conversations on public education. I will also be presenting at the Houston East End Chamber of Commerce's 3rd Annual Education Symposium on Wednesday. I will be speaking on the topic: The skills your future employees need to best equip them for success.

Since its electronic posting, we have received more than 50 applications for the position of Assistant Superintendent. I have also received numerous telephone calls from interested individuals across the United States. While this is certainly not unusual response for our market, it does speak to the level of interest job seekers have in public education leadership. I look forward to HCDE benefiting from this selection process and I am excited about the candidate pool from which I will be making the selection. I look forward to presenting a candidate to you at the May Board Meeting.

In closing, I would like to remind the members of the Governmental Relations Committee that a meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 from 12:00-12:30 p.m., prior to the regularly scheduled May Board Meeting. Any Board Member wishing to attend this meeting is invited; however, it will be facilitated by the members assigned to the Governmental Relations Committee.

Thanks for your continued service to HCDE and I hope you enjoy this 20th issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend!

IN THIS ISSUE:

2 Program Connections
2 Business Connections

3-4 Community Connections
4 Campus Connections

5 Board Spotlight

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Hands-on Trainings in Science Lab at HCDE Help Support Teaching New Science TEKS

Training from Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske in conjunction with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers provided new skills for elementary and secondary teachers May 5-6. The science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills require students to plan and conduct their own investigations. Teachers were given ready-made lesson plans to help support the science TEKS, including an exercise featured in the photo where investigators tried to maximize the amount of candy that would fit in a redesigned plastic bag. Retired Aramco electrical engineer Freddie Wong conducted both workshops, lending workforce application to the curriculum.



KHOU Education Reporter Lauren Talarico Visits Adult Education Division to Report on Test Challenges and Successes

KHOU reporter Lauren Talarico visited HCDE Adult Education Irvington Learning Center May 6 to report on GED graduation which is set for May 9 at 11 a.m. She interviewed Dr. Eduardo Honold about the more rigorous test and adult learner challenges and triumphs. Student Cynthia Mendoza, a mother of two, spoke about going back to school after 15 years. Mendoza plans to go to community college to become a realtor. View the story through this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkLOjqc41o>



Save the Date: CASE End of Year Recognition Event Set for May 21

CASE for Kids is recognizing its 2015 outstanding community partners, site coordinators, and outstanding programs on May 21, from 10 a.m. to noon in the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington. RSVP by emailing caseforkids@hcde-texas.org.

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Operating Guidelines Training

The Business and Purchasing offices have conducted financial operating guidelines training which included reviewing procedures pertaining to accounting matters, budgets, grants, procurement, receivables, accounts payable, payroll, and the Time Clock Plus system.

EDGAR is here

The Business Office is reviewing the new grant guidance released by the federal government. The new rules are now consolidated into a uniform guide called EDGAR. Grant managers and staff will be provided with new procedures dealing with time and effort, cost principles, debarment, indirect costs, procurement, and other administrative requirements.

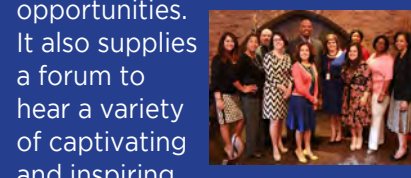
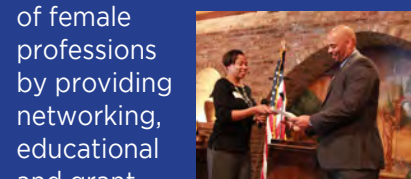
Super Mentor

The Business office participated in the Super Mentor Program with HCDE's Area I Head Start. This initiative promotes reading to kids. Business office staff read to students at Compton Day Care Center this year. A thank you reception was held at HCDE and the Business office staff were among this year's honorees who participated in the Super Mentor volunteer initiative.

Superintendent Colbert Speaks at Women Professionals in Government Meeting May 7, 2015



County School Superintendent James Colbert was keynote speaker at the Women Professionals in Government Meeting on May 7. The organization promotes the advancement of female professions by providing networking, educational and grant opportunities. It also supplies a forum to hear a variety of captivating and inspiring speakers.



Keynote speakers this year have included Harris County Commissioner R. Jack Cagle, Texas gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis, U.S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore and Harris County Judge Edward M. Emmett.

"The biggest issue in public education is that we don't have enough people stepping up to advocate for it," said Colbert.

For more information about the organization, go to www.wpghouston.com.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Announces April City Connections Grants

CASE for Kids recently announced the recipients of the 2014-2015 City Connections funding for April 2015. The following organizations, their project sites, and Houston City Council districts were announced. CASE for Kids received a total of 41 City Connections applications for the April 2015 deadline requesting a total of \$440,235.89 in funding for a variety of out-of-school time programs in the city of Houston. The organizations listed below will provide diverse activities for youth afterschool, including fine arts, academic enrichment, college exploration, and fitness classes.

