

The CONNECTOR



VOLUME 2/ISSUE 4
Week of September 21, 2015

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

From the office of JAMES COLBERT, JR. – SUPERINTENDENT

IN THIS ISSUE OF NOTE



*Former Clear Creek ISD principal
Andrea Segraves named director
of The Teaching and Learning
Center at HCDE*
p. 2



*Two Divisions Assist with KHOU
Story about Children with
Disabilities*
p. 3



*Assistant Superintendent
Kimberly McLeod's Team Meets
with Greensheet Marketing
Staff*
p. 3



*Compton Head Start Visit
Highlighted as Assistance League
of Houston Delivers Uniforms*
p. 3



*HCDE Receives Good Report Card
from State Auditor's Office*
p. 6

It was a great week at HCDE! As you are already aware, the State Auditor's Office released its report on the Selected State Contracts and Grants audit it conducted at HCDE over the past several months. The State Auditor concluded that HCDE had controls in place to ensure that funds from state contracts and grants were used for the intended purposes. It also found that HCDE complied with laws, policies, procedures, and other measures when tracking and spending those funds. In addition, the report stated that HCDE spent property tax revenue it collected in accordance with state laws and, to that end, those funds were used to provide school-based therapy services and education services for students who are at-risk and for those with emotional and special academic needs. The labor-intensive audit was conducted by a team of Certified Public Accountants and auditors who are regularly tasked to review various state agencies to find operational inefficiencies, spending or control irregularities, as well as wasteful, or even fraudulent spending. That said, since the State Auditor's Office is the independent auditor for Texas state government, we're both pleased and proud to share the positive findings of this report. Likewise, systems have been put in place to address the recommendations contained in the report.

Meanwhile, I spent much of the week in Dallas and Austin. I took advantage of the opportunity to spend quality time with Superintendent Rick Sorrells at Dallas County Department of Education where we toured several facilities under the auspices of our Dallas counterpart. In addition to that meeting and site visits, I attended the Dallas ISD State of the Schools address, sponsored by the Dallas area Chamber of Commerce, where Interim Superintendent Michael Hinojosa was the keynote speaker. I visited, probably one of the most unique schools in the Dallas metroplex, Conrad High School. This international school in Dallas ISD serves 2,000 students with 47 different languages spoken. It was an impressive campus operation.

My Dallas area meetings concluded after I connected with Mr. Gordon Taylor, Executive Director of Region 10. We had an opportunity to discuss HCDE's role in education, including our commonalities and partnerships. I am pleased with having made these significant contacts in that area of the state. Most importantly, all of the meetings were forward-moving and provoked the sharing of ideas as we each discussed innovative methods to advance our respective missions and goals.

Yesterday, I attended the continuance of the UIL hearings related to the San Antonio/referee incident that occurred over the Labor Day holiday weekend. Again, my participation in this process is to fulfill my duties and responsibilities in my official capacity as a member of the State Executive Committee of the UIL. As mentioned before, my role on this Executive Committee continues to allow me to increase HCDE's visibility on the state and national stages.

You may have heard or read in local news this week that the Texas Education Agency Commissioner issued notice to La Marque ISD officials that their Board and Superintendent will, indeed, be replaced. After thorough review of the district's overall operations, TEA Commissioner Michael Williams determined that ultimate oversight of the district would go in a different direction. For example, their Board of Trustees will be replaced by an appointed Board of Managers. Unfortunately, the district's areas of need exceeded the areas of business and finance, where HCDE assisted LMISD with great fiscal management improvements. In fact, HCDE was recently recognized by the **Houston Chronicle** for the expertise it provided the district. We will work with both the district and the Commissioner, as necessary, during this transition period. It should be noted, however, that HCDE's business team made great strides on behalf of La Marque ISD over the past several months.

We ended the week on a high note, through service to the community with the CASE for Kids 2015 Out-of-School Time Conference, which goes through tomorrow at the Memorial City location of the Westin Hotel. What a week of success in furthering our mission to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service!

In closing, I hope you were able to tune in to KHOU/Channel 11 last Friday to see the interview that featured several HCDE employees as they discussed special education. On page 3 of this issue of **The Connector**, there is a link to the story on the KHOU website. It highlighted HCDE as a unique education resource in Harris County. Next, the 100 Rooms of the Administration Building served as the venue for a neighborhood Mayoral Candidates' Forum last night. We served as a center for this important community event for our area constituents which allowed citizens and candidates, alike, to be heard.

As always, thank you for your service to the Department and I hope you enjoy this week's newsletter. Have a relaxing weekend.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Former Clear Creek ISD principal Andrea Segraves Named 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 teacher and principal.

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.

Call for Proposal/Presenters at R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Conference

Call for Proposals Issued for Presenters for R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference are being accepted.

