

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

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OF NOTE

It was an engaging week, for both HCDE and me, replete with events and activities related to our various programs and services. As mentioned in last week's issue of **The Connector**, this week our Head Start division celebrated the Week of the Young Child with tours of two of our Head Start locations. To mention just a few others, this past Saturday, CASE for Kids held its Spring 2016 Symposium, and for the latter part of this week, 10 Harris County superintendents and I attended leadership training at the United States Army War College (USAWC).

As we embark upon the last several weeks of the school year, we continue to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service to the school districts of Harris County and to the community at-large. This week, we hosted workshops ranging from STAAR test strategies to CPR/First Aid, to Homework Help and grants and funding, plus a lot more. We continue to offer programs and services that help students achieve.

On Wednesday of this week, Focal Point participants and I departed Houston for executive leadership development training in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania at the USAWC. The events of this experience kicked off Wednesday evening at a dinner hosted by the office of the Assistant Commandant of Outreach and Advancement for the USAWC. The college's historian, Steven Knott, conducted the Gettysburg Campaign Overview which provided extensive history of this famous campaign, from a military perspective.

We entered the nuts and bolts of this experience yesterday during the Gettysburg Strategic Leader Staff Ride as we departed for the Gettysburg Battlefield to visit the nine pivotal locations of this historic war. The point of this experience was to explore the various leadership styles of the leaders of the Civil War and how each leader's style evidenced itself throughout the Gettysburg campaign.

This morning, we reported to the School of Strategic Leadership for a presentation by Major General William E. Rapp, Commandant of the USAWC, just before attending the After Action Review, allowing for introspective identification of our respective leadership styles. We ended this unique executive experience with internal reflections led by Dr. Bob Thompson and the closing comments and presentations by Colonel Petery.

We are currently awaiting our return flight to Houston after an amazing, informative, and unique opportunity to not only learn about some of the greatest historical leaders within the nation's military, but also how we can apply some of those strategies to forward excellence in education. I look forward to reporting further on this professional development opportunity upon my return.

In closing, please be reminded that the April Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, April 19, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. We will also honor Board President Chesnut at a reception at 12:00 noon on that day, on the occasion of her farewell to HCDE.

I look forward to seeing you Tuesday and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Conference Equips Professionals, Parents, Caregivers of Children with Challenging Behaviors, Mental Issues



Helping children with challenging behaviors is the focus of the Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference scheduled for May 6 from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington. Cost of the workshop held through HCDE Head Start is only \$10 and includes lunch and free parking through a grant-funded initiative from the Hogg Foundation.

Training sessions with health professionals and others who work with children with mental health issues cover subjects ranging from growing up with bipolar disorder, ADHD, transforming the challenging child, food choices and mental health, and suicide prevention for children and teens. Additional topics include yoga for kids, understanding behaviors of abused children, keeping children with special needs safe, managing meltdowns, domestic violence 101, and positive guidance and discipline. Continuing education credits are available upon completion of the conference.

The Hogg Foundation advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research, and public education. Sponsors for the conference include United Healthcare and Legacy and Community Health.

"We hope that teachers, parents, caretakers, early childhood educators, and members of the Head Start community take advantage of the quality workshops being offered through our conference," said Venetia Peacock, senior director of Harris County Department of Education's Head Start division.

To register for the conference, go to <http://wms.hcde-texas.org> and search by date or workshop number 10381. For information, call 713-696-2170.



CASE for Kids Spring 2016 Symposium Provides Training Opportunities for Out-of-School Time Professionals

More than 150 out-of-school time professionals gathered at HCDE on Saturday, April 9, for the CASE for Kids Spring 2016 Symposium. CASE for

Kids staff members led morning and afternoon workshops centered on improving the overall quality of afterschool programs. "I'm proud of the work that our team put in to training for and presenting at the symposium, and I'm happy with the results," said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

APRIL 11, 2016

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

Online: Digital Safety Academy (Part I) - Digital Citizenship Online

APRIL 12, 2016

Creative Therapies Leadership Group (CTLG)

