

# The CONNECTOR

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



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Week of April 25, 2016

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

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## OF NOTE

As mentioned in last week's newsletter, members of the Schools division staff and I traveled to Chicago to visit five sites, all operated by Camelot—a provider of alternative education solutions. We departed Houston this past Sunday and returned Tuesday. Over the two-day period, we observed three of their campus environment types at five different locations. Their Transition program can be likened to our Highpoint schools while the Therapeutic Day School can be somewhat compared to our Academic and Behavior Schools, with the exception that their program is catered more to students who are strictly emotionally disturbed. As you know, our Academic and Behavior campuses cater to a much broader base of students on a wider spectrum of special needs. The Excel program helps overage students recover academic credits, which is extraordinarily helpful to students in that position. I found the visit to be very informative. Moving forward, the members of our Schools staff who attended the visit are eager to consider the principles of the most successful elements we observed for consideration as we work to better meet the needs of the students we serve. (See coverage of this experience on pages 6 and 7).

Upon my return to the office Wednesday, I attended the Houston East End Area Chamber of Commerce's 4th Annual Education Symposium. Last year, I participated in this event by serving as a panelist. This was an excellent networking opportunity and it served as an essential platform for HCDE to attend since we are located in the service area of this active organization in our immediate community. I am appreciative of the relationship that HCDE continues to maintain with this entity as well as with area school districts. To that end, on Wednesday, I also met with the superintendent of Fort Bend ISD as I continue to increase relations between the Department and area school districts.

We continued with budget meetings yesterday as we work to bring budget preparation and analysis to closure for next year's budget cycle. I will keep you apprised as we approach our presentation to you for Board approval.

Today, I attended the Upskill Houston Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative Houston Response Meeting—a Workforce, Education and Industry Forum. Governor Greg Abbott established this initiative to assess local economic activity, examine workforce challenges and opportunities, and consider innovative approaches to meet the state's workforce goals. I was asked to participate in today's roundtable discussion on behalf of the K-12 perspective, along with other Houston area superintendents and representatives from area charter schools as well as the Region 4 Education Service Center. This is a timely event given the focus of our Adult Education division as they bridge education and industry to help fortify Houston's workforce.

I will be attending the 2016 All-Earth Ecobot Challenge tomorrow at the Humble Civic Center. As you know, the EcoBot Challenge is an amazing event and we look forward to yet another successful this year.

Please be reminded that our rescheduled April Board Meeting will take place Monday, May 2. Also next week, I will be preparing for the American Leadership Forum kickoff retreat for its newest class of members. I look forward to this mind-opening experience.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you Monday and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### CASE for Kids Showcases Educator Training Opportunities during Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week



Comprehensive offerings in afterschool professional development are being showcased by the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. The online and live workshops are being promoted during Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, from April 25-29.

“We’re committed to strengthening the skills of those working in the afterschool profession,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. “As an outgrowth of this commitment, we offer extensive professional opportunities throughout the year to support out-of-school time professionals.”

CASE for Kids is an afterschool intermediary which provides funding, professional development, and networking for the local out-of-school time community. Funds support students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities, and community centers. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County.

“Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, a first-time national awareness-raising event, gives us the opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of our local afterschool professionals,” Thompson-Caruthers said.

Nationwide, an estimated 850,000 professionals work with the 10.2 million children who participate in afterschool programs each year. Afterschool offers an extension of the school day to enrich academics, broaden hobbies, and explore career possibilities. Training for afterschool professionals helps enhance the benefits of out-of-school time.

Topics for afterschool professional workshops, conferences, and symposiums range from science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, to behavior management to CPR.

A free, online training platform called Cypherworx provides 36 courses and useful resources for afterschool professionals.

“Research shows that professional development facilitates staff performance, and knowledge is vital to the success of afterschool programs,” said Thompson-Caruthers.

Through its annual End-of-Year Celebration on May 24, CASE for Kids will award its Professional Development Recognition Certificate to afterschool professionals who have completed multiple trainings throughout the 2015-2016 school year with CASE for Kids.

For more information about professional development offerings through CASE for Kids, visit [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### April Head Start Policy Council Meeting Provides Updates

The April Head Start Policy Council Meeting held April 26 provided a nutritional services report, updates of news from both Channelview and Fonwood Head Start Centers, a community partnership plan, and Early Head Start partnership updates. Parents were also told about opportunities to attend the Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference on May 6.



