

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

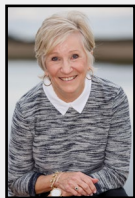
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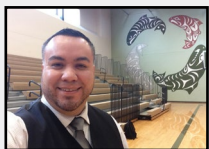
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OF NOTE

As we celebrate Board Appreciation this month, let me start off by thanking you again for your service and dedication to HCDE. It was an honor to celebrate you at yesterday's reception and to recognize you during the Board Meeting. We salute each of you and the time, energy, and brain-share you contribute to the Department.

I am pleased to report that Friday's ribbon cutting ceremony was a success at the new Humble Head Start Center. Parents, staff, and community members were on hand to celebrate the event. This new facility is an upgrade from the previous one and we are pleased to provide a new facility for our Humble Head Start students that is more conducive to the teaching and learning process. (Please see page 2 for additional coverage of the ribbon cutting ceremony.)

This week was no different as we continued our ongoing work and commitment to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service to the greater Harris County community and our client school districts. In the teaching and learning arena, we hosted workshops for educators in Harris County in the area of science in sessions such as Evaluating Rigor of Instruction and Assessment in elementary science. Such sessions were also held for educators in both the middle and high school levels. In other areas of focus, workshops were held regarding initiating sustainable change as well as social thinking. CASE for Kids hosted a CPR and first aid training. We also facilitated a Bilingual 164 TExES Supplemental 164 Test Review as well as a bilingual targeted language proficiency test review. We ended the week of training with science in Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification.

This week, I met with several Harris County superintendents to discuss HCDE's superintendents' executive leadership endeavor: **Focal Point | Executive Leadership in Action**. Focal Point will be launched next month at an inaugural breakfast, and I am very excited about its scope and possibilities. Wheels are in motion and there is great interest among the superintendents with whom I have either already met or with whom I have spoken thus far. I will keep you apprised of further developments as I move forward in this process.

Next week, members of our Executive Leadership Team will be traveling to the TASA/TASB Mid-Winter Conference in Austin. I will be leaving Sunday and will attend the conference through Tuesday. I will return to the office Wednesday. I look forward to the opportunity to bring additional visibility to HCDE, as well as the professional development and networking opportunities with my colleagues who will be in attendance from all areas of state of Texas.

In closing, please be reminded of the R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference which will be held next Saturday, January 30. It is not required that you attend; however, should you decide to do so, please plan to arrive at the Kingdom Builders' event facility no later than 8:00 a.m. so that you may be introduced as an HCDE Board Member during the opening session. You are not expected to remain beyond the opening session.

Thanks again for another successful Board Training and Board Meeting yesterday. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend. Again, thanks for all you do for HCDE.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Hosts Open House, Ribbon-Cutting at New Humble Head Start Center



HCDE showcased its new Humble Head Start Center with an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, January 15. The ceremony included special performances by the Humble Head Start students and a tour of the new facility.

Parents, staff, and community members also heard from HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock, County Schools Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., and Pastor Vincent Harris of Journey of Faith United Methodist Church, a major partner for the new Head Start facility.

"I am a product of Head Start," said Harris. "When I saw the Humble Head Start program on Isaacks was looking for a new place, I knew I was being called to be a partner with Head Start. From that time three years ago, we have moved together."

The new facility is located next to the Journey of Faith United Methodist Church at 130 Atascocita Road.

HCDE provides services to more than 1,200 preschool students in Harris County through 16 Head Start centers. The Head Start program empowers preschool children and their families with school readiness skills, and enhances their cognitive, social and emotional development.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Head Start Hosts Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference May 6



HCDE Area I Head Start and HOGG Foundation of Mental Health present the Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference on May 6, 2016 from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the HCDE Conference Center. The conference provides training to parents, educators, and other professionals on working with children with challenging behaviors, and increases the awareness of mental health issues in early childhood.

Parents, caretakers, educators, members of the Head Start community, and others involved in early childhood education are invited to attend. The cost of the conference is \$10, and registration begins March 1. For additional information, contact Taiwan Reliford at 713-696-2170 or treliford@hcde-texas.org.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

Scenes from Human Resources' Reasonable Suspicion Training

HCDE's Human Resources division sponsored Reasonable Suspicion Training hosted by Dr. Harvey Graves.

This training session reviewed drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace and provided techniques to help recognize and maintain a safe work environment.

This session was mandatory for managers, supervisors, and leadership team members.



DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Spring Branch ISD

Spring Branch ISD launches Countdown to Your Future, a program to motivate and inspire district eighth-graders.

More at <http://sbisdnsnapshots.blogspot.com/2015/12/eighth-graders-begin-counting-down-to.html>.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

January News from CASE for Kids Features Funding Opportunities, New Year Numeracy

Case for Kids staffers held a request for proposal meeting in early January to discuss the 2016 spring term applications and funding. A



workshop was held January 14 which was led by staff member Brandi Nichols and highlighted Lending Library materials. The workshop entitled New Year Numeracy was well attended as audience members participated in math activities and learned how students can have fun with numbers.

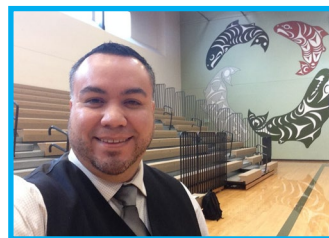
Early Childhood Conference Enrollment Climbs for 30th Annual January 30 Date



As the R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference enrollment continues to climb, the Teaching and Learning Center is planning to commemorate the beginnings of the 30th annual conference this year. During the conference, attendees will be urged to use the hashtag #ECWC16 to share thoughts and photos. The high-energy event will be kicked off by Dr. Jean Feldman whose hallmark is learning through motion. For more information, including the program, go to www.hcde.texas.org/ECWinterConf.