Creating Blended and Personalized Learning Activities

Quest for Grants Training Series: Case for Collaboration Webinar

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

APRIL 13, 2016

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments

U.S. History Era Studies: 8th Grade 'Hot Spots' and Strategies for Review

Grants for Afterschool: How to Get and Sustain More Funding

APRIL 14, 2016

CASE for Kids - CPR/1st Aid

Difference-Maker Summit Featuring JC Pohl

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments

APRIL 15, 2016

Homework Help - YPQ Methods

Online Instructor's Training - Part III

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



Adult Education student Lashae Johnson receives her NCCER/OSHA 10 certificate from Nolan Davis, career navigator at Capitol IDEA Houston

'Learn to Earn' Graduates at HCDE Gain Certification, Training, Employability for Oil and Gas Industry

When jobs in the oil and gas industry began disappearing this year, Lashae Johnson knew she had to gain more workforce skills. She found her opportunity in the craft instruction class in the Adult Education division at Harris County Department of Education.

At 40, Johnson had seven years of varied experience when she was laid off. She moved to Houston from Louisiana so she has no family here to lean on. Although she has experience, she needed the basic certification required in the industry, the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10.

Johnson joins a growing number of women looking at the oil and gas industry as a new frontier. Pipefitting, industrial maintenance, and welding are a few professions which remain in industry high demand.

Baby boomers are leaving the industry for retirement and taking their expertise with them. The gap creates opportunity for younger workers like Johnson; however, bosses are looking for forward-thinkers, not workers pegged for just one job.

"It used to be who you know, and now it's what you know," Johnson said. "Refinery companies are looking for people willing to take on opportunities, but they need you to know the basics."

Johnson coupled her on-the-job training with a basic core class at HCDE which combines basic safety, construction math, introduction to hand tools, power tools, construction drawing, materials handling, employability skills, and communication skills. Fifty percent of the time was spent with a craft instructor while the rest was spent with an academic instructor.

HCDE craft instructor Clifton Hypolite says construction drawing was the hardest subject for his 48 students, but most picked up the concepts quickly. A math tutor provided help for those who needed it. The power tools instruction was a little unnerving, but along with experience came empowerment.

April 6 was graduation day. On hand to pass out NCCER certificates was Nolan Davis, career navigator at Capital IDEA, a nonprofit which partners with HCDE to get students trained for employment and helps them get paid while learning a trade.

Along with gaining her certificate and her experience, Johnson has applied for a part-time job teaching the craft instruction class with HCDE. She will also continue with her training, learning more crafts to help her get ahead in the oil and gas industry.

"With the downturn, it gave me a humbling experience because I was used to making good money," she said. "When it stopped, I had to rebrand myself to be competitive and attractive to employers."

The 48 graduates in the NCCER/OSHA core curriculum class are either continuing their training at San Jacinto College in welding or industrial training, or starting ground-level jobs in the oil and gas industry.

"The more you know, the quicker you advance," said Johnson, giving sage advice to her classmates. "We have to broaden our horizons—period."

(For information about craft instruction classes or other "Learn to Earn" programs at Harris County Department of Education, email ajohnson@hcde-texas.org or call 713-692-6216.)

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

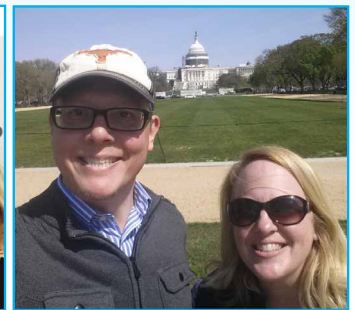


HCDE Celebrates Week of the Young Child with Head Start Center Tours

In celebration of the Week of the Young Child, HCDE invited staff from various community partner entities to tour two of our Head Start centers and participate in some of the classroom activities. Center visits provide community members the opportunity to see high quality early childhood education services in practice and encourage partners to join in on activities and interact with children.

TLC Digital Education and Innovation Staff Present in Washington, D.C. at National COSN Conference

Teaching and Learning Center Digital Education and Innovation staff presented at the National Consortium for School Networking Conference in Washington, D.C., April 4-7. Manager David McGeary and specialist Lynnice Hockaday shared their successes in implementing the Digital Trust Foundation grant at Cypress Fairbanks ISD. The pair's online training academy at Cy-Fair helps educate teachers and students about digital safety and online digital citizenship.