### Head Start Begins Recruitment Campaign for Early Head Start Teachers

The Head Start division began a campaign this week to recruit teachers for the Early Head Start program. The campaign will include flyers, neighborhood billboards, and targeted social media posts to recruit teachers in the Baytown

area. The division will also host two job fairs in June. For more information, visit <http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart>.

### Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### APRIL 18, 2016

Online: Digital Safety Academy (Part II) - Online Digital Safety and the Law

#### APRIL 26, 2016

Science Fiction: Teaching Weather with Children's Literature

Disciplinary Literacy

#### APRIL 27, 2016

Literacy and Content Strategies: 4th and 5th Grade Social Studies

#### APRIL 28, 2016

Cooperative Learning

Text Comprehension

Charter Roundtable

#### APRIL 29, 2016

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Aquatic Habitats/Terrarium Habitats

Snapshot: 21st Century Raising the Academic Bar and Risk Mitigation



### J.D. Walker Head Start Center

Members of the Highlands Fire Department visited the J.D. Walker Head Start Center. The children learned about fire prevention and safety as

well as learning about the equipment the firemen use to respond to emergencies. The teachers read stories about firemen and helped the children to understand the need to be a lifelong learner.



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Center for Grants Development News for April



Above: Danette Johnson and Olivia Smith-Daugherty of Pasadena ISD and Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard, HCDE, along with Linda Beeman of Aurora Grants, pose for a photo at the Southeast Regional Grant Professional Association Conference.

The Center for Grants Development attended several events within the grants community this month.

Staff attended the Southeast Regional grant Professional Association Conference held April 22 at United Way of Greater Houston.

Director Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard co-presented through a panel session at the Southeast Regional Grant Professional Association Conference.

Coordinator Kristal Johnson provided peer review of articles and papers through her new role as committee member of the Grants Professionals Association Publications Committee.

In other news, the center researched, identified and shared over 30 grants and resources with HCDE divisions, area districts and charter schools, and other educational organizations.

### HCDE Celebrates Administrative Professionals Day

HCDE celebrated Administrative Professionals Day on April 27 to highlight the importance of administrative professionals to the organization. Each division celebrated their professionals and recognized their dedication to helping Harris County students achieve.



Above: The Fifth Ward Head Start Center celebrates their administrative staff.



Above: Business Services Executive Assistant Deisy Rubio is recognized by Assistant Superintendent Jesus Amezcua and Chief Accounting Officer Rosa Maria Torres.

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



### Spring Parent Conference at AB School West Held to Promote Communication

Parents visited AB School West for the Spring Parent Conference on April 27. Presenters attended from the YWCA, the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the Harris Center for Youth to share community services available to families. A staff member presented to parents on how to properly reinforce positive behavior at home.

### DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Spring ISD

Spring ISD partners with Prairie View A&M University to provide early admission and related services to students ranked top 25 percent at the end of junior year.

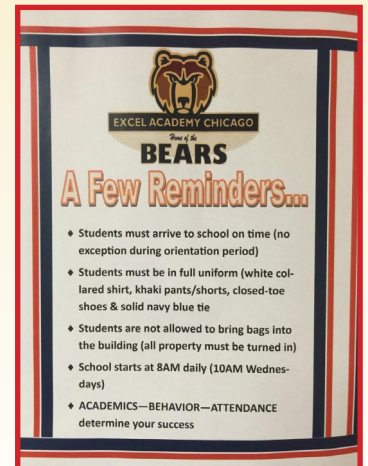
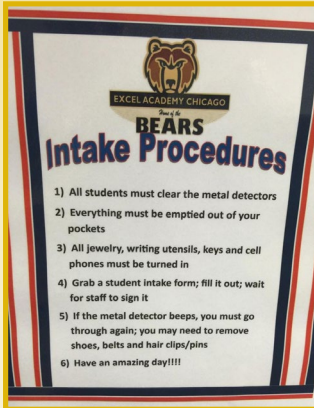


Details:  
<http://goo.gl/2gbuO8>.

