

The CONNECTOR

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



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Week of March 28, 2016

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

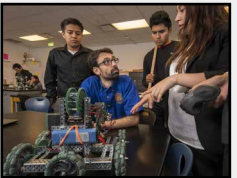
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OF NOTE

As of this week, we are in the full swing of the FY2016-17 budget cycle. Division directors have already begun addressing the budget committee, as will be the case for the next few weeks. In those meetings, directors and principals are presenting their budgetary requests, projections, as well as their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analyses in an effort to better inform the budget committee as we progress through this year's cycle and decision-making. This process is a tedious one, consistent with my philosophy as a fiscally conservative leader. It is our intent to ensure that we continue to maximize our resources with the ultimate goal being to continue to help the students of Harris County achieve, as we execute the programs and services of the Department.

Also, this week, I continued my discussions with Juliet Stipeche, the Director of Education for the City of Houston. We met regarding my involvement in assisting the mayor in his effort to collaborate with the 16 superintendents of school districts within the city of Houston as he forwards his goals to systematically fill education gaps that exist within our community-at-large. This work is moving at a fast pace so that the mayor is fully informed as he moves toward finalizing the city's budget.

I am pleased to announce that, as of today, I will have completed my quarterly meetings with each member of the HCDE Board of Trustees. I enjoy the opportunity to meet and ensure that you are abreast of the various initiatives related to our programs and services. It is also refreshing to receive feedback from you as we work together, as the Team of Eight, to meet the needs of the constituents of Harris County from the public education perspective. As always, thank you for your service to HCDE and to the learners of Harris County.

As mentioned in last week's issue of **The Connector**, I had the opportunity to attend the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Annual Luncheon as a guest of Dr. Bob Wimpleberg of All Kids Alliance. I had the unique opportunity to meet with a variety of educators in the Houston area—including the Dean of the School of Education, Dr. Bob McPherson, at the University of Houston—also a guest of Dr. Wimpleberg. I continue to attend events such as this one to ensure that HCDE is at the forefront of public education, whenever possible. I hope to reconnect with Dean McPherson in the future as we, the Department, work to further close the divide between K-12 and higher education.

On another note, I realize that many of you know Serlynthia Chatmon, a dedicated employee of HCDE for nearly 20 years. Serlynthia served HCDE in the capacity of executive assistant until she was very recently selected for a position in a professional capacity at Texas A&M University. While we will certainly miss her, we are excited that this opportunity crossed her career path. For many years, she has provided exceptional support to HCDE's administration, most recently having supported Dr. Kimberly McLeod. Because Serlynthia was a part of HCDE for so many years, I would be remiss to not have made mention of this transition within the Administration suite.

In closing, thanks again to each of you for taking time to meet with me over the past several weeks as I completed my quarterly meetings with you. Two-way communication is key to the success of all relationships and I genuinely appreciate those discussions.

Please be reminded that the regularly scheduled Board Meeting for the month of April is Tuesday, April 19, 2016. Please enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Free Teacher Resources Available through Free, 30-minute iTeach iLearn Webinar from HCDE



Teachers get help through a new webinar which delivers free monthly teaching resources called iTeach iLearn, a service provided by Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center.

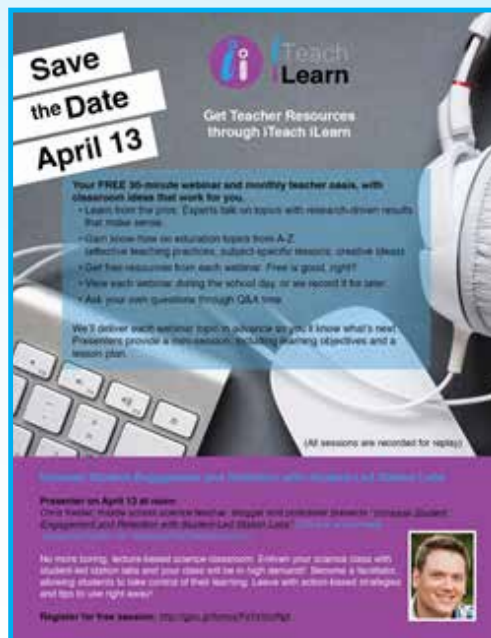
The webinar supplies resources on a gamut of topics for pre-k through 12 teachers. Each topic is advertised in advance and presenters include objectives and lesson.

Teachers can opt to listen live during the 30-minute presentation and benefit from a question-and-answer session at the end, or listen to the recorded, archived webinar later.

Save the date for April 13 presenter Chris Kesler, a middle school science teacher, blogger and podcaster. Kesler's session is called "Increased Student Engagement and Retention with Student-Led Station Labs." He is a nationally-known seller on TeachersPayTeachers.com, a marketplace where teachers share, sell, and buy original educational resources.

