

# 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

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We got a great deal accomplished this week at HCDE. We started the week off with a huge success. The Teaching and Learning Center held its first-ever Leadership Summit with over 200 educators in attendance. I provided the opening remarks to a room filled with anxious educators, eager to develop their full capacities. Keynote speakers for the day-long event included Dr. Nancy Robinson and Dr. Kelly Brown. It was an event well worth attending and many of the attendees signed up for future professional development offerings to be hosted by the Teaching and Learning Center. See Leadership Summit coverage on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.

My Executive Leadership Team and I began the week off, as usual, discussing a variety of ongoing projects as well as proposed initiatives. The brain-share that occurs during this weekly forum is dynamic, and ensures operational continuity throughout the organization.

On Tuesday, our Team of Eight also made great strides. Thanks for attending both the Board Work Session—where I had an opportunity to unveil my proposed initiatives (as well as the accompanying potential budget implications) and the November Board Meeting. It was rewarding to meet with you and discuss my programmatic visions for HCDE. After nearly a year of serving as Superintendent of HCDE, I believe I have a unique vantage point that provides me with data points that inform my suggestions related to the directions HCDE should venture. Further, I thank you for your valuable feedback during those discussions. As always, I appreciate your support and your service to HCDE.

For the remainder of this week, I've been attending the 2015 National Association of Black School Executives (NABSE) Conference in Washington, D.C. This conference has been an excellent source for professional development of educators and is well-categorized for educators at various levels within their careers. Today, for example, I presented during the Superintendents' Strand on the topic of Superintendents Supporting Each Other in Executive Leadership. This session was facilitated by leading, high-profile education executives from all over the country spanning from Gadsden County (Florida), Wake County (North Carolina), Brookwood County (Illinois), Lancaster, California, and South Holland, Illinois, who imparted wisdom on the real challenges facing today's public education system. The welcome and opening remarks were provided by Dr. W.L. "Tony" Sawyer—of New York, NABSE Board Member and Chairman of the NABSE Superintendents' Commission.

As for remaining true to our commitment to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service to Harris County school districts, we delivered additional professional development workshops to Harris County educators this week—in addition to the Leadership Summit held this past Monday. We hosted a Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar entitled, Diversify Your Funding through Government Grants and we also hosted an HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting.

In closing, please be reminded that next week is a short week due to the Thanksgiving Holiday break. As a result, I will be in the office Monday through Wednesday. HCDE will be closed on Thursday and Friday. **The Connector** will resume during the week of November 30.

On that note, thanks again for your service to HCDE and best wishes to each of you for a great Thanksgiving Holiday. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a relaxing weekend.

# Awareness

## EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

### Employee Holiday Celebrations

Administration and the Human Resources division will host receptions for staff at both the North Post Oak and 6300 Irvington locations of HCDE. Sweet treats will be provided during both employee celebrations before the Winter Break. Employees at the North Post Oak location will celebrate Thursday, December 10 from 2-3:30 p.m. Employees at the 6300 Irvington location of HCDE will celebrate the season Friday, December 11 from 2-3:30 p.m. Staff at respective locations are encouraged to join the festivities. Board Members are certainly also invited to attend.



### HR Recruitment in Full Swing

The Human Resources division continued its mission to recruit capable staff on Wednesday of this week by attending a job fair at Lamar University in Beaumont. There was no shortage of job seekers looking to start their careers.



### SCENES from Rosa Siller's Retirement Celebration

Rosa Siller, Adult Education, retired from HCDE after 25 years of educating over 10,000 students. As a dedicated teacher, she inspired both her students and co-workers. Siller received well-wishes from HCDE staff (former and present), family, and friends.



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Adult Education Students to be Inducted into National Adult Education Honor Society in December

At least 20 candidates will be inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society 2015. The celebration is planned for December 11 from 10 a.m. to noon in the HCDE Conference Center, rooms 501-502. Students are enrolled in English as a second language and GED classes at our community learning centers throughout the county. They are nominated for the award by their teachers, who commend their students for overcoming adversities. All are role models for their classmates and for the community at-large. Their personal stories will be shared during the induction.