- HeartBeat Performing Arts Charities, \$5,000, HeartBeat Houston Dance and Fitness, District A
- Living Word Christian Academy Afterschool Program, \$9,885, Living Word Christian Academy Afterschool Program, District A
- Be A Champion, \$14,950, NW Prep Academy and Houston Parks: Hobart Taylor, Tidwell and Highland, District B
- Church of I Am/ North Side Karate, \$7,830, Houston Parks: Hobart Taylor and Tidwell, District B
- Together We Grow, \$12,675, Houston Parks: Hobart Taylor, District B
- Breakthrough Houston, \$14,700, St. Johns School, District C
- Church of I Am/ North Side Karate, \$5,000, Houston Parks: Godwin, District C
- FotoFest, \$5,000, Houston Parks: Candlelight, Millroy, Cherryhurst and Hogg Bird, District C
- Blue Triangle Multi Cultural Association, \$5,000, Blue Triangle Multi Cultural Association, District D
- Children's Defense Fund-Texas, \$5,000, Hype Freedom School Inc., housed at Greater St. Matthew Baptist Church, District D
- Houston Area Urban League Inc., \$5,000, Houston Area Urban League, District D
- Houston Ballet, \$5,193, S.H.A.P.E. Community Center and at Sterling High School, District D
- Lilly Grove Baptist Church, \$5,000, Wendell Neal Memorial Life Center-Summer Enrichment Program, District D
- Sisters Network Inc., \$2,500, Sisters Network Inc., District D
- South Central Sportz, Inc., \$3,000, Houston Parks: Sunnyside Fields 2 and 3, District D
- Southeast Coalition Community Development, \$2,000, Project Sites: Southeast Coalition at Bethel Baptist Church, District D
- South Union Missionary Baptist Church, \$2,000, South Union Missionary Baptist Church, District D
- Texas French Alliance for the Arts, \$5,262, Change Happens, District D
- Texas Together Education Fund, \$14,545, Apartments are Communities Project Falls of Bellaire Apt., District F
- Amaanah Refugee Services, \$5,560, Walnut Bend Elementary, District G
- College Community Career, \$2,000, Westchester Academy for International Studies in District G
- Bella Vista Missionary Baptist Church, \$2,000, Bella Vista Missionary Baptist Church Summer Camp, District H
- Texan French Alliance for the Arts, \$1,455, Marshall Middle Academy of fine Arts, District H
- The Connect YMCA, \$2,105, Sutton Elementary, District J
- HISD - Charles P Shearn Elementary, \$11,204, Charles P. Shearn Elementary, District K

ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 05.05** | Elementary STEM with IEEE 6-12
- 05.06** | Secondary STEM with IEEE 6-12
- 05.06** | The Basics of Grant Writing
- 05.07** | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - Math Sessions only
- 05.08** | Integrating Elementary Social Studies and Science

HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Deer Park ISD offers robotics summer camps for students in grades 2-6. The four-day sessions are \$60 for morning or afternoon sessions in June-August, and students learn to build and program robots using Legos. Details: http://www.dpsd.org/cms/lib4/TX01001079/Centricity/Domain/1/2015_summer_robotics_camp_flyer.pdf

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

25 HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

CASE for Kids Matches Out-of-School Time Vendors with Licensed Child Care Facilities for Summer

HCDE's CASE for Kids hosted a matching event May 2 for 80 licensed child care facilities with 12 out-of-school time vendors. The event was held as part of the CASE Partnership Project which provides grant funds to support out-of-school time programming for summer 2015.



The CASE Partnership Project is a collaboration between HCDE, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, Texas Workforce Commission, and local foundations. HCDE commits local funds to supplement literacy and numeracy activities in quality out-of-school time programming for youth. Public, private, and charter schools in the HCDE service region with at least 40% of the student body identified as economically disadvantaged are eligible to apply for funding. The grant allows CASE for Kids to provide a variety of resources to selected sites such as site visits, training, scholarships and a lending library.



Community Partners Luncheon

HCDE Head Start held its bi-annual community partners luncheon to honor the individuals, organizations, and businesses that help support the program through volunteerism, donations, and service.



CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

ABC East Employee and Former Houston Oiler Haywood Jeffires Participates in HISD Special Olympics Opening Ceremonies

ABC East staff member Haywood Jeffires participated in opening ceremonies for the HISD Special Olympics this month. Jeffires, who has long supported Special Olympics, is the former wide receiver (1987-1996) for the Houston Oilers. The opening ceremony was complete with celebrities, governmental officials and cheerleaders. We thank Jeffires for supporting Special Olympics and for representing HCDE.



HCDE Special Schools Celebrates Teachers and Nurses

Teachers and nurses were honored and showered with flowers and food throughout our Special Schools division at ABC East, ABC West, Highpoint North, and Highpoint East. Teachers received treats, luncheons, flowers and good deeds as Texas recognized Teacher Appreciation Week and Nurses' Appreciation Week for School Nurses. We thank our dedicated teachers and nurses!



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

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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Upcoming Board Events:

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

