

# The CONNECTOR

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for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

I trust each of you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday weekend. As mentioned in the last issue of **The Connector**, the Department was closed last Thursday and Friday in observation of the holiday. We resumed normal business hours Monday and I began the week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team. On Tuesday, HCDE hosted a meeting on behalf of the Houston Urban Debate League—in which I attended. Today, the Education Foundation held its meeting, of which I was a part. I am pleased to report the meeting was a productive one.

As we are now into the month of December, our campuses are gearing up for the semester's end, as well as upcoming holiday festivities. On Friday of next week, at least two of our campuses are hosting holiday events featuring our students showcasing their talents and abilities. I look forward to attending as many of these events as I can.

On Monday of next week, HCDE is hosting the regularly scheduled IMPACT meeting with Harris County School Board Members. I will be traveling to Austin Monday evening to attend a UIL meeting as I fulfill my responsibilities as a member of the UIL Executive Committee. The meeting will take place Tuesday and I will be returning from Austin on Tuesday night. Upon my return to the office Wednesday, I will continue my monthly obligation to the American Leadership Forum (ALF) and I look forward to my volunteerism in the SuperMentor Reading program through our Head Start division on Thursday morning. As already mentioned, I plan to attend various holiday activities on our campuses next Friday.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, we were again engrossed in extensive trainings and workshops to empower educators and other leaders in Harris County and beyond. It is important to note that we hosted an Active Shooter training session this week. I provided the welcome to those in attendance who included representatives from all branches of law enforcement, school districts, and other government employees. The all-day session was very well-attended

and informative. Incidentally, the group was in session just as the attack on Ohio State University was underway. As usual, HCDE served as a resource for local media covering that unfortunate event as we discussed how we, through the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, prepare school districts and other entities for such a worst-case scenario.

Other trainings hosted this week include the following: School Finance Council; Dyslexia; 504 and RTI—How They All Fit Together; Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space; Financial Literacy Courses Training for Secondary Math, CTE, and Social Studies Teachers; ELA Leadership Meeting; Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space; Music Therapy Leadership Group; Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar; Social Studies Leadership Group; Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar—The Grant Budget! It's Not Just About the Math!; Force and Motion for Grades 3-5; Teaching Geography Concepts and Skills; Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification; Internet Safety for Schools and Communities; CPR and First Aid; and finally, Motivate. Motivate. Motivate! HCDE continues to provide exceptional value, opportunity, and service for the leaders in Harris County.

Please be reminded that the December Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13, 2016—the second Tuesday of this month, instead of the third Tuesday. Looking ahead, please note that the Department is hosting its annual holiday receptions for staff at both the Irvington and North Post Oak locations of HCDE. Receptions will take place December 14 (Irvington) and December 15 (North Post Oak). Both receptions will be held from 2:00-3:30 p.m.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Adult Education Inducts Students into National Adult Education Honor Society 2016



Scenes from last year's induction

Adult Education hosts its National Adult Education Honor Society 2016 as several dozen adult education students are honored for being exemplary classmates and for going above and beyond to further their education and careers. Many of the accomplished adult learners are

overcoming economic hardships and raising families while attending school. All are role models to their fellow classmates.

Hear stories from the honorees and their teachers on December 7, from 10-11 a.m. in room 503 at 6300 Irvington Blvd. Adult Education Director Dr. Eduardo Honold says it's a great way to start the holiday season as the stories are heartwarming and inspirational. View the invitation:

[http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4365/naehs\\_inv16.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4365/naehs_inv16.pdf) .



### Technology Services Hosts Dessert Open House December 6

Technology Support Services is hosting its annual Dessert Open House December 6 from 1-3 p.m. in room 208 at 6300 Irvington Blvd. View the invite about the come-and-go event:

<http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4364/techopenhouse.pdf>

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

#### NOVEMBER 28, 2016

School Finance Council

#### NOVEMBER 29 2016

Dyslexia, 504 & RTI...How They All Fit Together

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

Financial Literacy Courses Training for Secondary Math, CTE and Social Studies Teachers

ELA Leadership Meeting

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

Music Therapy Leadership Group (MTLG)

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

#### NOVEMBER 30, 2016

Social Studies Leadership Group

Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar - The Grant Budget! It's Not Just About the Math!

Force and Motion Workshop for Grades 3-5

#### DECEMBER 1, 2016

Teaching Geography Concepts and Skills

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification

Internet Safety For Schools and Communities

CPR and First Aid

#### DECEMBER 2, 2016

Motivate, Motivate, Motivate!

Quarterly Operations Board Meeting

Raising the Bar: Literacy Strategies in Science

Educational Diagnostician Test Prep

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Employee Internal News Featured Prominently through Newly Launched, Portal Hub

Communications and Creative Services and Technology launched the new Portal Hub, the place for internal news for all HCDE employees, after Thanksgiving break. Superintendent James Colbert introduced the site through a video message to employees:

[https://hcdeportal.hcde-texas.org/HCDEVideos/The%20Hub\\_%20Superintendent%27s%20Message.mp4](https://hcdeportal.hcde-texas.org/HCDEVideos/The%20Hub_%20Superintendent%27s%20Message.mp4)

Employees will see the Hub as their home page on Internet Explorer. Google Chrome and Firefox users may save the page to favorites.