# The Camelot Facilities

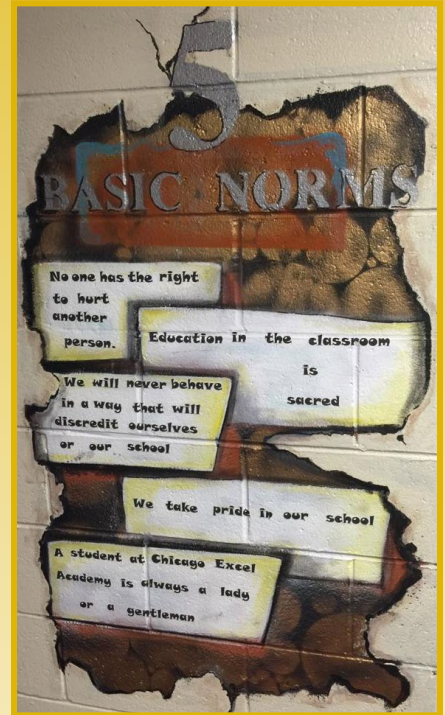
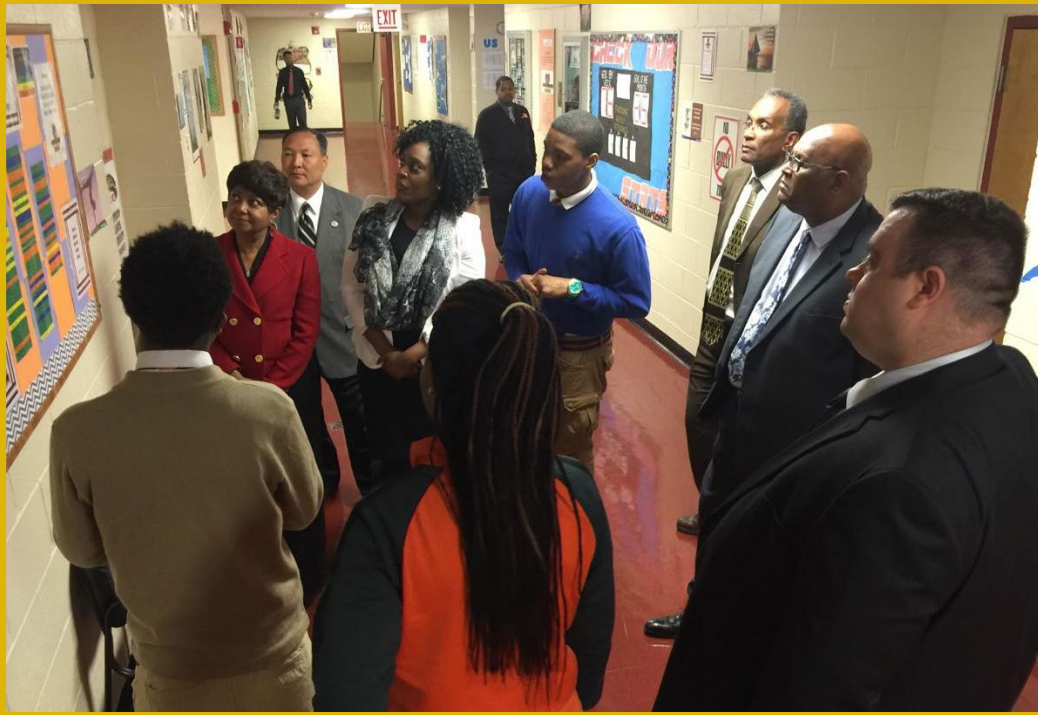
## IN REVIEW

Below are scenes from the various Camelot programs we visited in the greater Chicago area. We observed three campus environment types at five locations. The programs operated by Camelot include: Excel, Therapeutic Day School, and Transition.



# The Camelot Facilities

IN REVIEW



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Instructional Management

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

- Establish effective mechanisms for communication to and from staff in instructional evaluation, planning, and decision making;
- Oversee annual planning for increased student learning and conduct periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the planning process;
- Ensure that goals and objectives form the basis of curricular decision making and instruction and communicates expectations for student achievement;
- Ensure that appropriate data are used in developing recommendations and making decisions regarding the instructional program and resources; and
- Establish a system for regular evaluation of instructional programs to meet student instructional needs and to attain desired student



achievement.

This past week, members of the Schools division and I visited the Camelot programs in the greater Chicago area. We visited

three campus environments on five campus locations. By broadening our perspective and studying the elements and principles of the most successful components of the programs we visited, we have additional considerations for success as it relates to further enhancing and improving the teaching and learning environments for the students on our campuses.



## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

**May Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, 17, 2016  
1:00 p.m.  
Room 400

**In doing so, we are working toward achieving the Board's goals of me to:**

- **Identify the learning needs of students, in coordination with the home ISDs of our students;**
- **Develop a process that ensures that each student's learning goals are met or exceeded;**
- **Ensure feedback process in implemented to communicate effectively with the home ISD and parents;**
- **Investigate best practices for student achievement;**
- **Utilize effective practices that maximize achievement of student potential within HCDE schools; and**