More details about iTeach iLearn are available through the following link:
<http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Connector/iTeachILearnFlyer%20%283%29.pdf>

To register for the session, go to <http://goo.gl/forms/Fd1xVorRpt> . For more information about iTeach iLearn, email: dmcgeary@hcde-texas.org or lhockaday@hcde-texas.org .



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

MARCH 28, 2016

ICS 300 Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents 2.5 Day Class

MARCH 29, 2016

Planning with a Purpose

MARCH 30, 2016

ARD Committee Training for Teachers and Facilitators

CPR/1st Aid

MARCH 31, 2016

Ethics For Accountants

The Key to Cultural Competence

APRIL 1, 2016

Online Instructor's Training - Part II



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Houston Families to Benefit from \$498,592 in Houston City Council Funding for Out-of-School Time Programs through CASE for Kids City Connections



Houston children benefit from \$498,592 in funding for out-of-school time programs through the end of the school year through a collaborative called CASE for Kids City Connections. The partnership between the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, and the City of Houston supplies funding to all 11 city council districts A-K through nonprofit organizations and schools.

The spring afterschool funding award is part of a \$700,000 city ordinance passed earlier this year, and amended and expanded by \$200,000 in February 2016. The first phase of the grant awarded \$280,000 to 81 afterschool locations from October through December 2015. The \$900,000 continues to equip Houston communities with out-of-school time programs in fine arts, academic enrichment, college exploration, and fitness classes.

Council members choose the 84 organizations to be funded in their districts based on requests for proposals provided through CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education.

Spring semester funding ranges from \$2,000 to \$18,000 per nonprofit organization and includes 101 locations throughout the city. The funding is administered to the organizations through CASE for Kids. Funding from the second grant term continues through May 31 and will supply much needed afterschool opportunities for about 4,000 children and their families.

“Communities need afterschool programs to keep their children safe and to provide enriching activities during out-of-school time,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. “We remain grateful to our city leaders for their commitment to better the lives of Houston children and families.”

City Connections is an innovative program initiated by former Houston City Councilmember C.O. Bradford during the summer of 2014. The out-of-school time funding is intended to help fight juvenile crime and to promote child safety during the hours of 3-6 p.m. when parents are working.

“This funding is critically needed to keep Houston communities safe as state and federal funding decreases,” said Thompson-Caruthers.

A full list of organizations in each Houston City Council district receiving funding is available through the CASE for Kids website at www.afterschoolzone.org or http://www.afterschoolzone.org/default.aspx?name=City_Connections.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

50 National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals Earned by Area Teens after Regional Advancement through Harris County Department of Education

Harris County student artists and writers in grades 7-12 earn 50 national Scholastic Art & Writing Medals through awards announced by the New York Nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers on March 14. The students advanced from a regional competition sponsored by Harris County Department of Education, and their work was exhibited at art exhibits and celebrations in Houston.

Area teens competed among 320,000 art and writing entries across 29 different categories. Through the 2016 Awards, students receive opportunities for recognition, exhibition, publication, and scholarships. Past winners include Robert Redford, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, John Lithgow, Joyce Carol Oates, and Sylvia Plath.

"We're extremely proud of the hard work and dedication of our teens and their teachers," said Andrea Segraves, HCDE coordinator for Scholastic and director for the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE.

Sharing in the national limelight are students from public school districts Aldine, Clear Creek, Cypress Fairbanks, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Houston, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Pearland, and Tomball. Private school medalists are from Episcopal High School, The Kinkaid School, River Oaks Baptist School, St. Agnes Academy, St. John's School-Middle School and Upper School, and The Village School.

Three distinguished awards go to student in Deer Park and Houston independent school districts and The Kinkaid School.

Deer Park Bonnette Junior High School student Peyton Vasquez earns the RBC "Flaunt It" Award sponsored by RBC Capital Markets, along with a \$1,000 scholarship. The award recognizes two teens nationally among 10,000 submissions whose writing or art explore the theme: "The things that make me different, make me."

Two Harris County students earned the American Voices and American Visions awards, awards that recognize one "best of category" from five nominated Gold Key regional entries.

Houston ISD's Carnegie High School student Jaelynn Walls earns the American Voices Award for her personal essay/memoir entitled "Prime."

Kinkaid High School student Lenox Butcher was awarded the American Visions Medal for a sculpture entitled: Getting Closer to the Stars.

Gold Key Medalists are invited to a ceremony in New York City's Carnegie Hall on June 2 with appearances from award-winning filmmaker and commentarian Ken Burns along with other surprise celebrities.

Work from more than 1,000 students will be on exhibit from June 2-12 at several prominent New York galleries.

For a complete list of the 50 national awards from Harris County teens, go to www.hcde-texas.org/Scholastic.

Photos: Drawing and illustration by artist Erin Del Paggio, Kleb Intermediate, Klein Independent School District. Mixed media from for Houston Independent School District Pin Oak student Andrea Conley.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

HCDE Represented at Prairie View A&M Job Fair

The Human Resources division represented HCDE at a job fair at Prairie View A&M University on Tuesday of this week. The job fair was well-attended and recruiter Roxanne Torres spoke with numerous interested applicants, informing them about how HCDE helps students achieve.



