

The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education
for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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From the office of **JAMES COLBERT, JR. – SUPERINTENDENT**

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OF NOTE

I take this opportunity to wish each of you a happy and prosperous new year. HCDE reopened from the Winter Break this past Monday, January 4. I trust that you enjoyed the holiday season with family and friends.

Please be reminded that January is Board Appreciation Month and we look forward to honoring you at the January Board Meeting which will be held Thursday, January 21, 2016. Please plan to arrive at 12:00 noon for refreshments with staff. (Note that this month's Board Meeting is being held on the third Thursday of this month instead of the third Tuesday.) Also, be reminded that it is now statutory that all future HCDE Board Meetings be recorded, and made available to the general public within seven working days following each Board Meeting. To that end, we are in the final stages of refining logistics so that we are in seamless compliance as of the January 21 Board Meeting. In accordance with the statute, the recordings will be made available via the HCDE website.

This week, I had the honor of being part of a panel of elected officials and area school superintendents during a two-day symposium hosted by the Desire to Aspire Program in conjunction with My Brother's Keeper. The event was held at the College of Education at Texas Southern University. Panelists included several state legislators, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Mayor Sylvester Turner, and a variety of other notable speakers. Topics and breakout sessions focused on the Desire to Aspire Program's theme: Leading All Children Toward Success.

As you are aware, the City of Houston inaugurated its new mayor earlier this week. HCDE has a strong relationship with former State Representative Sylvester Turner and we look forward to even stronger relations with the City of Houston as we continue to administer our city-related grants and programs. Also, on a sad note, I would be remiss not to mention the passing of longtime County Commissioner El Franco Lee. My thoughts and prayers are with the late Commissioner's family. It is evident that Harris County lost a great ambassador.

Our school campuses officially began the second semester this week after ending the first semester with impressive academic achievements, not to mention outstanding performances in celebration of the Christmas season. My Executive Leadership Team and I visited the various campuses and attended the holiday festivities while also taking the opportunity to visit and meet with faculty, staff, and campus administrators.

Our Head Start Centers also went the extra mile for our youngest learners as Santa Claus made visits to some of our centers. Our Humble Head Start location is looking forward to its upcoming groundbreaking ceremony and open house which will be held next Friday, January 15, 2016 from 2-4 p.m. We are excited about this new facility and all Board Members are encouraged to attend as area elected officials will also be invited.

Our Executive Leadership Team had a productive meeting this week to kick off the new semester. My team is also reviewing the goals and objectives in which I set for them at the start of the year, and they are evaluating the status of their respective charges as we move forward. Likewise, I am working diligently on numerous projects to advance HCDE in the broader community that supports public education. We continue to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service. Our Leadership Team will convene next week and we will continue to drill down into the organization as we ensure excellence in systemic achievement throughout the organization.

HCDE has received exceptional visibility over the past several weeks. Our annual car-giveaway, as a result of the ongoing relationship between our Head Start division and Bates Custom and Collision, was covered on local broadcast media in late December. This event is always an outstanding outreach opportunity that affords two deserving families reliable transportation, in the form of two refurbished vehicles, packed with Christmas toys for the children within those families. Additionally, as in years past, the mothers of these Head Start students were also provided gift cards for gasoline, as well as temporary assistance with motorist insurance. At the state level, HCDE's Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program was showcased through a student column in the current issue of Texas School Business magazine. See details on page 4 of this issue of The Connector.

In addition to the aforementioned Board Appreciation and Humble Head Start Open House events, please save the date of Saturday, January 30, 2016. You are invited to attend the 30th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference. Should you plan to attend, please advise Karla Cantu. You need not plan to attend all day; however, if present, you will be introduced during the welcome at the start of the day's activities. The event will be held at Kingdom Builders' Center in southeast Houston, located at 6011 West Orem. If you would like to be introduced as an HCDE Board Member, please plan to arrive no later than 8:15 a.m.

I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend!

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

HCDE Community Service and Shriners' Hospital Toy Drive

The Human Resources division hosted a Department-wide Toy Drive in conjunction with the Shriners' Hospital in the Texas Medical Center. Representatives from the Human Resources division delivered boxes of toys, donated by HCDE employees, just in time for Christmas. The gifts were placed under the hospital's Angel Tree and then disseminated to the pediatric patients in the hospital.



