

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...

This week, HCDE hosted the Summer 2-Day Autism Institute that was facilitated by two longtime experts in the field of autism, and also included a panel of three autistic students. The two-day conference, which attracted educators from across Harris County, included lectures, networking, and discussions that advanced teaching and learning in the special education community. This unique group of educators left the conference equipped to impart cutting edge techniques as they positively impact the lives of students within the autism spectrum.

We are now settling into the rigors of summer as we, along with school districts, regroup for the upcoming 2015-2016 academic year. Our program, campus, and division personnel are assessing needs, focusing on program improvements, filling vacancies, and finalizing budgetary projections to ensure excellence in service delivery for next year. They are taking advantage of this time to arrange professional development opportunities and other initiatives to advance programming during this period of recalibration.

Next week, I will be attending the UT/TASA Summer Conference. I will be traveling to Austin this weekend, and I will be there through Tuesday. I am looking forward to this opportunity to grow with Superintendents from across the state during this leadership experience. The goal of this conference is to address a variety of school leadership issues with featured keynotes such as UT System Chancellor Bill McRaven. I will return to the office on Wednesday of next week, and I will resume our regular Summer Flex Schedule.

Please be reminded that the HCDE Annual Staff Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at the Humble Civic Center.

In closing, thanks again for your service to HCDE. Have a great weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

IN THIS ISSUE:

2-3 Program Connections
3 Campus Connections

3 Campus Connections
4 Community Connections

5 Board Connections

Dallas ISD Education Veteran Jonathan Parker Becomes HCDE Assistant Superintendent

Jonathan Parker is the new assistant superintendent at Harris County Department of Education. Parker will oversee the divisions of Head Start, Therapy Services, and Special Schools.

Parker is a 21-year educator and formerly served as principal of Dallas Independent School District's Benjamin Franklin Middle School. He previously worked in Dallas ISD as an administrator and teacher.

Parker earned his bachelor's in science degree from Prairie View A&M University, and a master's in educational administration from the University of North Texas.

The assistant superintendent has relocated to Humble from Dallas. He and wife Kesha have three daughters who are enrolled in public school.

His achievements include "Principal of the Year," an award given by the Northwest Council of Parent Teacher Associations. The school he led earned six of seven Texas academic distinctions in 2014, and was named the prestigious International Baccalaureate Candidate School in 2015.

Parker said his goal in leading HCDE, which provides services to 25 Harris County school districts and citizens in Harris County, is to model and inspire excellence, and to empower employees to collectively accomplish the goals of HCDE. (See story in Humble Observer.)



Jonathan Parker,
Assistant Superintendent

Leading Learning 3Di: Instruction to Action

Educators traveled as far as El Paso to attend the training Leading Learning 3Di: Instruction to Action. The 2-day training is hosted by HCDE Curriculum Specialists and is presented by Lead4ward, LLC. Leadership teams learn new strategic processes for using cumulative state level data at the knowledge and skills level to determine focus areas for the next year.



Photo: East Central Independent School District's Mary Steen and San Elizario Independent School District's Debbie Cortez collaborate on strategies to take back to their district teams.

ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 06.22 | Summer 2-Day Autism Institute
- 06.22 | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting
- 06.22 | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - SOCIAL STUDIES Sessions ONLY
- 06.23 | Leading Learning 3Di: Instruction to Action (2 Day Session)
- 06.23 | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - ART/MUSIC/THEATRE/PE/HEALTH Sessions ONLY
- 06.24 | Grant Writing and Its Processes Workshop
- 06.24 | Recruitment for HCDE Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Meeting
- 06.25 | Ethics For Accountants

HCDE Autism Conference Wraps Up with Panel of 3 Autistic Students to Discuss Classroom Practices



The Summer Autism Conference provided two days of lectures, networking, and discussions on autism on June 22 and 25. On the last day, a panel of three young, autistic adults provided a dynamic discussion about their trials of learning while in high school. The conference was led by two longtime educators Dr. Susan Catlett and Dr. Beverly J. Braman. The duo uses their practical classroom experience with autistic children to introduce successful behavior methods and practices.



PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Employees Cool Off with Summer Socials

Employees cooled off with a watermelon treat at 6300 Irvington through a Summer Social event sponsored by Human Resources. Another social is planned in July when ice cream will be served. The events encourage networking between divisions and support general employee camaraderie.

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

ABC West Begins Extended School Year Services for 2015: Lessons Focus on Hydration, Life Lessons from Golf



The golf course became the classroom as ABC West students took to the fairways at the F.M. Law Park Golf Course last week. Principal Dr. Victor Keys used the experience to teach life lessons to students, including



sportsmanship, rules, and team-building. Principal Keys gave instruction on differences in clubs and how to make a putt. The event was sponsored by the First Tee Program of Greater Houston, a nonprofit that instills life-enhancing values and promotes healthy choices through the game of golf.

Before leaving to the fairways, staff talked to students about staying hydrated outdoors, and provided cups for students to decorate and personalize to use during the summer.



Photo: For record-keeping purposes, the longest golfing drive was made by student Deven Freeman, featured in the photo with (left) Principal Dr. Victor Keys, Dr. Dee Mattox Hall, and



Assistant Superintendent Jonathan M. Parker.

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

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

8 National School Public Relations Association Awards Garnered by HCDE Communications and Client Engagement Staff for 2015

Communicators from Harris County Department of Education's Communication and Client Engagement division earned eight National School Public Relations Association awards for 2015. Judges received 1,024 entries for the 2015 national awards.



The awards honor superior school public relations programs; exemplary public relations activities, programs, projects, and campaigns; and outstanding publications and electronic media. The Golden Achievement Award measures clear evidence of research, analysis/planning, communication/implementation, and evaluation of public relations campaigns. Publications are awarded in three "best of categories," including excellence, merit, and honorable mention.

Communication to Launch Employee Social Media Campaign this Fall!

Communication is launching an internal social media campaign to engage employees to follow HCDE on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linked In, YouTube, and our School Bell blog. In return, we are choosing one employee each month through our new followers to highlight or feature. We are calling them our HCDE rock star. We'll be announcing the contest soon, so stay tuned and don't forget to follow us!



Like Us and Follow
our **blog** and **social media** outlets.
Become our HCDE Superstar!

*Get featured on internal news**



@HCDEtx



@HCDEtx



@HCDEtx



@HCDEtv



@HCDE



blog.hcde-texas.org



www.hcde-texas.org

**One employee chosen to be featured monthly.*

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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Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

Upcoming Board Events:

July Board Meeting
Tuesday,
July 21, 2015
1:00 p.m.