The workshop presentation included details about implementing the program; strategies for developing online teacher professional development; and the lessons learned to improve the process.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

May is Employee Health and Wellness Month



Human Resources is planning activities for Health and Wellness Month held each May for our employees. The "Stress Less Challenge" is a tracking sheet for decreasing stress by introducing stress-relief activities for 10 minutes a day in a 12-day challenge. Examples include deep breathing, walking at lunch, and going to bed earlier. Participating campuses, divisions, and individuals will be entered into drawing for prizes.

During May, employees will be able to access free, 30-minute webinars provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) featuring helpful topics for mental and physical health. The EAP webinars planned for the month are:

- May 11 – Choosing Happiness Webinar
- May 19 – Parenting in the 21st Century Webinar
- May 24 – Sweet Dreams Webinar

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Creates Video to Recruit New Talent



HCDE recently created a video to recruit new talent to the organization. We are actively recruiting physical and occupational therapists as well as Head Start teachers. The recruitment video, which describes various benefits of working at HCDE, was shared via social media and

reached more than 5,500 people with 33 shares. To watch the full HCDE recruitment video, visit <https://goo.gl/M5UAaH>.

All-Earth Ecobot Challenge Team Prepares for Event with Instructional Video



The Baylor College of Medicine Academy 6th-grade team shown with Lead Teacher Joe Paneitz and Education Foundation of Harris County President/CEO Doug Kleiner

The 6th-grade All-Earth Ecobot Challenge team from Baylor College of Medicine Academy visited HCDE this week to film an instructional video detailing their original robotics game for the judges. The team's game was based on this year's challenge theme, "Backyard Bots."

The instructional video will be shown to the judges before the challenge on April 30 so they will know how to set up and play the game at the event. For more information on the All-Earth Ecobot Challenge or to volunteer for the event, visit <http://www.ecobotchallenge.com/>.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Waller ISD



Waller hosts its Teacher Job Fair on Saturday, April 16 from 9 p.m.-1 p.m. Get info and pre-register:

Details:
<http://goo.gl/qZx8yn>

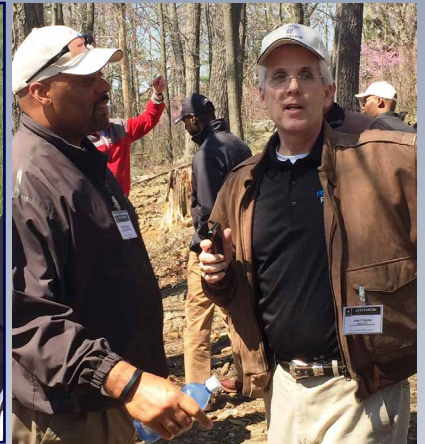


Executive Leadership

...in action

Scenes from the Focal Point | Executive Leadership in Action Delegation at the United States Army War College

The following are just a few of the photographs from the Strategic Leader Staff Ride at the United States Army War College in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania which includes the day-long visit to Gettysburg. A total of 11 Harris County superintendents were part of this distinguished delegation of leaders in education. A more comprehensive report of this leadership experience will follow.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations Professional Growth and Development Organizational Morale

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

- 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 the community;
- Work with governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way;
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration;
- Model and support responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas; and
- Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team-building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management

I established **Focal Point | Executive Leadership in Action** in an effort to bring together the Harris County superintendents. The purpose of this endeavor is three-fold: to agitate the traditional educational leadership theory, explore different education perspectives, and impact public education across the state of Texas. To that end, this week, a group of 11 Harris County superintendents (including myself) traveled to the United States Army War College (USAWC) for an exclusive executive leadership experience.

This Battlefield Leadership Seminar Program is a leadership development opportunity for senior executives from private corporations, governmental organizations, and academic institutions. Offered at the expense of the USAWC, as an outreach initiative to increase public awareness of the high quality of Army leadership education, the seminar is conducted at historic battlefields and employs a proven experiential method used at the United States Army War College to educate senior military and interagency leaders.



In doing so, I am forwarding the Board's expectations of me to:

- **Function as the primary ambassador for the Department;**
- **Maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD superintendents;**
- **Be open to their ideas and needs;**
- **Communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department;**
- **Listen and take into account differing viewpoints of various constituencies using good judgment to discern the best decision and action for the Department; and**
- **Assess any new and effective development tools available and determine their applicability to HCDE staff**

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

