

# The CONNECTOR



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

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

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## OF NOTE

I take this opportunity to thank you for your support during this week's Board Meeting. The decisions made, and the actions taken, are positively impactful as we advance our goals, execute our mission, and move the Department forward. You demonstrated goodwill and exceptional stewardship on behalf of the taxpayers of Harris County. I look forward to us garnering even more successes as we continue to work together as a Team of Eight, demonstrating our commitment toward the betterment of HCDE and all of Harris County.

Also this week, I met with the Vice President of S&B Engineers and Constructors. We visited HCDE's Crosstimbers facility to discuss potential partnership and training opportunities in an effort to converge and better equip our Adult Education population. Assistant Superintendent Kimberly McLeod joined us to further explore various options. This collaboration would be the result of my affiliation with UPSKILLS Houston, powered by the Greater Houston Partnership. I will keep you apprised of future discussions between HCDE and S&B Engineers and Constructors.

I am pleased to report that Choice Partners has doubled its partnerships over the past three years, having realized a 20% increase in partnerships over last year alone. In celebration of this significant achievement, I hosted an Appreciation Lunch for this division earlier this week. It was a pleasure for me to commend them for jobs well done.

You may recall that, in the last issue of **The Connector**, I promised to inform you of the airdate of the KHOU/Channel 11 news story surrounding special education. Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker was interviewed as part of the story. Footage was captured at the Academic and Behavior School- East location. In culmination, at 4:30 this afternoon, the story is scheduled to air. During that time, HCDE's Special Education specialist Debra Anderson and Director of Curriculum Services Brenda Mullins will appear live in the studio to receive telephone calls, offer advice, answer questions, and further discuss the topic of Special Education with concerned parents in KHOU's viewing area. Please tune in to Channel 11 as HCDE's staff will be utilized as field experts. This is an excellent opportunity for HCDE to shine.

For most of next week, I will be traveling between Austin and Dallas. I will be visiting both Dallas County Schools and Region 10. From there, I will travel to Austin for the second half of the UIL Emergency Hearing, and meetings related to the recent San Antonio football player/referee. I will be attending in my formal capacity as a member of State Executive Committee for the UIL.

In closing, I look forward to our continued collaboration. I hope you have a great weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Again, thank you for your support. You are appreciated.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Klein ISD Student Teoh Named 2015 National Student Poets Program Semi-finalist Through Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Sponsored Regionally by HCDE

Klein Oak High School junior Julianna Teoh is officially a rising poet and a voice to be reckoned with in the literary world. Teoh was selected as one of 34 semi-finalist nominees for the 2015 National Student Poets Program, the nation's highest honor for youth poets. The program is part of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a national venue for young artists and writers sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education. Famous alums of the program include Sylvia Plath, Sarah Jessica Parker, Zac Posen, Robert Redford, Stephen King and Truman Capote.



Teoh, 15, earned both regional and national Scholastic Awards and Medals and traveled to New York City in June to receive a Scholastic Art & Writing Silver Medal. Her poems were judged among 20,000 works of poetry submitted to the Awards.

The National Student Poets Program is supported by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, a committee which is supported by First Lady Michelle Obama as its honorary first chair. Two other organizations support the program: the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers.

Teoh entered the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards in both 2014 and 2015 and earned multiple awards for her prose.

HCDE accepts regional art and writing entries for Scholastic Art and Writing beginning September 16. Students residing in Harris County may enter the awards as public, private, or home school students. Students may register to enter at [www.artandwriting.org](http://www.artandwriting.org). To learn more about HCDE's role as the Scholastic Art and Writing regional sponsor, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting).

### Math Workshop Attracts Harris County Teachers of Grades 2-8

About 30 math teachers of children grades 2-5 and grades 6-8 gathered to brainstorm about multi-step math problem solving with HCDE's Math Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan and her staff. The workshop called Model Drawing included two groups of teachers focused on problems ranging from fractions and decimals to percentages and ratio.



### Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### SEPTEMBER 14 TRAINING

Developing Fraction Concepts from the Ground Up

#### SEPTEMBER 15 TRAININGS

Math Leadership and Writing Collaborative

#### SEPTEMBER 17 TRAININGS

Model Drawing in Grades 5-8

ARD Committee Training for Teachers and Facilitators

Model Drawing in Grades 2-5

Patterns in the Sun, Earth, and Moon Systems

#### SEPTEMBER 18 TRAINING

School Finance Council





# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### ARD Committee Training Held September 17

About 25 teachers and administrators came to HCDE to learn about facilitating ARD committees, meetings for students with special needs. The training acquainted educators with the legal basis for all ARD deliberations and was facilitated by Special Populations Director Debra Anderson.



### Patterns of the Sun, Earth and Moon Systems



Thirty science teachers enrolled in a highly-interactive workshop with experts from The Lunar and Planetary Institute, Christine Shupla, Heather Dalton and Carrie Stokes. Patterns of the Sun, Earth and Moon Systems helps students make observations and predict the changing patterns in the day, seasons, and lunar phases. Workshop attendees created models of the sun, earth and moon systems, and explored the patterns of their motions.



