

# 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...

We have ended our first week of the Summer Flex Schedule. The 6300 Irvington location is closed today; however, the North Post Oak location is open for divisions needing to continue with their routine schedules in order to meet the needs of clients. Although the 2014-2015 academic year has come to an end, we are recharging ourselves for a summer of intense preparation for the next academic session.

On Monday of this week, our new Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support, Jonathan Parker, reported for his first day of work at HCDE. He attended his first Executive Leadership Team Meeting, and was introduced to his colleagues around that table. He has also begun meeting with his direct reports, learning more about, and sharing ideas related to his respective divisions: Therapy Services, Head Start, and Special Schools. I am excited about the wealth of experience and knowledge that Mr. Parker brings to HCDE.

On Tuesday, I met with the Leadership Team and we engaged in an in-depth discussion on a variety of topics, but the conversation was especially focused on my expectations for all divisions. We also discussed Senate Bill 1216 as well as the recently revised organizational chart. I believe the group is on target and focused to move forward with the business of providing value, opportunity, and service to our constituents in Harris County and beyond. With the legislative session now behind us, we anticipate no further distractions as we take time to recalibrate ourselves over the summer months.

Speaking of recalibration, please save the date of August 19. Annual Staff Meeting is returning to HCDE. It will be held at the Humble Civic Center at 11:30 a.m. Please plan to attend as we convene—as a whole—to mark the start of the next academic session. We are excited about this event and expect it to be unlike any other Annual Staff Meeting employees have experienced during their tenure at HCDE. I will seize this opportunity to invigorate, motivate, and inspire our staff. I will deliver a charge to them to excel and to push themselves to the limit—as HCDE prepares to blast off in the sphere of service in education across the county, city, and state.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to visit and tour Rice University. I was hosted by the associate provost and I also met with the university president. We had a great information exchange and I hope to nurture that relationship in the future. As for our relationships outside of the education arena, I met with yet another city councilman this week. That meeting was productive and promising. I plan to continue to fortify our relations and enhance our image as we move forward.

Our relationships are invaluable. Our product is excellent. Our image, while tainted, can be improved. We must change the public's perception of HCDE. We must create an accurate reflection in a community that doesn't currently envision us for who we are, the value we deliver, the opportunity we bring about, and the service we provide. We, the 'Team of Eight', are our most valuable advocates—first. Therefore, it is up to us—all of us—to shore up the Department and project the reality of excellence in teaching and learning that resides within the walls of HCDE.

In closing, please be reminded that the regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on next Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. Thanks again for your service to HCDE, and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend!

## IN THIS ISSUE:

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## CASE for Kids Welcomes Newcomers to Staff to Promote New Initiatives

CASE for Kids welcomes its new, afterschool heroes. Our newcomer staff members will assist with new initiatives and projects on the horizon. With a variety of expertise, our professionals are dedicated to the CASE for Kids mission of sustaining and enriching afterschool programs. We are excited to have each of them onboard, and we look forward to a promising year.



New staff include (pictured) Renae Johnson, community outreach manager; Adrienne Perez, data clerk; Brandi Nichols, outreach specialist; Chasidy Celestine, outreach specialist; Kimberlee Flowers, administrative assistant; Nick Cantu, event planner coordinator; Adrian Fields, program coordinator; Alex Alvarez, data compliance specialist. Other new staff members (not pictured) include Audrey Jefferson- Harrison, training and professional development specialist; Cedric Thomas, family engagement specialist; Toni Candis, program coordinator; Whitney Jackson, data compliance specialist.

## HCDE Employees Donate Food to Houston Food Bank in June

The Human Resources division is hosting a food drive this month to benefit the Houston Food Bank. Employees may drop off their donations in the reception areas at Irvington or Westview. Human Resources will also be collecting donations at our schools. The drive has been posted to HCDE Facebook/Twitter so that the public may donate during work hours.



