

# The CONNECTOR

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



VOLUME 2/ISSUE 27  
Week of April 4, 2016

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

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## OF NOTE

The Budget Committee and I continued meeting with our division directors and budget managers this week as we make great strides toward presenting a sound budget for board approval. We are progressing according to schedule, in sync with the methodology that guides this process. I will continue to keep you apprised during each phase of this budget cycle.

As we near the end of this academic year, I am pleased to inform you that **Focal Point | Executive Leadership in Action** has taken off in full force. This leadership endeavor, which replaced the former Superintendent's Institute, is well underway and has gained great momentum. Its success brings even more credible visibility to HCDE and it is consistent with our mission to deliver opportunity and provide service to our member school districts.

Our facilitator, Dr. Bob Thompson, was very effective during the first meeting with superintendents from Harris County and beyond. As a result of our inaugural breakfast meeting, along with my follow-up discussions and individual meetings, as well as because of the superintendents' buy-in to the overall mission of Focal Point—to agitate the traditional educational leadership theory, explore different education perspectives, and to impact public education across the state of Texas—we will be traveling to the United States Army War College next week for an executive leadership seminar. It is significant that an entourage of 11 Harris County superintendents will participate in such an exceptional leadership experience.

On the grounds of Gettysburg, we will explore various leadership styles that were pivotal in each of the significant battles of the Gettysburg campaign. Co-facilitated by Dr. Thompson, along with elite and esteemed military faculty personnel of the United States Army, we will also have an introspective experience as we identify and explore our various leadership tendencies and their effectiveness. As a group, we are excited about this experience to grow professionally, and to replicate much of this experience with our staff, in such a way that it trickles down throughout our systems, thereby increasing the productivity, efficiencies and effectiveness, and enhancing the professional growth and development of administrators within both the Department, as well as within the 12 Harris County school districts represented during this experience. I am happy to report on the outcome of this experience upon our return.

As the academic year comes to a close, we are anticipating clarification of Senate Bill 507 which requires video-monitoring of the classrooms and specified common areas of schools with students who have special needs. HCDE, more than school districts, will be greatly impacted by this legislation. As a result of this new law, effective with the 2016-2017 school year, we will likely be required to outfit, with video cameras, all of the classrooms and possibly common areas—at both the Highpoint and Academic Behavior campuses. There is a public comment period that is forthcoming and TEA will make determinations regarding implementation in the near future. I will keep you apprised of this matter as we receive additional information.

I am pleased to report that we will begin the enrollment process for Early Head Start at our Baytown location in mid-April. The facility is now move-in ready and we are excited about recruiting our first clients for this much needed program that will enhance the learning process for the income-challenged population within east Harris County. To that end, our Tidwell Head Start location will be relocating to a more spacious facility and modern facility, and as a result, we hope to expand our Early Head Start programming to the new Tidwell location, as space allows.

In closing, please be reminded that the next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 19, 2016. Also, please note that I will be out of the office next Wednesday through Friday, attending training at the War College. I will return to the office on Monday, April 18.

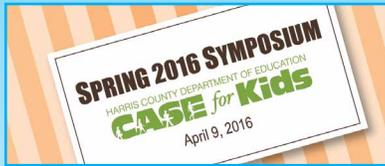
Again, thank you for your service to HCDE and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend.



# Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## CASE for Kids News



CASE for Kids hosts the Spring 2016 Symposium on April 9. The symposium offers a full day of training, with interactive and hands-on workshops that offer practical skills that are geared to improve the quality of interactions with youth. Workshops are offered in subject areas like encouragement, interaction with adults, choice, leadership, responsibility, planning, reflection, collaboration, belonging, emotional safety, session flow, child-centered space, and warm welcome. Learn more about the symposium at [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).

CASE for Kids welcomes Tracie Scales to the team. She serves as the new special events and promotions coordinator for the division.



Tracie Scales

Tracie brings 20-plus years of experience in administration, finance, and special event management to the team. In fact, Tracie briefly worked for CASE for Kids a few years ago coordinating the Kids' Day Series. Now we're happy to have her back in a full-time capacity.

In her spare time, Tracie volunteers with youth, women, and seniors nonprofit organizations.

On March 30, afterschool programs around Houston joined CASE for Kids in celebrating Pencil Doodle Day. All doodles will be displayed at the CASE for Kids Spring 2016 Symposium on April 9. Attendees will be invited to judge the doodles in the categories of artistic merit and creativity. Winning doodles will be posted on [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org) in mid-April.



The Key to Cultural Competence Training with trainer Wykesha C. Hayes was held in the CASE for Kids training room this month. Participants challenged their personal cultural competency levels and discovered how cultural competency and responsiveness (CCR) supports positive change.



## Perales Gains Maintenance Director Position at Harris County Department of Education

Joseph Perales is the new director of Maintenance at Harris County Department of Education. He served in Cuero Independent School District as director of Facilities and Operations for the past 15 years. Perales was also the past vice president of operation for ATEC Communications and Alarm Systems of Texas.

Perales, a Houston native, graduated from Houston Independent School District and obtained technical training in the military. He attended a Houston-area trade school to gain training in electronics and electrical. He resides in Waller, Texas.

# Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## HCDE Adult Education Students Complete Sales and Service Class



Eleven Adult Education students completed the Sales and Service class this week and participated in the Course Completion Ceremony. The 200-hour training course provides students with computer, math, language and literacy skills, as well as general employability skills such as workplace ethics and customer service. Many of the 11 students found jobs as cashiers and sales clerks, and in restaurants and tax offices as a result of the course. For more information about HCDE Adult Education courses, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).