Shriners' Hospital in the Texas Medical Center



Boxes of donated toys collected by HR from HCDE employees



Shriners' Hospital in Angel Tree



HCDE Human Resources representatives deliver toys collected from the HCDE toy drive



Employee Referral Program Provides Incentives for Employees to Refer Professionals for HCDE Jobs

Sharvon Pipkins, coordinator for the Center for Grants Development, receives her gift from Human Resources for referring Rodrigue Gino Kamaya for a Data and Compliance Specialist position within Head Start. Once Kamaya completed 60 days of employment, Pipkins was eligible to receive the prize she selected. The Employee Referral procedures and forms can be found on the HCDE Portal.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

5,000 Scholastic Art & Writing Entries to Be Judged as HCDE Receives Record-Breaking Number of Student Pieces



HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing accepted 5,000 art and writing entries just before the holidays. The record number of entries will be judged this month. The national competition allowed districts to send unlimited numbers of

entries this year. HCDE staff worked diligently to log in all the entries. In our featured photo, Norma Rodriguez of Spring ISD drops by her student writing entries and administrative assistant Laura Aguirre makes sure they are all accounted for.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 4, 2016

Assessment Training Adult Education

JANUARY 8, 2016

Links to Learning



Labors of Love: Bates Collision Centers Donates 2 Cars to 2 Head Start Moms During Holidays

Bates Collision Centers donated two cars to Head Start moms who gained the cars for responsible parenting during the holidays. Center managers nominated parents for the award and each wrote an essay and completed an application. A panel of judges at Bates drilled the list down to two families. Bates staff rehab the cars after hours and local businesses donate to the cause. This year's awardees are Emely Webster (view video: <https://youtu.be/u6KrQUCbeX0>) and Lynn Ponce (view video: https://youtu.be/Y6cH7BLjo_Y).



Stories about the moms aired on both KPRC (<https://youtu.be/TEPuVj00Zlg>) and Univision 45 (<https://youtu.be/xRVxmL1sHCs>). The Baytown Sun also wrote a front-page story about the philanthropic project (view story: www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Press_releasesNewFolder/BaytownSun_121715_all.pdf).

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Program Showcased Through Student Column in Texas School Business Magazine



HCDE's regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program is showcased in this month's Texas School Business edition as student writer and HCDE regional Scholastic Art & Writing awardee Julianna Teoh writes a column for Student Voice, a venue for teens to voice their opinions about education matters.

After the Communication division sent the magazine a news release about Teoh becoming a national poet finalist, editor Katie Ford asked if Communication would coordinate the column with Teoh. The fifteen-year-old traveled to New York City last June with her district with former Scholastic coordinator Melba Kent to an awards ceremony in Carnegie Hall. Her story tells about her appreciation for HCDE and Klein for giving her opportunity to share her writing voice.

Read the story in the January/February edition of Texas School Business: <http://goo.gl/XI9ct5>



CASE for Kids to Gain \$900,000 in Funding from Houston Endowment

The Houston Endowment recently announced that CASE for Kids will receive \$900,000 in funding for afterschool for two years. Funds support approximately 2,000 low-income youth through 36 comprehensive afterschool programs.

National Adult Education Honor Society Celebrates Student Successes with Community

The National Adult Education Honor Society provided opportunity for adult learners to celebrate their stories of success with their teachers, staff and the community. The story was featured in the Pasadena Citizen:

<http://goo.gl/VUzc6M> and through Univision 45: <https://youtu.be/dbafdC7Gpmk>



SRI Board HCDE Representative Elected to Serve in National Capacity



HCDE's Deirdre Walker Sharkey, Ed.D., Curriculum and Compliance Officer with the Educator Certification and Professional Advancement division was recently elected to serve on the School Reform Initiative (SRI) Board, representing the state of Texas.

The SRI creates transformational learning communities fiercely committed to educational equity and excellence. Hats off to Dr. Sharkey, the Educator Certification and Professional Advancement division and the entire TLC group for this significant accomplishment.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

SCENES FROM THE ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOL WEST LOCATION HOLIDAY PRODUCTION



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Graduation Focuses on Single Graduate from AB West



AB School West held a fall graduation ceremony on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 to commemorate a newly minted graduate. Elijah Walker was all smiles when staff told him how proud they were of him for graduating. Attendees showered Walker with best wishes for the future. (Since students are on individual plans, graduation times and ceremonies for the students may vary.)