The Early Childhood Winter Conference is set for January 30 at the Kingdom Builders' Center. Presenters are needed for breakout sessions. The

conference audience is teachers of children in grades pre-k through second. To apply or learn more about presenting:

www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/ECWC15/ECWC_RFP_cv.pdf

30th Annual R.T. Garcia
Early Childhood Winter Conference
Saturday
January
30, 2016
8:30 - 3:30



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

SEPTEMBER 21 TRAININGS

lead4ward: Cooling the Curriculum Hot Spots in Math (Grades K-2):
Data Analysis

Threat Assessment

SEPTEMBER 22 TRAINING

lead4ward: Cooling the Curriculum Hot Spots in Math (Grades 3-5): Algebraic Reasoning

SEPTEMBER 23 TRAININGS

lead4ward: Cooling the Curriculum Hot Spots in Math (Grades 6-8): Number and Operation, Algebraic Reasoning and Data Analysis

Quest for Grants Training Series
Webinar - Team Approach to Proposal Writing

SEPTEMBER 25 TRAININGS

CASE for Kids
2015 Out-of-School Time Conference

Vendor Registration
2015 Out-of-School Time Conference

Mentoring Students in Individual Inquiry Investigations

BEST Plus Refresher Toolkit

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Two Divisions Assist with KHOU Story about Children with Disabilities

How do you know if your child has a learning disability? Where do you get help? KHOU 11 News Lauren Talarico KHOU visited Academic and Behavior School East, led by Principal Mindy Robertson, last month. The story aired September 18. In the segment, Teaching and Learning Center Special Populations Director Debra Anderson and Schools Director of Curriculum Services Brenda Mullins answered questions at the station with Len Cannon KHOU and Mia Gradney KHOU.

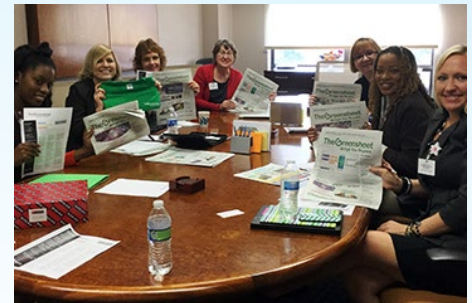


Communication sent a big thank you to both divisions for devoting time and talents to the story to help spread the message about HCDE's Value, Opportunity and Service to the community.

Here's a link to the KHOU story: <https://youtu.be/PJ6UO-I7llw>

Assistant Superintendent Kimberly McLeod's Team Meets with Greensheet Marketing Staff to Increase Visibility

Service delivery directors on Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kimberly McLeod's Education and Enrichment team met with Greensheet marketing specialists to discuss providing articles for the newspaper in over two dozen geographic markets. The opportunity will allow HCDE to continue building visibility. The Greensheet is expanding its editorial section, social media, and is also creating a Web presence, including a blog. Communication will work with Education and Enrichment to produce the copy, which will be placed in the Greensheet free of charge.



Compton Head Start Visit Highlighted as Assistance League of Houston Delivers Uniforms to All 15 Centers



Compton Head Start was one of 15 centers receiving uniforms donated, packaged, and delivered by the Assistance League of Houston with help from the U.S. Coast Guard and HCDE Head Start staff. Children at Compton and Pugh Head Start were photographed by Communication staff and will be featured through local news outlets.

The Assistance League of Houston provided 1,200 uniforms for Head Start students attending 15 centers in northeast Harris County. Children ages 3-5, and parents, are each given the bags which include pants or jumper, shirts, a shoe voucher, and underwear. Operation School Bell® is a signature philanthropic program started over 50 years ago by the National Assistance League.

Venetia Peacock, director, HCDE Head Start, said the families and staff are grateful for the continued generosity of Assistance League of Houston members.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

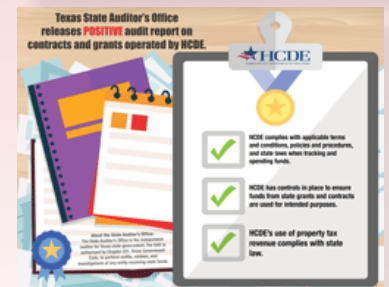
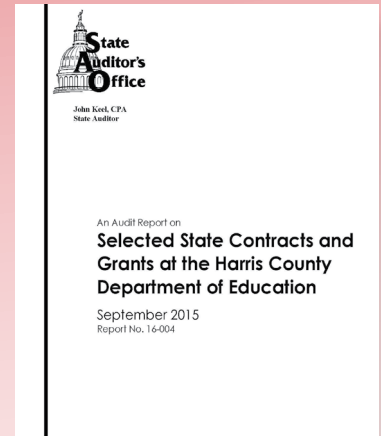
HCDE Receives Good Report Card from State Auditor's Office

Harris County Department of Education received a good report card from the State Auditor's Office through findings of a comprehensive audit conducted between January and June of this year.

