

The CONNECTOR

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



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From the office of JAMES COLBERT, JR. – SUPERINTENDENT

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I began this week continuing to network with area education executives, furthering my efforts to shore up and fortify HCDE's relationships with our Harris County school districts. As mentioned previously, I continue to reach out to our area leaders, both in public education as well as those in city, county, and state government, to help maintain HCDE's status as we contribute to student achievement.

On Tuesday, I met with the Leadership Team as we are in full gear in anticipation of the fast-approaching school year. I am pleased to inform you that our school faculties and staff will return to their campuses next week—a full two weeks prior to the return of students. During this time, they will receive quality professional development as they prepare for another year of academic achievement during the 2016-2017 school year. Aside from our Schools division, other programs and divisions are also facilitating orientations in advance of the upcoming academic year—all to ensure excellence in education.

Shortly after Tuesday's Leadership Team Meeting, I departed for Austin. There, as you are aware, I attended yesterday's Senate Hearing as it relates to the Interim Charge regarding HCDE, and I testified before members of the Senate Education Committee—on behalf of HCDE. I fielded questions from the committee on topics including last year's state audit, possible duplicity of HCDE's program and service offerings in juxtaposition with regional service centers, as well as HCDE's relationship with the Education Foundation. Chairman Taylor requested information of the Department and also made suggestions for improved operations. I am in the process of following up with the chairman in accordance with yesterday's hearing.

Also during yesterday's hearing, Aldine ISD Superintendent Wanda Bamberg gave positive testimony on behalf of HCDE based on her long-term relationship and experiences with HCDE. She explained to members of the Senate Education Committee that, without HCDE her district would be in the unfortunate position of having to find resources—both financial and programmatic—to replace the services we provide. She informed the committee that, for example, she only knows of one other program in the state of Texas that serves the population of students we serve in our HCDE schools. I am thankful to Dr. Bamberg for her commendations on behalf of HCDE to the Senate Education Committee. Please visit the following URL to view video from the hearing: http://tlcenate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=40&clip_id=11235. You may fast forward directly to HCDE's testimony which begins at 6:21:30 on the URL. Scenes from the testimony can be found on page 2.

I returned from Austin late last night, and this morning I met with my Executive Leadership Team, followed by review of the Board Agenda for the regularly scheduled August Board Meeting. Tomorrow, I am scheduled to attend a meeting with the mayor as I continue my work on his committee to improve public education within our city. Tomorrow's meeting will be comprised of the superintendents from the school districts within the city of Houston, along with the mayor and other city officials.

I am pleased to report that the 2016 School Safety Summit was successfully held yesterday and was very well-attended. In addition to HCDE's Ecomet Burley (Director, Center for Safe and Secure Schools) appearing on Fox26's morning show for a live in-studio interview, the event received extensive media coverage on last evening's news broadcasts on KPRC-Channel 2, KTRK Channel 13, as well as on Telemundo. Hats off to the Center for Safe and Secure Schools as the division successfully collaborated with area entities to provide such an informative summit for Harris County area educators. See page 6 for additional details and for links to the news coverage.

This week, in the area of Teaching and Learning, we continued with Part II of the Online Instructor's Training and we delved into math with Lead4ward's Number Sense for grades 1-4. Our Education Certification and Professional Advancement division hosted its Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting. We closed the week by returning to math for grades K-5 with Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS. We continue to help students achieve, in Harris County and beyond, through our exceptional professional development programming.

Next week, I will be participating in a panel discussion sponsored by the University of Houston in which the topic will be the State of Education. I look forward to representing HCDE in this endeavor within the higher education realm.

Please be reminded that our Annual Staff Meeting will be held two weeks from today on Thursday, August 18, 2016. It will take place at the Kingdom Builders' event venue located at 6011 West Orem Drive in Houston, just off Beltway 8. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the program will start at 10:00 a.m. All members of the Board are invited to attend. As previously mentioned, I look forward to this opportunity to recognize and motivate our hard-working staff.

In closing, thanks again for all you do and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a relaxing weekend.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

SCENES FROM THE TEXAS SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING



Superintendent Colbert testifying before the Texas Senate Education Committee at the Senate Hearing related to the Interim Charge regarding HCDE. The superintendent answered questions posed by Senators Bettencourt, Garcia, Huffines, as well as committee chair Taylor.

HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start Recruits Families of Children Ages 6 Weeks to 4 Years for Free Childcare Services

Harris County Department of Education Head Start is accepting applications for families of children 3-4 years old for pre-school for the 2016-2017 school year at its 15 Head Start centers in northeast Harris County. In addition, Early Head Start services for children 6 weeks to 3 years of age are available at the Baytown Head Start Center.

Locations include Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Fonwood, Fifth Ward, Humble, and J.D. Walker. Other neighborhoods served are La Porte, Pugh, San Jacinto, Dogan, Sheffield, and Tidwell.

Facts about Head Start:

- Children are provided pre-school education along with healthy meals and snacks.
- Head Start delivers developmental screening for children.
- Parent involvement opportunities are provided along with service referrals to meet family needs.
- Family Engagement activities are hallmark to the program.
- Low-income families and children with disabilities are eligible. Children must be 3-4 years old.
- For more information about registration, call 713-672-6393.

Applicants should have the following for registration:

- Proof of age—child's state birth certificate, state birth facts or passport
- Proof of address—lease contract, current utility bill, state ID, benefits letter or paycheck stub
- Proof of income—current tax form (W-2 or 1040), 12 months of check stubs, child support payment record, verification of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Supplemental Security Income
- Shot record—proof of up-to-date immunizations
- Additional documentation, if applicable—child's health insurance card, legal documentation of guardianship, ARD/IEP documents

Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

AUGUST 1, 2016 THRU DECEMBER 2016

Online Instructor's Training – Part II

AUGUST 1, 2016

lead4ward: Number Sense
(Grades 1-4)

AUGUST 3, 2016

HCDE Principal Certification
Academy Information Meeting

Crime Stoppers 2016 School Safety
Summit

AUGUST 4, 2016

Using Manipulatives to Teach the
TEKS (Grades K-2)

Using Manipulatives to Teach the
TEKS (Grades 3-5)



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Children's Songwriter, Performer Don Monopoli to Headline Popular Early Childhood Conference January 31



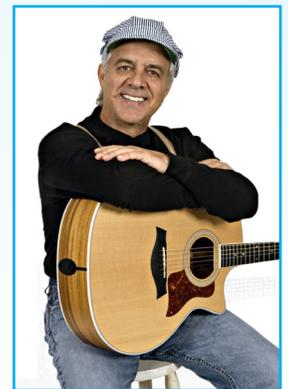
National children's recording artist Don Monopoli headlines the 31st Annual R.T. Garcia Winter Conference scheduled on Jan. 28 from 8:30 am.-3:30 p.m. at the Kingdom Builders' Center, 6011 W. Orem Drive, Houston, Texas. Throughout the Saturday conference, nationally-known presenters and local classroom teachers share best practices in early childhood education. Vendors also fill the exhibit hall at the event which attracts about 1,300 educators annually.

"Traditionally this event is filled with grades pre-k through second educators who are eager to gain new learning initiatives and materials for their classrooms," said Andrea Segraves, director for the Teaching and Learning Center and coordinator for the event. "It's a value-priced, energy-packed day with multiple sessions to optimize learning, as well as time for catching up with old friends and making new ones."

Monopoli has published more than 400 children's songs. In the past 20 years, he has presented more than 500 motivational presentations throughout the nation.

Additionally, the bilingual keynote speaker for the event is Gilberto Soto, professor of music education and guitar at Texas A&M International University. Soto teaches early childhood, elementary and secondary bilingual music education courses.

Cost for the conference with six hours of professional credit is \$85 before Dec. 1 and \$100 before January 28. Onsite registration is \$125. Register at <http://www.hcde-texas.org/teachers-workroom/>.



Human Resources Hosts Watermelon Social

HCDE Human Resources division hosted a watermelon social last week for staff in the lobby of the Irvington Building. Employees were invited for a refreshing afternoon break while networking between divisions. The watermelon social was one of several "cool" summer events hosted by Human Resources to build camaraderie.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



Center for Grants Development Secures Book Donation for Schools Division

Center for Grants Development Resource Development Specialist Dr. Vida L. Avery secured a 177-book donation from the McGraw Hill Education Group for the Schools division that they will use at AB School West and AB School East to create libraries in the classroom.