Community Service Project at AB West Provides Needy with Food, Clothing

Students and staff of AB School West completed their annual "Share Your Christmas Clothing and Can Food Drive" for the 2015-2016 school year. Dr. Victor Keys, principal, said faculty, staff and students gathered slightly used clothes and can goods for more than a month. On December 15, 2015 the clothes were delivered to the Star of Hope Shelter. Canned goods were taken to the Houston Food Bank. Once all the items were delivered, the students were treated to pizza as a reward for their community service efforts.



Highpoint School North Provides Character Education Presentation for Students

The "Power of Being Persistent" was the theme of a character education presentation at Highpoint School North. Principal David Oquin said the presentation held last month focused on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) through a panel of presenters. Students heard from Kenneth Morris, founder/CEO of Universal Elite Aerospace; Dr. L. Hamilton, founder/director of STEM UP (STEM with an Urban Perspective); J.N. Beasley, project manager of Chevron Corporation; W. Jones, air traffic controller with the Federal Aviation Administration; and J.B. Bulter Jr., rocket innovator for NASA-Houston Rocket Club.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Sheldon ISD Superintendent



King Davis selected as Sheldon ISD Superintendent

Details:

<http://www.sheldonisd.com/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=9568&ViewID=7B97F7ED-8E5E-4120-848F-A8B4987D588F&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=16196&PageID=1>



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Harris County Department of Education hosts open house, ribbon cutting at new Humble Head Start Center January 15

Harris County Department of Education Head Start showcases its new Humble Head Start Center which will serve 74 students through an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony on January 15 from 2-4 p.m. at 130 Atascocita Road in Humble, Texas.

View invitation: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HumbleHeadStartinvite.pdf>

The ribbon-cutting ceremony begins at 2:30 p.m., followed by a tour of the new 5,700-square-foot center located next to the Journey of Faith United Methodist Church.

Head Start, a federal program, empowers preschool children ages 3-5 and their families with school readiness skills. HCDE provides services for families in northeast Harris County through 16 Head Start centers which serve 1,250 students.

“We are proud to share our services within the Humble community and look forward to partnering with Humble businesses and local agencies to strengthen the community,” said Venetia Peacock, senior director of HCDE Head Start.

HCDE Head Start develops relationships with school districts, social service agencies, local businesses, universities and other community entities to provide services to Head Start families. Centers include Humble as well as Channelview, Fifth Ward, Dogan, J.D. Walker, Tidwell, Coolwood, Baytown, Crosby, La Porte, Barrett Station, Compton, Sheffield, Fonwood, Pugh and San Jacinto College.

Applications are now being accepted for enrollment at all 16 HCDE Head Start centers, including Humble. Services include early childhood instruction, meals during program hours, family services, developmental screenings, disability services and mental wellness services. Since its inception, HCDE Head Start has served over 18,000 families in northeast Houston. For more information about enrollment, call (713) 672-9343 or access www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart.

About Harris County Department of Education (HCDE): Serving students, teachers, schools and communities throughout Harris County and Liberty County, HCDE is a local governmental organization providing value for school districts while supporting educational opportunity. Partnering with Harris County school districts, HCDE maximizes local resources and respond to the needs of locally elected school boards and education leaders. HCDE services include school-based therapy for students, afterschool programs, Head Start, educator training, adult education and programs to promote safe schools. To learn more about how your county department of education can help you: www.hcde-texas.org.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations and Professional Growth and Development

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to

- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way;
- 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 community; and to
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration



This week, I participated in a symposium sponsored by the Desire to Aspire program and My Brother's Keeper. The selected venue was the College of Education at Texas Southern University. Topics covered over the two days were geared to the overall theme of Leading All Children Toward Success. In addition to Superintendent Alton Frailey and other area superintendents, other featured guests were:

- Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee
- State Representatives Alma Allen and Joe Deshotel
- State Senators Rodney Ellis and Royce West
- Mayor Sylvester Turner
- State Board of Education Member Lawrence Allen
- Dr. Ivory Toldson, Executive Director-White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

By participating in this event, I am working to achieve the Board's goal of me to communicate the accomplishments of the Department in a variety of formats; interfacing in political arenas and public meetings; representing HCDE through attendance at events and speaking professionally; making professional presentations to audiences in various arenas; listening and taking into account differing viewpoints of various constituencies; and assessing new and effective development tools that are available in cutting-edge education environments and determining their applicability to HCDE staff.

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

JANUARY 21, 2016
Board Appreciation Reception
12:00 noon

Board Appreciation Reception
12:30 p.m.

January Board Meeting
1 p.m.