The audit released on September 23 analyzed HCDE's work for fiscal years 2012, 2013, and 2014. The report supports HCDE's goal of fiscal accountability, stating that HCDE spent property tax revenue it collected in accordance with applicable state laws. It also found that HCDE "had controls in place to help ensure that it received and used funds from state grants and contracts for the intended purposes." Auditors said that HCDE complied with applicable terms and conditions, policies and procedures, state laws, and administrative rules.

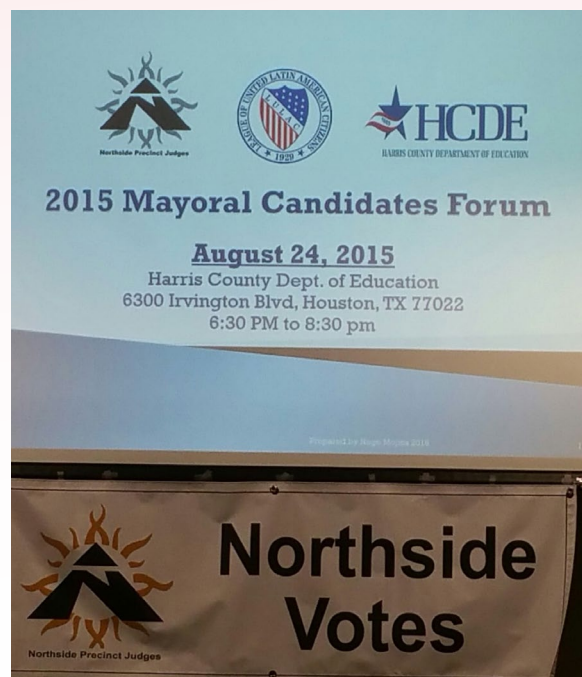
View press release and audit report:

<http://www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=001.news&a=182>



All Candidates' Roads Lead to HCDE

HCDE was the meeting place for Houston's 2015 Mayoral Candidates last night. Area neighborhood organizations converged on behalf of the area citizenry and hosted a Mayoral Candidates' Forum. HCDE is always pleased to serve the community in this way by assisting in the civic process for the betterment of the community-at-large.



School District Highlight: Tomball ISD

Tomball ISD offers community members the opportunity participate an innovative program: Tomball Principal Partners. Tomball Principal Partners are community leaders who participate in a project in Tomball ISD designed to:

- Increase awareness and understanding among individuals in the private sector of the strengths and challenges of schools in the Tomball ISD
- Demonstrate the private sector's commitment to ensuring a quality public education for all students, and
- Strengthen communication between the schools and the community they serve.

The deadline to apply is September 25, 2015.

For more information:

<https://d3jc3ahdjad7x7.cloudfront.net/SZgkjCoWzSyFcBmBeR5koM2XXmo8jGYVktOwbPWYf1G5wGyA.pdf>

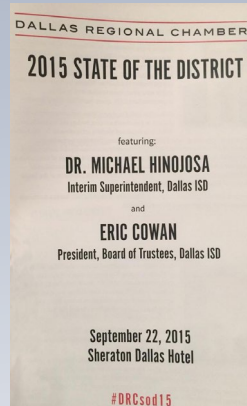
Superintendent's Week

...in review

Scenes from visit to
Dallas County Schools with
Superintendent Rick Sorrells



Scenes from the Dallas ISD's State of the
District Address sponsored by the Dallas
Regional Chamber of Commerce where
Mike Hinojosa, Interim Superintendent,
served as the Keynote Speaker



Scenes from Region 10 visit with Mr. Gordon Taylor,
Region 10 Executive Director



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Management of Administrative, Fiscal, and Facilities Functions

In accordance with the Board's expectation of me to

- Oversee a budget development process that results in recommendations based on Department priorities and available resources; and to
- Oversee budget implementation in a way that ensures appropriate expenditure of budgeted funds and provides clear and timely budget reports;

we successfully completed the State Audit on Selected State Contracts and Grants at HCDE. Further, not only did we present a balanced budget after thorough analysis and associated processes, but we are also in a sound position, due to executive leadership, able to make appropriate adjustments as a result of a conservative financial approach in response to having lowered the effective tax rate. **In doing so, as a conservative financial leader, I will continue**

to 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.



Personnel Management

In an effort to ensure that the system for recruiting and selection results in personnel, recommendations are based on defined needs, goals, priorities and candidate credentials and qualifications, our Human Resources division has targeted specific populations to meet the needs of the Department through registering for and attending a variety of job fairs in the greater Houston area at several universities, as well as through Workforce Solutions. **In doing so, we are establishing a culture among staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance.**

Job Fairs Attended:

Workforce Solutions, September 12
Sam Houston State University, September 23, 2015
Texas Southern University, September 24, 2015

Job Fairs Upcoming:

University of St. Thomas, September 29, 2015
Sam Houston State University, October 7, 2015
University of Houston, October 15, 2015
University of Texas, October 28, 2015



HCDE BOARD

Board President
Position 2, Precinct 4
Angie Chesnut

Board Vice-President
Position 4, Precinct 3
Kay Smith

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:

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

