

The CONNECTOR

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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It was a successful week at HCDE! First off, thank you for your attendance at this week's Board Meeting this past Tuesday. It was a productive meeting and again, I thank you for your service to HCDE. Furthermore, our campus principals were honored to be publicly recognized by you for their service in observance of Principals' Month, as declared by Governor Greg Abbott.

On Monday of this week, I met with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). I continue to keep my finger on the pulses of all of our programs, service offerings, and divisions—especially through this ongoing medium. In doing so, I ensure that our processes are tweaked, as necessary, to ensure efficient and effective operations. My ELT has the ability to recalibrate when necessary, while ensuring systemic, seamless operational flow.

Yesterday, we hosted the Child Nutrition Expo, powered by Choice Partners. As you know, the Choice Partners cooperative hosts this event annually in an effort to assist our school district nutrition directors with their planning for the upcoming academic year. As a result of this cooperative relationship, HCDE partner members are responsible for supplying more than 85 million school lunches each school year to students across Harris County. The sheer number of 85 million, alone, is impressive—to say the least. Imagine the value we bring our client school districts as it relates to food! I am also pleased to report that we garnered excellent media coverage related to this event, including above-the-fold front page coverage in the City/State section of today's Houston Chronicle. I participated in an interview on KPRC Channel 2 and the event was also covered on KHOU Channel 11. (See page 4 of this newsletter for the URL to view news coverage from yesterday's events.)

In the Education and Enrichment arena, we hosted internationally-acclaimed presenter Eric Jensen this week. Dr. Jensen is a brain research expert and author. Articles on his work have appeared in USA Today, CNN, Wall Street Journal, and major education journals such as Education Leadership, Education Week, and PDK International- Phi Delta Kappan. During the HCDE-hosted day-long professional development session, Dr. Jensen discussed Brain-Based Solutions for Engagement. The event was very well-attended with over 250 educators in the audience, interactive, and engaging. Additionally, we hosted a series of other workshops for educators on topics ranging from Student Engagement in the Science Classroom to a test prep series for TExES Core Subjects for the EC-6 Exam as it pertains to Social Studies.

Also, this week, I met with Pam Wells, Executive Director of Region 4. We had a successful discussion and exchange of ideas related to how our respective organizations impact education across Harris County, and the public education community-at-large. I look forward to continuing to nurture this relationship moving forward.

In closing, next week, I will attend a meeting of the North Harris County Education Alliance Leadership Council. This alliance works collaboratively around shared goals, measures, and results in education to support the success of every child from cradle to career. Its members convene community leaders from all sectors (business, community, and education) to bring together ideas and resources to improve student achievement.

Finally, have a relaxing weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. You are appreciated.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Open House Slated for CASE for Kids Lending Library October 29

You're invited to the CASE for Kids Fall Open House on October 29, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at 6005 Westview Drive.

View the valuable resources for out-of-school time programs available through our lending library. Shelves are stocked with comprehensive curriculum, activity kits, sports equipment, electronics, and more. All materials are available for check out.

At the open house, attendees will have opportunities for door prizes, and snacks will be served.

To learn more about the library inventory, go to www.afterschoolzone.org. Call 713-696-2140 for info about the event.



CASE for Kids Hosts CPR Training

CASE for Kids is hosting a professional development training series featuring a workshop on CPR/First Aid presented by CASE for Kids Coordinator Brandi Nichols on October 29, 2015 from 9-11 a.m. at the NPO location. It is open to the public. Through CPR/First Aid training, participants will learn how to provide immediate care in cardiac, breathing, and first aid emergencies until advanced medical personnel arrive. Cost is \$35. To register go to wms.hcde-texas.org. Enter workshop number **17-05389**.

