

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

It's been a busy week here at HCDE. On Monday, I held the first Leadership Team meeting of the second semester. As you are already aware, during those meetings, division directors report on the status of their programs, services, and campuses. All divisions are moving full speed ahead during this half of the academic year. Our Academic and Behavior Schools, alone, serve 23 area school districts. Just today, our Head Start division celebrated an accomplishment by having hosted its Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at its Humble center location.

Our Records Management division is also experiencing growth that has been steady over a period of time, receiving an approximate 500 new boxes of documents for storage per week. Meanwhile, our Center for Safe and Secure Schools division recently added a new member school district to its client base. The wheels of HCDE's programs, services, and divisions are moving in the right direction.

I am pleased to report on a significant community partnership between HCDE and one of the largest construction companies in the city of Houston—S&B Construction. This relationship has resulted in an excellent endeavor for our Adult Education division. It allows us to participate in the empowerment of women in a sector of industry usually dominated by men. Moreover, it helps to power our Adult Education division's focus on workforce development, a major need in our community and the city-at-large. We are excited to take part in increasing the earning potential of at least 20 women at the start of this ongoing project. (Please see page 2 of this issue of **The Connector** for additional details.)

Several of our divisions will be either presenting or showcasing at upcoming conferences, including the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, Research and Evaluation, and Choice Partners. Our Center for Grants Development group is re-instituting its meetings with fellow grants professionals in area school districts in an effort to advance creating value, delivering opportunity, and providing service to our clients. HCDE is making progress in the greater Harris County and metropolitan Houston area.

In the coming weeks, I will be hosting area Harris County superintendents in an inaugural meeting for a new initiative sponsored by HCDE that will inspire my colleagues to agitate the traditional education theory, explore different education perspectives, and ultimately, impact public education across the state of Texas. I look forward to collaborating with the education executives in our city and county, and I anticipate tremendous brain-share as we create synergy in advancing education on an executive leadership platform.

Please be reminded that January is Board Appreciation Month and we will honor you at a reception at 12:00 noon on next Thursday, January 21, 2016. Also, please note that those of you who are members of the Audit Committee will have an 11:30 meeting, and all Board Members should plan to attend an important Board Training at 12:30, immediately before Board Meeting, to discuss proper Board Meeting protocols as a result of the new statute that is now in effect regarding the recording of Board Meetings.

In closing, please be reminded that Monday is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and HCDE will be closed for business. We will resume normal business hours Tuesday, January 19, 2016. We look forward to honoring you in recognition of Board Appreciation next week. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

Have a great weekend and thanks for your service to HCDE.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Project with S&B Construction Company and \$148,000 HGAC Grant Expands HCDE's Reach on Workforce Development



The Adult Education division has a great opportunity to broaden its impact on workforce development through both a partnership with S&B Construction and a grant funded by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC).

HCDE has been in discussions with S&B Construction in an effort to increase workforce development within the Adult Education division. S&B is one of the city's largest construction companies and it has decided to introduce women to careers in pipefitting as they construct and outfit a client facility in Baytown. As a result, our Adult Education division provided the testing for a group of 80 women, of whom approximately 20 will be selected for employment with S&B. Marketing of this opportunity was distributed to approximately 4,000 women. Of the

4,000 women solicited, 150 women responded and our Adult Education division managed the screening of the 80 who were selected for testing. Of the 80 the division tested, approximately 20 will be hired by S&B Construction. For the duration of the large construction project in Baytown (a 3-year endeavor), our Adult Education division will be providing the academic support component in the areas of literacy and math, and will be developing curriculum for assessment of those skills.

This project is in conjunction with United Way and THRIVE. It is anticipated that as S&B is engaged by additional clients to construct other facilities, that the partnership with HCDE will continue. The current project with S&B is underway and training for the women is expected to commence in February.

Yet another project, also with emphasis on workforce development, is the result of a demo grant with HGAC. The council has awarded a grant in the amount of \$148,000 to our Adult Education division to cover expenses for instructors, and curriculum development for job-readiness and workforce development, for the purposes of facilitating services similar to those related to the S&B project.

The goal of the overall project is to implement new workforce integration models related to three areas of industry—construction, logistics, and manufacturing.

This project is in conjunction with the Texas Workforce Board and the Workforce Board will identify participating employers. Final funding approval will take place during the January 19 HGAC Meeting, and this project is also expected to begin in February.