The donation included nearly 30 books from a variety of genres, each for K-4 and 6th grade levels. This is an extension of the in-kind contribution of 226 books made to CASE for Kids for their Summer Learning Event, totaling 403 books for HCDE divisions.



Adult Education Classes Begin at Irvington Learning Center

More than 500 students began classes last week at the Irvington Learning Center for the 2016-2017 program year. Center staff is using a new registration form that collects more detailed personal histories from students in an effort to better serve them and identify resources that may help them overcome barriers to further education, training, and employment.



Adult Education Classes Learn about Voter Registration

Margaret Zadouri, an ESL teacher at the Family Development Center in Spring Branch, has been visiting HCDE Adult Education classes to talk about voting rights and help students register to vote. Zandouri is a Deputy Registrar who provides non-partisan information and guides the students in filling out the registration forms.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Hosts 2016 School Safety Summit to Strategize for Back-to-School



In partnership with Crime Stoppers, HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools hosted the 2016 School Safety Summit on Aug. 3 at 6300 Irvington Blvd. More than 120 school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, teachers and campus-level staff gathered to discuss issues facing schools in the upcoming school year.

"Trending concerns include the rise in active shooter incidents, implementation of new truancy laws for Texas, and the need to reduce the heavy reliance on exclusionary practices such as out-of-school suspension to discipline our students," said Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley.

Keynote speakers for the event included Constable Alan Rosen of Harris County Precinct 1 and Don Alwes, National Tactical Officers Association. Breakout session topics focused on de-escalation techniques, mental health, officer-administration relationships, juvenile law updates, open carry, restorative justice, and more.



Participants also heard from the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Region IV Education Service Center, Mental Health America, Restorative Justice Collaborative of Houston, Klein ISD Police Department, Highland Park ISD, Childress ISD, and United Against Human Trafficking.

"This summit was a great way for educators to jump-start the school year by coming together and collaborating with experts in the field of school safety," said Burley.

See news coverage from yesterday's summit by visiting the following links:

KRIV Fox 26: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nqv2ChNPmUI&feature=youtu.be>

KPRC Channel 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPypmf-3qcl&feature=youtu.be>

The Energy Bus for Schools comes to HCDE



Harris County Department of Education welcomed the Energy Bus for Schools last week, a program focused on inspiring and developing leaders who positively impact schools, communities, and the world.

As part of the experience, participants left with principles and strategies to improve school culture, build a positive staff, and develop positive student leaders. Through the power of this positive leadership, schools and organizations can transform their culture.

The session was led by Niki Spears, Chief Energy Officer and Lead Facilitator, and former administrator and educator.

"I am passionate about changing communities," said Spears. "Energy Bus participants can take the principles they learned during this session and apply them to any situation in their lives."

Participants also created action plans to help them reach their full potential as leaders and ultimately impact others.



Find more information on the Energy Bus at <http://www.energybusschools.com>.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to

- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way; and 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 community

Yesterday, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools hosted the 2016 School Safety Summit to strategize for back-to-school. The event, which included participation from school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, teachers, and campus-level staff, was the result of collaboration between the Center for Safe and Secure Schools and Crime Stoppers.



The goal of the summit was to convene the best minds in education security to discuss how to keep schools safe in light of trending concerns. Such concerns included the rise in active shooter incidents, implementation of new truancy laws for Texas, and the need to reduce the heavy reliance on exclusionary practices such as out-of-school suspension to discipline students.

Local high profile keynote speakers headlined the event including Constable Alan Rosen of Harris County Precinct 1. Other entities represented included the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Region IV Education Service Center, Mental Health America, Restorative Justice Collaborative of Houston, Klein ISD Police Department, Highland Park ISD, Childress ISD, and United Against Human Trafficking.

The event also had tremendous reach through extensive coverage on Fox 26 Morning News as well as news broadcasts following the summit on Channels 2, 13, and Telemundo.



Ecomet Burley, Director of Center for Safe and Secure Schools, participated in a live studio interview on Fox26 yesterday morning in advance of yesterday's 2016 School Safety Summit

This event is yet another example of HCDE working to meet the Board's expectation for HCDE to maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD superintendents, elected officials, and community leaders. Through the news coverage, it also meets the Board's expectation to communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department in a variety of formats through communication with the media, community, school districts, and varied political arenas.

HCDE BOARD

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Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

August Board Meeting
August 16, 2016
1:00 p.m.
Room 400