HCDE Hosts Eric Jensen



Our Education and Enrichment division hosted internationally-acclaimed presenter Eric Jensen this week. Dr. Jensen is a brain research expert and author. Articles on his work have appeared in USA Today, CNN, Wall Street Journal, and major education journals such as Education Leadership, Education Week, and PDK International, Phi Delta Kappan. During the HCDE-hosted day-long professional development session, Dr. Jensen discussed Brain-Based Solutions for Engagement. The event was very well-attended with over 250 educators in attendance, interactive, and engaging.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

OCTOBER 19 TRAINING

lead4ward: Focus Standards: Cooling the Curriculum Hot Spots in ELAR (Grades K-5)

Introduction to The Incident Command System

Introduction to The Incident Command System

OCTOBER 20 TRAININGS

Student Engagement in the Science Classroom

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291) - SOCIAL STUDIES Sessions ONLY

OCTOBER 21 TRAINING

So You Want Me to Write a Grant

OCTOBER 22 TRAINING

Tools for Engagement with Eric Jensen

OCTOBER 23 TRAINING

Raising the Bar: Literacy Strategies in Science

ARD Committee Training for Teachers and Facilitators

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Choice Partners Hosts Food Expo



With clipboards in hand, about 150 students sampled the food from about 60 vendors alongside their school district nutrition directors and complete a survey. Choice Partners gathers that information to decide on future food contracts with vendors who are awarded contracts for groceries, dairy products, bread, produce and other food products. The legal, competitively awarded contracts save member school districts both time and money in purchasing school lunches.

Food is purchased annually by school districts in greater Harris County for more than 85 million student lunches through the contracts available through Harris County Department of Education's Choice Partners.

The following are a few items that were judged by the taster-tasters at the 14th annual event with this year's theme, *Let's Get*

Wild! Choice Partners Child Nutrition Expo

Rich Chicks: Whole muscle, whole-grain, fully cooked sliders made from the "filet mignon" cut of the chicken. (Houston ISD goes through 7,680 pounds of these filets per day.)

Breakfast Fundles: Individually wrapped, stuffed sandwiches which feature two fun shapes and popular flavors that are great for breakfast or lunch.

Some other featured items include breakfast sausage pizza with country gravy, whole-grain pizza, whole-grain apple cinnamon muffins, reduced-sugar ice cream and a multiple of fresh fruit options.



PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS/MEMBERS

- Aldine ISD
- Alief ISD
- Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
- Aristoi Classical Academy
- Barbers Hill ISD
- Big Sandy ISD
- Bryan ISD
- Channelview ISD
- Clear Creek ISD
- Columbia-Brazoria ISD
- Crosby ISD
- Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
- Damon ISD
- Fort Bend ISD
- Galena Park ISD
- HCDE Head Start
- Hearne I.S.D.
- Houston Food Bank
- Houston ISD
- Huffman ISD
- Humble ISD
- Katy ISD
- Klein ISD
- La Porte ISD
- Liberty ISD
- Oakwood Independent School
- Pasadena ISD
- Pearland ISD
- Raul Yzaguirre School for Success
- Richard Milburn Academy - Texas
- San Jacinto College
- Splendor ISD
- Spring Branch ISD
- Spring ISD
- Stafford MSD
- Two Dimensions Preparatory Academy Charter School

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Scenes from the HCDE Choice Partners School Nutrition Expo



VISIT THE FOLLOWING URLs for news coverage of yesterday's Child Nutrition Expo.

Houston Chronicle

<http://www.chron.com/news/education/slideshow/Students-sample-food-items-119203/photo-8836900.php>

Humble Observer/Your Houston News

http://www.yourhoustonnews.com/humble/news/houston-area-kids-taste-test-potential-school-lunch-items-at/article_6d14fb99-da34-5b35-9d44-c7b440ba5132.html

http://www.yourhoustonnews.com/humble/news/houston-area-kids-taste-test-potential-school-lunch-items-at/article_6d14fb99-da34-5b35-9d44-c7b440ba5132.html

KHOU Channel 11

<http://www.khou.com/videos/news/local/2015/10/22/new-school-lunch-taste-test/74377186/>

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Lights On Afterschool! Morning Celebration Planned at City Hall October 22 through Alliance of Local Afterschool Organizations

The Lights On Afterschool! rally and press conference on October 22 at 10 a.m. at the Houston City Hall Rotunda, 900 Bagby, celebrates the importance of afterschool programs and the achievements of students participating in out-of-school time programs. It also draws attention to the need for more afterschool programs in greater Harris County.