## Afterschool Programs at Chinese Community Center Awarded Over \$20,000 in Funding from City Connections Grants from City of Houston, CASE for Kids

Council Member Richard Nguyen (District F) and CASE for Kids project coordinator Adrian Fields present checks totaling \$21,830 to summer programs for youth located at the Chinese Community Center, 9800 Town Park Drive. The Chinese Youth Camp Dragon Training Program and Chinese Community Center Afterschool Program were awarded the grants for afterschool funding from the City Connections initiative with the City of Houston and CASE for Kids.



## ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

### Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 06.09 | The Case for Collaborations Workshop
- 06.09 | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting
- 06.12 | Grant Writing Basics

## HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: HOUSTON ISD:



This summer, Houston ISD is offering a free breakfast and lunch to children ages 1 to 18 at HISD campuses all over the city. The free meal program starts June 3. To find program dates and the location nearest you, go to <http://houstonisd.nutrislice.com/meal-locations/>.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## Adult Education Presents at Economic Development Conference of National Organization of Black County Officials

Adult Education's Angela Johnson represented Harris County Department of Education at the 31st Annual Economic Development Conference of the National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc., or NOBCO, on June 3-7. The theme for this year was "Empowered to Succeed in a New Era". The organization's Annual Economic Development Conference focused on nationally recognized leaders who shared relevant information on important issues confronting counties and cities.

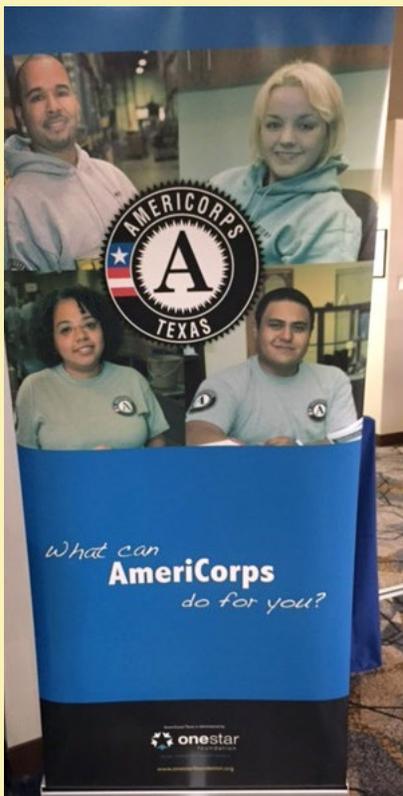


The primary focus was to look at the economic impact in areas such as education, job growth, and development. Workshops focused on maintaining healthy counties, the impact of the criminal justice system, and more. The conference reached out to government, community, and business leaders across the country to engage in roundtable discussions, workshops, and presentations that educated and highlighted many issues facing governments today.

Left: Roy Brooks, county commissioner and chairman, National Organization of Black County Officials; Angela Johnson, HCDE Adult Education coordinator; and Grady Prestage, county commissioner and conference host.

## Teacher Alternative Certification, CASE for Kids Network, Receive Training at Southwest National Service Conference

HCDE's Teacher Alternative Certification director, Lidia Zatopek volunteered and is learning about service opportunities at the Southwest National Service Conference (SWNSC) held June 8-10 in Fort Worth. SWNSC is coordinated by OneStar Foundation, the state service commission in Texas. The event provides training for staff of AmeriCorps programs. Alternative Certification has applied for an AmeriCorps Teacher Professional Corps grant, and should hear back on the status this summer. Also attending the conference is Ne'Cauje Turner, CASE for Kids AmeriCorps project coordinator.



## Center for Safe and Secure Schools Hosts Meeting about Legislative Changes in Truancy Law

Attendance Officers who oversee truancy issues met at HCDE to hear about the changes in legislation regarding House Bill 2398. The bill decriminalizes truancy by repealing the failure to attend law and creating a new civic process. Truancy officer Nathaniel Broussard from Cy-Fair ISD led the discussion with about 50 officers in school districts throughout greater Harris County. The meeting was hosted by the Center for Safe and Secure Schools.



T together  
E everyone  
A achieves  
M more

# BOARD CONNECTION

## 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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**Don Summers**  
*Position 7, At Large*

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

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

## Upcoming Board Events:

**Tuesday,  
June 16, 2015  
1:00 p.m.  
June Board Meeting**

