

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

IN THIS ISSUE OF NOTE



School Nutrition Expo with
Choice Partners Attracts
Food Directors, Students,
Media
p. 2



Hands-on Math Activities
Help Teachers Understand
New Math TEKS
p. 3



Choice Partners Vendor
Exhibit
p. 4



Students Participate in Red
Ribbon Campaign
p. 5



Academic and Behavior
School West Recognizes
Students for Honor Roll,
Perfect Attendance
p. 5

It's hard to believe that we're nearing the end of the month of October. The first semester of the academic year is more than halfway over. We hit the ground running and have maintained our momentum.

This week has been a busy one for us at HCDE. In creating value, delivering opportunity, and providing service, our support divisions have offered much to the school districts of Harris County and beyond. We started the week off with the new Math TEKS training for grades 5 and 6, and with an elementary Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) training workshop for grades K-5. We also offered a training related to Modifying Instructional Methods and Materials for Struggling Learners as there is a great need for such in our school districts at this time. We continued STEM training for secondary educators later in the week and we also hosted an HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting for interested candidates. Other trainings for the week included additional math and science professional development sessions, as well as lifesaving First Aid/CPR training sponsored by CASE for Kids.

I am pleased to report that our new Choice Partners director, Jeff Drury, is onboard. He started with HCDE this past Tuesday. We are excited about the energy he brings to the Department.

Also, this week, I attended the North Harris County Education Alliance Leadership Council meeting, hosted by Spring ISD. At that meeting, I met the Executive Director of the Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM). She is interested in discussing possible collaborations with the Department in a variety of areas. We plan to meet in the near future to discuss how establishing a relationship might be mutually beneficial. I will keep you apprised of any developments associated with NAM.

Additionally, I met with the Superintendent of Stafford MSD. It is always refreshing to meet with our client superintendents to ensure that we are meeting their needs and to also see how we might improve our service delivery.

In closing, please be reminded that Daylight Saving Time ends at 2:00 a.m. Sunday and that we fall back an hour so please remember to set your clocks back one hour.

I hope you have a relaxing weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Thanks again for your service to HCDE.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

School Nutrition Expo with Choice Partners Attracts Food Directors, Students, Media



The School Nutrition Expo 2015 attracted several hundred students and nutrition directors along with numerous members of the media interested in what's new on the school menu. See the coverage through KPRC, KRIV, and KHOU through our YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/3KkD3MPU8SE>. In addition, the event was covered in the Houston Chronicle City/State; the Humble Observer; and Houston Public Media. To view photos through SmugMug, use the password hcde1889 through this link: <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/organize/ChoicePartners/2015-Nutrition-Expo>

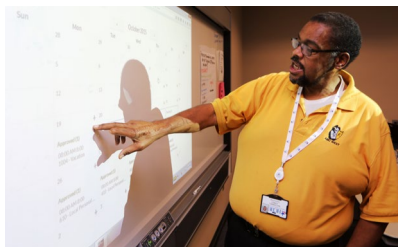
Teaching and Learning Center Staff Facilitating CIRCLE TIME Training for Head Start Staff

The Education and Enrichment division offered customized professional development and support to Head Start staff. The CIRCLE Training session not only models and supports responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas, but is also a great example of our divisions collaborating to enhance the instruction that we provide the children of Harris County.



Technology Trains Over 100 Time Clock End-Users, Training Video Also available

Nathaniel Jones (Technology Support Services) trained HCDE employees across all divisions within the Department on the recent upgrades to the TimeClock Plus system. The system was upgraded to increase efficiency for end-users. Over the past two weeks, a total of 10 sessions were held. Technology Support is responsible for having trained a total of 122 employees who attended those sessions. In addition, a training video was produced and has been distributed to all staff via HCDE email. It is also available on the Department's intranet system, the HCDE Portal.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

OCTOBER 26 TRAININGS

INew Math TEKS Grades 5 & 6

Online Instructor's Training - Part II

Elementary STEM with IEEE K-5

OCTOBER 27 TRAININGS

Modifying Instructional Methods and Materials for Struggling Learners

Secondary STEM with IEEE 6-12

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

OCTOBER 28 TRAINING

It Takes Planning to Save the World! Workshop

OCTOBER 29 TRAININGS

Ethics For Accountants

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Elephants and their Young/Mother Opossum and her Babies (6 hours G/T credit)

CASE for Kids - CPR/1st Aid

Recruitment for HCDE Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Choice Partners Purchasing Co-op Vendor Exhibit Showcases New Products, Services Needed by School Districts, Governmental Entities

School districts, universities, colleges, counties, municipalities, nonprofits, and other governmental entities view products showcased by vendors at the Choice Partners Purchasing Co-op Vendor Exhibit October 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas. Choice Partners is the purchasing cooperative for Harris County Department of Education and provides legal, competitively awarded contracts for technology, facilities, food, products, and services. The process saves both time and money.