Our Adult Education division will continue its support of GED training and other related skills training while also focusing even more on workforce development.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

Football Friday

The Human Resources division sponsored a Houston Texans Spirit Day last Friday in anticipation of last week's Houston Texans playoff game. HCDE employees were able to wear their Houston Texans jerseys and jeans in celebration of the much-anticipated playoff game last Saturday night.



Teaching and Learning Center staff proudly support the Houston Texans in support of last weekend's playoff game



Center for Grants Development staff Gayla Rawlinson Maynard and Martha Silva Froude sport Houston Texans gear

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

A Lesson About Life....Using Cabbage



Highpoint School East students were able to learn a lesson or two about the cycle of life using a cabbage. The unusually large cabbage, grown in the garden of a friend of Dr. Dee Mattox Hall, proved effective.

Because of the size of the cabbage, Mattox Hall felt that the cabbage could be put to excellent use in the advancement of teaching and learning. Using the various inner and outer leaf layers of the cabbage as an example, students were able to apply the subject matter during an interesting, hands-on lesson. The oversized cabbage also serves as a reminder to us all to adopt even healthier eating habits as we enter a new year!

HCDE Principals Train on Communication Styles

Harris County Department of Education campus principals Marion Cooksey, Victor Keys, David



Oquin, and Mindy Robertson recently attended a two-day seminar focused on how to communicate clearly and effectively. The Fred Pryor seminar, How to Communicate with Tact and Professionalism, teaches individuals to use nonverbal communication to reinforce their message, put others at ease, and achieve a positive outcome. The seminar also included dozens of interactive exercises designed to enhance skills learned, and apply them in real life situations. For more information about the communications seminar, visit the Fred Pryor Seminars website.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Katy ISD



Katy ISD
Superintendent
Alton Frailey
Stepping Down
After 9 Years

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT UPDATE

The Education and Enrichment divisions are focusing on leadership development through model and application. Collectively, the group completed its Fall Book Study Series as they read and reviewed, **Multipliers** by Liz Wiseman.

The divisions within Education and Enrichment closed out the first semester of this academic year in exceptional fashion as it relates to accomplishments, achievements, and recognition.

Adult Education Highlights

- The Adult Education division ended the year recognizing 24 students who were inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society in a ceremony held on Friday, December 11.
- Adult Education Manager Angela Johnson submitted two presentations that have been accepted for the Commission for Adult Basic Education Conference. This is a national conference that will be held in Dallas in April.
- The division is also working with United Way of Houston and S&B Construction on a project to hire and train 25-30 Houston-area women for pipefitting jobs. This is an exciting endeavor with a great deal of potential in the area of workforce development. (See article on page 2.)
- The division closed out the year by establishing a relationship with Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) that will prove to be a mutually-beneficial development.



Educator Certification and Professional Advancement

- The ECPA division ended the year on a proud note in announcing that Dr. Deidre Sharkey, ECPA Curriculum and Compliance Officer, has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the School Reform Initiative (SRI), a national non-profit organization which serves as the premier source for resources and professional development related to SRI Critical Friendship, Facilitative Leadership, and Collaborative Learning. This is accomplished by addressing issues of educational equity and excellence for all students, through building and sustaining transformational adult learning communities. Dr. Sharkey will serve for a term of three years.
- As part of its continuous recruitment efforts, ECPA conducted a Career Choice seminar for prospective applicants who are considering a career change to become certified teachers. The seminar includes information about Texas licensure laws, ECPA's admissions requirements and selection process, and a program overview.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 12, 2016