Sponsored by members of the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance, the event includes afterschool support remarks by Houston City Council members and the unveiling of new afterschool research. Cheerleaders lead the rally in support of afterschool.

In Texas, 935,057 kids are on their own during the hours after school, or 19 percent. An analysis of 68 afterschool studies found that participants in high-quality afterschool programs go to school more, behave better, receive better grades, and perform better on tests.

Throughout greater Houston, communities will celebrate afterschool at programs in schools, community centers, and faith-based organizations on October 22 from 4-7 p.m.



Organizations that are a part of the greater Houston Lights On Alliance include the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning, or CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston; the YMCA; Houston Independent School District; the South East Texas After-School Association; the Education Foundation of Harris County; and the Houston Parks & Recreation Department.

"We want the community to know the benefits of afterschool, especially during a time when funding for programs is waning throughout the nation," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for CASE for Kids.

Houston is benefitting this year from funding for afterschool projects through City Connections, an initiative supported by Houston City Council and administered by CASE for Kids, which infuses all 11 city council districts with \$45,000 throughout the school year.

"We continue to look for innovative ways to support afterschool in greater Houston and celebrate the innovative programs we have here," Thompson-Caruthers said.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers.

For more facts about afterschool in greater Houston, contact CASE for Kids at 713-696-1331 or go to www.afterschoolzone.org . To access the afterschool fact sheet authored by the Afterschool Alliance, go to <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/TX-afterschool-facts.pdf> .

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Head Start Hires Teachers, Teacher Assistants in Baytown for Expansion of Service

Head Start in unison with Human Relations hosts a job fair in Baytown, Texas as part of the service expansion in the area. Employees will be hired for Early Head Start teachers, Head Start teachers, and teaching assistants. The fair will be held November 12 from noon to 5 p.m. at the Harris County Department of Education building at 101 S. Whiting St. in Baytown, Texas.

Qualifications for positions vary. For more information, see the attached flier through the following link:
[http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HeadStart/headstartjobfair\(2\).pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HeadStart/headstartjobfair(2).pdf)

Employees receive Harris County Department of Education benefits, including all major holidays, teacher retirement and social security, competitive salary, and a work schedule which matches with school district calendars. Interviews may be scheduled by calling 713-696-2177 or by emailing: hsoperations@hcde-texas.org. To prepare for the interview, applicants must fill out an application online through HCDE at www.hcde-texas.org.



Scenes from Energy Day Festival 2015 in Connection with the Education Foundation of Harris County



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

AB School West 'Hunts for the Cure' as part of Human Resources Sponsored Event

AB School West staff dressed up to "hunt for the cure" during Breast Cancer Prevention Month promoted at HCDE by Human Resources. Each week features a new theme.



School District Highlight: Klein ISD

Klein ISD creates its own smart phone app. The app available in English or Spanish features district news, calendar notifications and more.

Details:

http://www.kleinisd.net/default.aspx?name=cr_smartphoneapp



Humble Head Start Playground Completed for Opening of Center

The new Humble Head Start playground has been completed as part of the build-out of the facility at 130 Atascocita in Humble, Texas. The facility will share the grounds with Journey of Faith Church in the community. It is a free-standing facility which is slated to open before the end of the semester.

Principals of 4 Schools Honored through Governor's Principal Month

All four principals at HCDE were honored through a proclamation issued by Gov. Abbott this month. Each received a copy of the proclamation.