Vendors with table-top exhibits at the event include Guardian Security. The company provides security cameras and video storage to assist K-12 school districts in preparing to comply with recent changes to laws governing the use of cameras in special education classrooms.

Vendors will showcase their products and services, offering a wide variety from art installations, building construction and trades, supplies for education, janitorial, medical, office, technology, library furniture and design, to uniforms and more. The event includes a safari/jungle theme and features a complimentary barbecue lunch. Purchasing, technology, and facilities professionals will meet with the Choice Partners vendors to view the offerings from 70 of the 500+ HCDE Choice Partners vendors.

The 20-year-old event typically attracts about 300 attendees and allows members to network with vendors and see the products and services.

Texas purchasing laws are stringent, so many government entities rely on cooperatives such as HCDE's Choice Partners to award contracts that can be shared between governments. Choice Partners processes were recently validated by the State Auditor's Office after the agency's six-month, comprehensive audit of HCDE. The rigorous assessment confirms HCDE Choice Partners position as a standard-bearer in legal compliance and gives members further assurance about the high quality of its cooperative purchasing program.

For more information about Choice Partners, go to <http://www.choicepartners.org/choice-partners-annual-exhibit>.

Hands-on Math Activities Help Teachers Understand New Math TEKS



Hands-on activities with shapes and measure helped teachers in understanding the new math TEKS vertical alignment between grades 5-6. The two-day workshop at Harris County Department called the New Math TEKS Grades 5 & 6 focuses on fractions, decimals, geometry, math expressions, equations, and more. More sessions are planned throughout the year to assist teachers

in the transition. The sessions are provided by Nicole Shanahan, math curriculum director and Kristen Allen, math consultant.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Scenes from the HCDE Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Schools Participate in Red Ribbon Campaign 2015 with Theme Respect Yourself: Be Drug Free!

During Red Ribbon Week, staff at all four schools talked to our students about staying drug-free. The Red Ribbon Week campaign includes curriculum for classrooms and themes for the week. Staff dressed to themes such as “blacking out drugs” and “too cool for drugs” (with sunglasses). Statistics show that children of parents who talk to their teens regularly about drugs are 42 percent less likely to use them.



School District Highlight: La Porte ISD

La Porte ISD hosts the Career and College Expo on October 29 at La Porte High School. Students and parents gain the opportunity to explore college and vocational options for career pathways.

Details: <https://d3jc3ahdjad7x7.cloudfront.net/Gzofwew-5wGMIFUIdIGu4AkaefX-KRBrS9RE6KRMCPf38rJYP.pdf>

Academic and Behavior School West Recognizes Students for Honor Roll, Perfect Attendance



Academic and Behavior School West had its perfect attendance and honor roll assembly on October 23, 2015 for the first six weeks. Staff members were excited for those students that were able to get good grades and come to school every day. Students were awarded certificates recognizing their achievements. Students reacted positively about being recognized among their peers and staff.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

Employee Pumpkin Contest Candidates Judged during Breast Cancer Awareness Month at HCDE

The pumpkin candidates are lined up and votes are being cast. HCDE hosts its first Breast Cancer Awareness Pumpkin Decorating Contest this month. According to Human Resources Executive Director Natasha Truitt, the voter turnout has been excellent. The first, second, and third place winners from 11 entries will be announced soon. View the pumpkins through SmugMug with the password hcde1889: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HumanResources/Pumpkin-Contest>



HCDE's Human Resources division unveils new recruitment campaign and collateral at local job fair



HR Recruiter Kris Duke greets job seeker at Houston Baptist University job fair event

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to

- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness; and to
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration



The Education and Enrichment division of HCDE recently facilitated training for Head Start staff. By offering this customized professional development and support to Head Start staff, we are ensuring, from within, that staff development is not only available onsite, but also monitored for effectiveness. Because our Education and Enrichment division remains abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration, it further ensures quality professional growth and development. In addition, the CIRCLE Training session not only models and supports responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas, but is also a great example of our divisions collaborating to enhance the instruction that we provide the children of Harris County.

By HCDE facilitating such an interconnected training session, I am ensuring that I meet the Board's expectations of me to ensure that staff development opportunities be communicated and made available to employees and that those opportunities allow for assessment of any new and effective development tools available and determine their applicability to HCDE staff.

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

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