HCDE Human Resources Recruiters Participate at University of Houston-Central Job Fair

Recruiters Kris Duke and Laura Nilon Williams represented HCDE at the central campus of the University of Houston the Texas Job Fair for colleges and universities. This year, the event was held locally at the central campus of the University of Houston. In its effort to obtain competent staff, the division regularly engages in area job fairs as part of their comprehensive recruitment system that includes participation in area job fairs at colleges and universities. This was an excellent event to attract competent candidates to fill vacancies within the divisions of HCDE.



Houston Community College and Lee College in HCDE's Path This Week

Both HCC and Lee College were the venues for Human Resources staff this week. The Human Resources division represented HCDE at both the HCC and Lee College Job Fairs as the division works to meet the needs of HCDE divisions and inform job seekers of the benefits of working at HCDE. By the end of this month, the division will have represented HCDE at a total of 30 job fairs.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Fifty-three Students Compete in 2016 Houston Public Media Spelling Bee April 2

The 2016 Houston Public Media Spelling Bee will be broadcast live on April 2 beginning at 2 p.m. Forty-two counties are represented in the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee, the second



largest qualifying bee of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The season began in August with 100,000 students, and culminates on April 2 with 53 of the best spellers competing for a chance to represent our community in Washington D.C. at the Scripps National Spelling Bee. For more information, visit <https://goo.gl/lx7EN6>.

Spelling Bee Officials
Prose: Richard Armstrong, Ph.D.
President, Office of Cultural Studies
The Honors College and Dept. of Modern & Classical Languages
The University of Houston

Judge: Lauren Davis, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, English
Department of English
The University of Houston

Judge: Kevin A. Singh, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Curriculum, Instruction
Department of English
The University of Houston

Judge: Unshakal Richard A. Gaskins
Assistant Principal
Frank Doster High School

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Houston County Department of Education

Special Thanks
Houston Public Media is the sponsor of the second largest qualifying bee of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Our bee season began in August with 100,000 students and culminates today with 53 of the best spellers competing for a chance to represent our community in Washington D.C. at the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Financial contributions by Houston Public Media dedicated staff and caring volunteers made this day possible.

Houston Public Media appreciates the efforts of volunteers whose time and energy are vital to the success of the School, District and regional Spelling Bee throughout the entire bee season.

The results of today's competition are grand, but the overall impact of 100,000 students competing on spelling is the best result of all. Since appreciation goes out to all who contribute to this project.

Houston Public Media

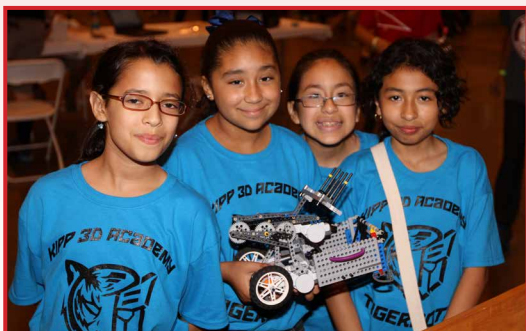
DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Crosby ISD



Crosby ISD introduces the Columbus Initiative which provides 7-12 graders with Apple Mac Books or iPads for school/home.

Details:

<http://goo.gl/dX4qpe>



Education Foundation of Harris County Presents All-Earth Ecobot Challenge on April 30

The Education Foundation of Harris County presents the All-Earth Ecobot Challenge on Saturday, April 30 at the Humble Civic Center. The All-Earth Ecobot Challenge is an innovative engineering competition that engages fifth through eighth grade



students in complex problem-solving, while developing critical thinking skills and elevating students' confidence in formulating solutions to real-world issues. For more information, visit <http://www.ecobotchallenge.com/>.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Personnel Management

In accordance with the Board's goals for me to:

- Ensure that the system for recruiting and selection results in personnel recommendations based on defined needs, goals, priorities, and candidate credentials/qualifications.

This week alone, the Human Resources division represented HCDE at four, high-profile job fairs. In particular, HCDE recruiters attended one of the largest job fairs in the state, the Texas Job Fair for colleges and university, which was held locally this year at the University of Houston, central campus. In summary, HCDE was represented this week at the following venues:

1. University of Houston, Central Campus (Texas Job Fair)
2. Prairie View A&M University
3. Lee College
4. Houston Community College

By the end of this month, our Human Resources division will have represented HCDE at 30 job fairs, just since the start of this semester.



HCDE BOARD

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Erica Lee Carter
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Marvin W. Morris
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Don Sumners
Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman
Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016



As a result of the Human Resources division's commitment to implementing a comprehensive recruitment plan to attract exceptional personnel to HCDE, I am ensuring that I exceed the Board's goal of me to ensure that we establish a culture among the staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance.