## Communication and Client Engagement Hosts School Public Relations Professionals

Nearly 50 Houston-Area school public relations leaders attended a meeting hosted by Communication and Client Engagement on March 31 at HCDE. Attendees listened to a presentation from GovQA, a company that helps governmental

agencies handle open records requests and received tips for incorporating high-quality video into communications efforts from HCDE Media Production Manager Joe Perez.

## Special Delivery of The Hub: Employee Newsletter Issue Number Two Published



Issue number 2 of The Hub is hot off the press. The Hub is HCDE's internal newsletter for employees. Communications and Client Engagement sends the newsletter out by print and by email. Read the latest edition:

[http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/The%20Hub/TheHub\\_Issue%202\\_April1%20%285%29%29.pdf](http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/The%20Hub/TheHub_Issue%202_April1%20%285%29%29.pdf)

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



### AB School West Receives Whole Kids Foundation Package to Support Garden Program

HCDE AB School West's grant package was delivered this week from the Whole Kids Foundation. The package included a \$2,000 check, gardening curriculum, books, gloves, seeds to plant fruit, and other related products to support AB School West's garden program. The goal of the garden program is to promote health literacy and healthy lifestyles for 50 students and families, along with school staff.



### AB School West Student Participates in Student Prelude to Shell Houston Open Golf Tournament

Academic and Behavior School West student amateur golfer Payten Holmes represented HCDE in the Champion Challenge March 2, a prelude to the Shell Houston Open Golf

Tournament. The event is sponsored by the National School First Tee Golf Program, a nonprofit which promotes the game of golf to students.

In addition to meeting other young golfers in other school districts, Payten participated in the golf obstacle course. Challenges included hitting balls between targets and chipping and putting. The event was held at the Golf Club of Houston. Principal Victor Keys volunteered at the event.

**Photo:** Doug Earl, director of the First Tee of Greater Houston and Payten Holmes, ABS West student, tee off during a promotional event for the Shell Houston Open Golf Tournament.

# Value

## BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

### Take an Opportunity to Read *Co-opportunities*

Choice Partners Cooperative recently released the latest *Co-opportunities* to its subscriber list. Please visit the following URL to view the current issue: [http://www.magnetmail.net/actions/email\\_web\\_version.cfm?recipient\\_id=1284673900&message\\_id=12516446&user\\_id=HCDOE&group\\_id=0&jobid=33061046](http://www.magnetmail.net/actions/email_web_version.cfm?recipient_id=1284673900&message_id=12516446&user_id=HCDOE&group_id=0&jobid=33061046)



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Spelling Bee 2016 Wraps Up with 53 Spellers from 42 Counties as HCDE Supports Event



The 2016 Spelling Bee was a family affair as parents, friends and supporters joined the cause to support 53 spellers who represented 42 counties. Throughout the morning, HCDE's Client Development sent out social media posts as HCDE was an official supporting sponsor. Three

supporter announcements about HCDE, created by Communications and Client Development, ran throughout the week through Houston Public Media. HCDE was also represented in printed materials and signage. View the program: <http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HPMBeeProgram%20%28002%29.pdf>

**Photo:** Houston Independent School District student Mahi Tomar, a seventh grader from T.H. Rogers, spells through a practice round before the competition:

### DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Alief ISD



Support Alief ISD by participating in its After School Rocks! Fun Run on Saturday. Registration ends April 13.

Details:  
<http://www.aliefisd.net/groups/after-school-program>



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Management of Fiscal Function

Consistent with the Board's goals and expectations of me to:

- Oversee a budget development process that results in recommendations based on Department priorities and available resources;
- Oversee budget implementation in a way that ensures appropriate expenditure of budgeted funds and provides for clear and timely budget reports; and to
- Implement and oversee a planning process that results in goals, targets, or priorities for major areas of operation



The Department began planning for the 2016-2017 budget cycle several months ago with the onset of training sessions and workshops facilitated by the Business Services division. Several weeks ago, division directors, principals, and budget managers completed workflow processes, received by managers within the Business Services division, via a budget planning software system.

Over a period of several weeks of meetings, division directors are presenting their projected strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the form of SWOT analyses presentations to members of the budget committee. During those meetings, division directors are also justifying any additions to their budgets, explaining significant changes in budget projections, forecasting other trends that may be relevant to their areas of responsibility which may also impact the respective budgets, and also fielding questions from members of the budget committee, comprised of members of the Business Services division and Executive Leadership Team.

The process is a fluid, laborious, and thorough one which greatly informs the process of presenting a conservative budget to the board for approval. I am pleased with the execution of this system and I look forward to us completing our planning for FY2016-2017, according to schedule.

**As a result of this process, I am working toward achieving the Board's expectations of me to**

- **Serve as a conservative financial leader;**
- **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

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

*Vice President*  
Louis Evans, III  
**Position 4, Precinct 3**

Erica Lee Carter  
**Position 6, Precinct 1**

Marvin W. Morris  
**Position 1, Precinct 2**

Don Sumners  
**Position 7, At Large**

Diane Trautman  
**Position 3, At Large**

Michael Wolfe  
**Position 5, At Large**

## UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

**Appreciation Reception for Board President Angie Chesnut**  
Tuesday, April 19, 2016  
12:00 p.m. noon  
ROOMS 100A,B,C

**April Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, April 19, 2016  
1:00 p.m.  
Room 400