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

'Pumpkin Patch' Fun Provides Friendly Rivalry Between Classes at AB School East

Academic and Behavior School East displayed several dozen decorated pumpkins in a "pumpkin patch" complete with a wooden turkey sculpture crafted by Deputy Charles Reece, the officer who provides security for the campus. Principal Mindy Robertson said the activity allowed students to collaborate and work in teams. She was proud to show off the campus class pumpkins, and a friendly competition helped everyone get in the fall spirit. On hand to show off their class pumpkins were Daniel Calais from teacher Kimberly Walker's class with the "tinman" pumpkin; Bryce Collins from teacher Jesus Gomez's class with the "value, opportunity, service" pumpkin; Rodney Webb of teacher Sheridan Warren's class with the blue pigeon pumpkin; and Asia Hailey of teacher Kedrick Hampton's class, with the Burger King pumpkin. The fall décor is featured in the campus lobby for parents, staff, students, and visitors to view.



Value

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Update on La Marque ISD

On October 19, 2015, HCDE's Business Office was asked to participate in a hearing with the Commissioner of Education regarding the status of La Marque ISD. The hearing consisted of an update of the financial condition and improvements made in the last 10 months. Participants included the LMISD's Superintendent, Board President, General Counsel, State Representative Wayne Faircloth, a Texas State Senate representative, and HCDE's Dr. Jesus Amezcua. The TEA Commissioner will make a decision on the appointment of a Board of Managers for the district in the near future.

Whitley Penn and HCDE Partner for Presentation

Whitley Penn and HCDE partnered to present to the Association of State Compensatory Educators of Texas Conference at the Galleria on October 20, 2015. Celina Miller, CPA with Whitley Penn and Dr. Jesus Amezcua presented information about EDGAR to a group of approximately 800 attendees. The presentation included changes in the law, implementation of the changes, and updates to the procedures and samples of how Choice Partners Cooperative and HCDE have implemented the changes effective with new federal laws.

Business Services Introduces EDGAR

HCDE's Chief Financial Officer has been asked to present EDGAR implementation and updates to the local chapter of Internal Auditors at Pasadena ISD. The group meets periodically to receive training and updates on various new laws and implementation of new procedures.

School Finance Council

The School Finance Council met on October 17, 2015, and presentations included speakers on Ethics, Employee Benefits, and SHARS federal revenues for ISDs. Business Officials attending received CPE credits and networked with other officials.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS



HCDE Human Resources Strategy Session

Today, HCDE's Human Resources team met to discuss human resource strategies focused primarily on organization and employee morale as well as recruitment initiatives. This month, the group is rolling out a refreshed recruitment campaign that recruiters will be employing as they visit local job fairs and attend other recruitment events. Today's session was facilitated by Natasha Truitt, Executive Director of Human

Resources. The group wore pink in observation of Human Resources' Department-wide Pink in October campaign in recognition of Breast Cancer awareness.

SHADES OF PINK

Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker is joined by Theresa Torres, Serlynthia Chatmon, and Karla Cantu as they sport pink. Resource Development team members Kristal Johnson, Vida L. Avery, Sharvon Pipkins, and Joyce Aikens sport shades of pink ranging from pale to fuchsia to true pink.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Management of Administrative, Fiscal, and Facilities Function

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to

- Ensure the Department's purchasing practices are sound, cost-efficient, and consistent with policy and law; and to
- Implement and oversee a planning process that results in goals, targets, or priorities for major areas of operations; as well as the Board's goal related to

Community Relations

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

Choice Partners hosted its annual School Nutrition Expo yesterday at the Humble Civic Center. This program is responsible for supplying districts with food for more than 85 million student lunches throughout Harris County. Nearly every school district in Harris County participated and we received news coverage from numerous local media outlets.

By HCDE hosting this event and by HCDE operating such a successful program as well as my having attended, I am ensuring that I meet the Board's expectations of me to

- **Function as a conservative leader, looking 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;**
- **Recommend an annual budget to maximize resources and manage the budget while exercising prudent judgment;**
- **Serve as the primary ambassador for the Department;**
- **Present a positive, professional image;**
- **Maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISDs**
- **Communicate the needs and accomplishments of HCDE; and to**
- **Represent HCDE by attendance at events and speak professionally.**



HCDE BOARD

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Michael Wolfe
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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

NOVEMBER 17, 2015
November Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.