2016 Spring Leadership Institute

JANUARY 13, 2016

Gang Awareness

12:30 - 4:30

Gang Awareness

8am-12

JANUARY 14, 2016

Lending Library - Demonstration Workshop: New Year Numeracy

JANUARY 15, 2016

Emergency Operation Plan Orientation Workshop

10 am-11 am

HCDE Employees Only

Emergency Operation Plan Orientation Workshop

2:30 pm-3:30 pm

HCDE Employees Only

Project WET Educator Workshop

School Finance Council

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT UPDATE *(continued)*

Research and Evaluation Institute

- Our Research and Evaluation group submitted a presentation for the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators' (TABSE's) 31st Annual Conference which will be held in March. The presentation will be based on a descriptive study comparing school district and state demographic and disciplinary data within Harris County and TABSE school districts.
- In collaboration with Head Start, R&E staff completed the 2015-16 aggregate report of the Developmental Assessments from over 1,200 students who were measured at the beginning of the year.
- The group also worked in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) for their Leadership Summit held in November and found that results from more than 152 participant evaluations indicated that the Leadership Summit expanded theoretical knowledge and provided helpful applications for educational practice among classroom teachers and campus and district administrators. (HATS OFF TO TLC!)
- Dr. Andres Garcia and Dr. Jeannette Truxillo of REI collaborated with faculty from four area local universities and a Harris County school district on a conference call led by Dr. Kimberly McLeod to discuss a developing research study of "Texas by the Numbers". Universities included in the study are Sam Houston State University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas Southern University, and Lamar University.
- Dr. Jeannette Truxillo and Likita Holmes are collaborating with Dr. Lisa Caruthers and Dr. Patrick Leung from the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work to discuss a study investigating the return on investment of afterschool programming.
- The group ended the year during a lunch where they celebrated the holiday and shared current plans and discussed personal and professional memories.

Center for Grants Development

- Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard hosted a national Twitter Chat #GrantChat titled "A Team of One to a Team of Many". She also has an article posted on the SmartEGrants blog found at <http://smarte-grants.com/2015/12/from-a-team-of-one-to-a-team-of-many/>.
- Dr. Vida L. Avery attended a reception honoring William Adams, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, where she discussed HCDE's programs, our role in the community, and grant proposals with the entity's executive director and board members. The entity advances heritage, culture, and education.
- Kristal Johnson participated in the Houston Social Media Breakfast Gift of Guidance Roundtable where she shared social media strategies with local nonprofit organizations. She also identified four prospective funding opportunities for HCDE divisions (one to apply; one for collaboration; and two for sharing), which she distributed via the weekly Funding Announcement e-blast.
- The division researched, identified, and shared over 40 grant and other resources with HCDE divisions, districts, charter schools, and other education organizations through their grant-based media outlets.
- Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard presented a webinar, "The Grant Budget, It's Not Just About the Math!" with attendees from Evolution Academy Charter School, Fort Bend ISD, and HCDE.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT UPDATE *(continued)*

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)

- TLC ended the year after a month of special project highlights, including Frances Hester and Andrea Segraves' meeting with the Chancellor and Chief of Staff of Houston Community College: Drs. Caesar Maldonado and Melissa Gonzalez. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future partnership opportunities between HCDE and HCC.
- The pair also met with Dr. Kim Nugent, President of DeVry University, to discuss possibilities for future opportunities for HCDE to support DeVry. Dr. Nugent will be providing educational resources this spring by facilitating sessions as an addition to the Leadership Speaker Series.
- Frances Hester and Andrea Segraves met with Lonestar College Chancellor and Executive Vice-Chancellor to discuss future partnership opportunities. Segraves will be adding a Leadership Consortium between K-12 educators and higher-ed educators to the Leadership Speaker Series in Spring 2016.
- The Scholastic Art and Writing Program completed the submission process for over 5,000 student entries, an increase of 40% over last year.
- Segraves led the Leadership Summit Steering Committee in two follow-up meetings regarding next steps for the upcoming Leadership Institute Cohort that begins this month.



Pictured are a few of the volunteer art judges from surrounding school districts, The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and Texas Art Supply.

Judging Begins for Harris County Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

Last week, Houston-area professionals from nonprofits, businesses, and school districts met to judge 4,800 student art and writing entries for The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards of Harris County.

Student entries are judged based on originality, technical skills, and artistic vision, and those selected to receive Gold Keys will advance to the national level. Regional awards will be announced at the end of January.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to:

- Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;
- Seek systematically to improve the climate by obtaining and utilizing feedback from employees of the Department;
- Model and support responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas;
- Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence
- Ensure fair and equitable management practices;
- Demonstrate skill in anticipating, managing, and resolving conflict; and
- Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team-building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management



The Department continues its work in the area of organizational morale Department-wide through a systemic leadership model. Through a variety of collaborative activities that bring groups together, all division directors, principals, and managers are sensitive to employee morale.

Our Education and Enrichment group is just one example of this, as highlighted in this issue of The Connector.



As a result of activities such as these, I am working to achieve the Board's goal of me to

- **Establish a culture among the staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocrity;**
- **Ensure that all staff administers personnel practices with consistency and fairness with respect for the individual;**
- **Monitor the salary grid to ensure equity in the compensation program; and**
- **Ensure an effective backup plan is in place for all functional areas in the event of absence of personnel.**

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.