Gang Awareness Workshop Presented by Fabian Ramirez Who Was Bullied as Youth

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools hosts a Gang Awareness Workshop on February 5 from 9-11 a.m. at HCDE Irvington in the Conference Center. Presenter Fabian Ramirez is an anti-bullying speaker and drug prevention specialist from Austin, Texas. Fabian was bullied himself in middle school so he knows the psychological impact that bullying can have on youth. Workshop topics include dropout prevention, motivating teens, youth development and leadership, and youth drug prevention.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 19, 2016

Evaluating the Rigor of Instruction and Assessment in Elementary Science

Turn the Battleship on a Dime: Keys to Initiating Sustainable Change/
Mobilize Now

JANUARY 20, 2016

Evaluating the Rigor of Instruction and Assessment in Middle School Science

Social Thinking Across the Home and School Day: the iLAUGH Model

JANUARY 21, 2016

HCDE Employees Only – Reasonable Suspicion (Mandatory training for managers, supervisors, principals, etc.)

CASE for Kids - CPR/1st Aid

Evaluating the Rigor of Instruction and Assessment in High School Science

Bilingual 164 TExES Supplemental 164 Test Review

JANUARY 22, 2016

Bilingual Targeted Language Proficiency Test Review

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

School-Based Therapy Services Receives Unsolicited Testimonial from Cy-Fair Administrator

School-Based Therapy Services received the following unsolicited testimonial from an administrator in Cy-Fairbanks ISD. The administrator Sharon Parham is the former, longtime director of the Deaf Education Cooperative housed in CFISD. The co-op serves students from multiple surrounding school districts. Cy-Fairbanks ISD houses and administers the program. (Now retired, Parham currently serves as the part-time auditory impairment specialist at the district.)



Through this email, Parham expresses appreciation for the occupational therapy team working in the district. The email was received before the holiday break:

"I wanted to let you all know how much the Elementary Deaf Education program in CyFair ISD appreciate the services of our O.T. team. Even when a student may not qualify for services, they give us invaluable information that help support the unique needs of our students who are deaf and hard of hearing. We have always appreciated the support your team has provided us at both Hancock and Birkes Elementary. From motor labs (in the past-which were extremely helpful with our newly identified and young PPCD students) to suggestions as to how to support our students struggling with sensory needs other than hearing impairment ... your staff has been greatly appreciated. They understand the uniqueness of our students and their language deficits and particularly our students who have come and gone with deaf blindness.

I retired several years ago as the Coordinator of the Deaf Education program and have only come back recently as a temporary worker as an Administrator for Deaf Education at both of our Elementary campuses. Our O.T. team, especially SueAnne Hill, has always been responsive and helpful with problem solving and supporting this program. It is nice to see that you understand the importance of these services to our students with their unique and often challenging needs.

Please know as an "old timer" and a new administrator, the role these ladies serve in our program is critical and much needed.

Thank you for what you do!"

Sharon Parham
A.I. Specialist
Hancock and Birkes Elementary



School-Based Therapy Services Hosts Social Thinking Workshop

School-Based Therapy Services division held a workshop on January 20 with renowned speaker, Michelle Garcia Winner. One-third of the 223 participants were from surrounding school districts and schools including: Katy ISD, Humble ISD, Tomball ISD, Lamar Consolidated ISD, Alief ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Conroe ISD, New Caney ISD, Navigating Behavior Solutions, and an individual provider from the Richmond/Rosenberg area.

Michelle Garcia Winner is the founder of Social Thinking, an organization that specializes in developing treatment models and specific strategies for helping persons with social cognitive learning challenges.

Winner's goal is to help educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health counselors, and parents appreciate how social thinking and social skills are an integral part of students' academic, vocational, and community success.



"Thank you to HCDE for bringing Michelle Garcia Winner to us and allowing the public to attend," said HCDE Occupational Therapist Amy Traynor, who works in Katy ISD. "I spent time on her website last night and printed many articles she referenced. I'm excited to learn more!"

Board Appreciation



School Board Recognition Month 2016

Members of Harris County Department of Education's Board of Trustees were honored at the January 21 board meeting and reception as part of School Board Recognition Month. Each January, the School Board Recognition Month campaign focuses on the crucial role an elected board of trustees plays in our communities and schools. This year's campaign was "Super-Heroes for Schools."



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Management of Administrative, Fiscal and Facilities Function

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to manage the following elements of performance:

- Oversee a budget development process that results in recommendations based on Department priorities and available resources;
- Ensure the Department's investment strategies, risk management activities, and purchasing practices are sound, cost-efficient, and consistent with policy and law;
- Implement and oversee a planning process that results in goals, targets, or priorities for major areas of operations; and
- Monitor effectiveness of operations against appropriate benchmarks



The Head Start division recently moved into its new Humble center location. The overall process required strict budget development processes that resulted in recommendations based on HCDE priorities and available resources as well as sound purchasing practices that are cost-efficient as well as the implementation and management of a planning process that directly related to



goals, targets, or priorities for major a major area of operation. The process also required the monitoring of effectiveness of operations against appropriate benchmarks.

This overall process illustrates my goal to meet the board's expectations of me, as a conservative leader, to:

- **Look for ways to improve programs and services without greater expenditures and with concern for cutting expenses and costs to public schools for service without sacrifice to high quality services; and to**
- **Recommend the annual budget to maximize resources and manage the budget while exercising prudent judgment.**

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

1:00 p.m.

Room 400