### HCDE Hosts Houston AREA GIS Student Day 2015

Geographic Information Systems Day provided hands-on activities with geocaching, tours of GIS-equipped vehicles, a geography bee and an explorative GIS lab for 250 students from Spring, Houston, and Laredo independent school districts yesterday at HCDE. Students worked with GIS specialists from the City of Houston, the City of Stafford, and the Port of Houston Authority. The event was hosted by Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center and included indoor and outdoor activities.

A geographical information system (GIS) is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, integrating, manipulating, analyzing, and displaying data related to positions on the Earth's surface. GIS software helps organizations and businesses produce maps and other graphic displays of geographic information for analysis and presentation.

Students explored the world of geocaching, with hide-and-seek containers, and toured emergency vehicles as part of the activities. Hands-on lab time was provided inside a GIS lab. The first GIS Student Day was held in 2001 and the event continues to expand and offer incentives for students to participate and explore GIS careers.

### Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

#### NOVEMBER 16 TRAINING

HCDE Leadership Summit 2015-2016

#### NOVEMBER 18 TRAINING

Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar - Diversify Your Funding through Government Grants

#### NOVEMBER 19 TRAINING

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools just released its most current issue of *The Guardian*. It is chock-full of information related



to school safety and is relevant to a plethora of professionals in the education and safety community.

### District Highlight: Galena Park ISD

Galena Park ISD hosts its FFA Livestock Show November 16-19. Get the details:

<http://www.galenaparkisd.com/n.../2015ShowSchedule5website.pdf>



# Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



## Leadership Summit Presenters at a Glance

The goal of this week's Leadership Summit was to assist educators with:

- Developing systems that organize teaching and learning outcomes to advance teacher and student growth
- Understanding how PLCs are used in a reflective practice model
- Empowering campuses with a culturally responsive model; and
- Reducing teacher burn-out



Superintendent James Colbert delivers Leadership Summit welcome



Dr. Kelly Brown presents Creating Cultural Responsiveness



Dr. Nancy Robinson presents Essential Instructional Systems for Advancing Outcomes



Dr. Kelly Brown, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership  
Whitlowe R. Green  
College of Education  
Prairie View A&M  
University



Nancy Robinson, M.Ed.,  
Former Associate  
Superintendent of  
Curriculum and  
Instruction,  
Judson ISD (1)



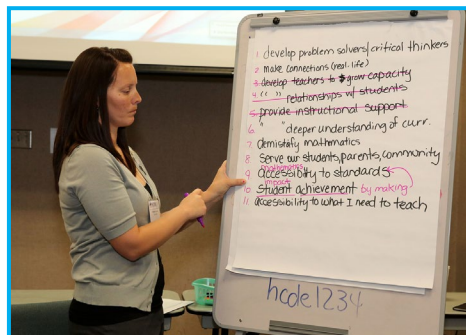
Laura Aguirre and Serlynthia Chatmon ensure seamless Summit logistics



Dr. Vida Avery, Grants Presenter (HCDE's Center for Grants Development)



TLC Senior Director and Director help facilitate Summit



# Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



TLC's Special Education expert Debra Anderson facilitates focus group



Lidia Zatopek and Nicole Shanahan collaborate during the Summit



Assistant Superintendent for Education and Enrichment, Dr. Kimberly McLeod greets Summit attendees



TLC Content Directors and Staff address conference attendees



Presenters Dr. Kelly Brown and Dr. Nancy Robinson



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Community Relations Organizational Morale Professional Development

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

- Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and the community;
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way;
- Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;
- Model and support responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas;
- Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team-building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management;
- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness; and
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration



By HCDE hosting the Leadership Summit with nearly 250 educators at all levels develop their leadership capacity, I ensured that I met the Board's expectations of me in several elements of performance in categories including Community Relations, Organizational Morale, and Professional Development. I am clearly meeting the Board's goals of me to make professional presentations to all audiences in all arenas, maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents and community leaders; direct administrators to accomplish the mission, goals,

and objectives of the Department, and monitor progress; and ensure that staff development opportunities are communicated to, and available to employees. Finally, this medium allows us to assess any new and effective development tools available, and determine their applicability to HCDE staff.

## HCDE BOARD

*Board President*  
*Position 2, Precinct 4*  
Angie Chesnut

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Kay Smith

Erica Lee Carter  
*Position 6, Precinct 1*

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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:

**DECEMBER 15, 2015**  
**December Board Meeting**  
**1:00 p.m.**