### HCDE Head Start Families Gain School Uniforms for 1,200 Children through Assistance League of Houston's Operation School Bell

HCDE Head Start's community partner, Assistance League of Houston, is working hard to prepare for their annual uniform bag stuffing event scheduled for September 24. Over 1,200 HCDE Head Start students will receive a free uniform package that includes polo shirts, pants or skorts, windbreaker, underwear, shoe gift voucher and toothbrush. Volunteers from the Assistance League and the U.S. Coast Guard are assembling the packages. Two events will help celebrate the partnership on September 24. A morning event will be held at Compton Head Start Center from 10-11:30 a.m. Later that afternoon, Pugh Head Start Center staff host a community event from 1:30-2:45 p.m. Media will be invited to the morning event.



Assistance League of Houston assemble uniforms for children in HCDE Head Start

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Collaborates with KHOU for Story about Children with Disabilities

HCDE Communication collaborates with KHOU with a story about children with disabilities which will air Friday, September 18 at 4:30 p.m. on KHOU Channel 11. The story was filmed at Academic and Behavior School East with Principal Mindy Robertson. The story follows the success of a student named Nathan Malek with interviews about his progress from his grandparents Joan and Jeff Ownsbey. Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker is interviewed about children with disabilities. After the segment airs, Debra Anderson, special populations director and Brenda Mullins, Schools director, will help answer questions from callers.

The purpose of the story is to help parents who have questions about how to get special populations children help in school through their teachers, counselors, and principals.



### HCDE Invites Area Districts to Collaborate on Grant Proposal

The Center for Grants Development, Digital Education and Innovation, and the Research and Evaluation Institute invited targeted area school districts to consider collaborating with HCDE on a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation. The proposed project will focus on increasing student interest and the capacity to participate in the STEM workforce. School districts in attendance included Aldine, Alief, Galena Park, Sheldon and Spring Branch.



### Former Clear Creek ISD Principal Andrea Segraves Named Special Events Director of The Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE

Andrea Segraves is the new special events director for the Teaching and Learning Center, a division at Harris County Department of Education. The center provides professional development opportunities such as workshops and conferences for teachers and administrators in school districts in greater Harris County. To save districts time and resources, curriculum content specialists travel to district sites to offer services.

Segraves is a former administrator and teacher for Clear Creek Independent School district. She served as both elementary principal and teacher.

She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma. After gaining her master's degree from the University of Houston Clear Lake, she also worked at UHCL as an adjunct professor and at a collaborative professional development lab school within the university.

Her goals at HCDE include initiating, planning, and executing valuable professional learning opportunities that best serve the community and meet the needs of school districts in greater Harris County.

Segraves and her husband Rodney Smith are active community residents in League City. Their son, Rodney Smith, Jr., 7, attends public school within the district.



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### HR Participates in Alief Community Center Job Fair

Human Resources staff recruited potential employees through a job fair hosted by Councilman Richard Nguyen and the Southwest Work Solution on September 12. The half-day job fair held at the Alief Community Center provided an opportunity to recruit in southwest Houston for teachers, teaching assistants, housekeepers, cooks, and other positions within HCDE.



### Infographic, Video, Press Release Explain Tax Savings for Harris County Citizens

An English and Spanish infographic, video and press release are being used as tools to explain the tax savings for 2015-2016 passed by HCDE Board of Trustees. View the video, press release and the English and Spanish infographic: [http://www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=001\\_news&a=181](http://www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=001_news&a=181)

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### AB West Celebrates Constitution Day

Academic and Behavior School West recognized Constitution Day on today. The students wore red, white, and blue as they gave the definition of Constitution Day and gave an explanation of what Constitution Day means to them. The program was closed with patriotic songs and cupcakes.



### Harris County School District Highlight: Alief ISD

Alief ISD, in partnership with Memorial Hermann, provides FREE health services to registered Alief ISD students who attend eight district schools. Find out more about health and dental coverage through these links:  
<http://www.aliefisd.net/www/Alief/site/hosting/Districtwide%20Information%20Files/MemorialHermannAliefClinicDentalVanFlyer.pdf>  
<http://www.aliefisd.net/www/Alief/site/hosting/Districtwide%20Information%20Files/MemorialHermannAliefClinicFlyer.pdf>



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Organization Morale

In keeping with the Board's goal to **celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence**, I hosted a luncheon of appreciation for the Choice Partners division staff. At the Appreciation Luncheon, I commended the employees in Choice Partners on their outstanding achievements. Choice Partners doubled their partnerships over the past three years and realized a 20% increase over the last year alone! **In doing so, I worked toward establishing a culture among staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance.**



## Community Relations



In keeping with the Board's goal to work **with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way**, I am pleased to showcase that HCDE is working closely with our Head Start partner, Assistance League of Houston's Operation School Bell to receive free school uniforms for

over 1200 Head Start students. The students will receive a free uniform package that includes polo shirts, pants (or skorts), a windbreaker, underwear, shoe gift voucher, and toothbrush. Two events will celebrate this partnership, both taking place September 24. **In doing so, we not only met the needs of our students and the community in a coordinated way, but we will also increase HCDE's positive visibility in the community that supports education.**

## HCDE BOARD

*Board President*  
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**Position 6, Precinct 1**

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**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:

**OCTOBER 20, 2015**  
**October Board Meeting**  
**1:00 p.m.**