Included in the Hub are important announcements and campaigns from Business Services and Human Resources along with feature stories about employees and divisions. Important information about client districts is also highlighted. Upcoming events are chronicled in the calendar, and helpful links are featured on the side bar.

**The Hub**  
A place for HCDE employees

Home Divisions Forms Public Info Requests Search this site Search

Former Student, Teacher Reconnect during HCDE New Employee Orientation. [Read more...](#)

Time for Toys holiday gift drive to benefit Head Start children. [Read more...](#)

**NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Writing Judges Needed for Scholastic Art & Writing Awards**  
Examples of professionals who typically serve as jurors: Creative Professionals from advertising ag ...
- Birth Announcement**  
Congratulations to Karla Cantu Torres, Administration, and husband Francisco Javier, upon the birth of ...
- GUESS WHO?**  
**Guess Who**  
Roxanne Torres, Human Resources, is the winner of the Throwback Contest from October's printed version ...
- Ask HR**  
Question: I have state days from another district that I worked at. How do I transfer those state ...
- 3 Harris County Teens Featured in Traveling Arts Show**  
Houston is the second of four national stops for the "Art.Write.Now.Tour" featuring the trav ...

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- DEC 06 HR Social: Hot Chocolate Bar
- DEC 06 Technology Support Services Dessert Open House
- DEC 07 National Adult Educ. Honor Society
- DEC 07 HR Social: Hot Chocolate Bar
- DEC 09 AB School East Holiday Program
- DEC 14 Head Start/Bates Car Giveaway
- DEC 14 Holiday Reception
- DEC 15 AB School West Holiday Program

**HELPFUL LINKS**

- Human Resources**  
Employee Access Center  
Employee Assistance Program  
HCDE Job Feed  
Employee Handbooks & Manuals  
Workflow Forms
- Payroll and Finance**  
HCDE Dashboard  
W2 Consent Form  
Travel Management System  
Time Clock  
2014-2015 Pay Processing Schedule  
eFinanceplus Request Form
- Research and Evaluation**  
Annual HCDE Service Delivery

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Homeland Security Presents Active Shooter Training at HCDE



Homeland Security Representative presents to area Facility, Security, and Law Enforcement professionals

As part of its ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of area schools, HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to help local leaders better prepare for active shooter incidents.

More than 100 facility security professionals attended the full-day DHS Active Shooter Workshop at HCDE on Monday, November 28. A DHS instructor led the group through six modules designed to help officials learn from past experience and create or improve emergency action plans.

“Unfortunately, in today’s climate, schools have to adopt an attitude of ‘not if, but when’ in order to stay prepared,” said Ecomet Burley, director, Center for Safe and Secure Schools, “which is why we are offering this training at no cost – it could literally save lives.”

Along with banks, retail, and commercial facilities and other areas, security experts consider schools among the critical infrastructure areas that must develop and strengthen emergency action plans. In addition to learning about the history of active shooter incidents, participants collaborated with each other in breakout groups to share wisdom and foster connections for future planning.



HCDE serves as a resource to local media during the Active Shooter training as they discuss tactics employed during the Ohio State attack earlier that day

### Community Volunteer Gary Whitt Instills Love of Reading through SuperMENTors Program



On November 17, Gary Whitt, senior vice president for Bank of Texas, Houston, visited the Fifth Ward Head Start Center to read to students as part of the Real SuperMENTors Read Program. Whitt has been a dedicated SuperMENTor at the Fifth Ward center for three years and reads to 3 and 4-year-olds once a month.

As part of the initiative to encourage male involvement throughout Head Start centers, SuperMENTors reinforces the ideas that reading is fun, joint reading positively impacts children learning to read, and community involvement matters.

“It’s important for the students to have regular, meaningful interactions with adult male figures through SuperMENTors,” said Whitt. “We want to show that even though we’re involved in business, we’re still involved in our community.”

Learn more about the SuperMENTors program at <https://goo.gl/XOYTYU>.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Writing Judges Needed for Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

HCDE is looking for professionals in the community to judge student writing for the 2017 Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.



#### Examples of professionals who typically serve as judges:

- Creative Professionals from advertising agencies, publishers, literary non-profits, publishing houses and literary agent offices.
- Graduate Students and/or Emerging Artists and Writers—students pursuing graduate work or young professionals seeking a career in fine arts, writing, or education.
- Educators from local colleges, writing department heads, and retired secondary school educators.
- Educators who have student(s) submitting work to the Awards should not serve as judges in your region. If a judge does encounter a work that they are familiar with, then they must recuse themselves while the submitted work is under consideration.
- Professional Writers—published novelists, magazine contributors, journalists, and writers for the stage and screen.

Those interested in volunteering as a writing judge can sign up and select their preferred dates and categories at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Writing2017>.

For questions, contact Andrea Segraves at [asegraves@hcde-texas.org](mailto:asegraves@hcde-texas.org).

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Be An Angel



From left to right: Ms. Tayyaba Ali, Ms. Davietta Ford, and Ms. Gaylynn Sanders

Be An Angel is a great charity organization that brings a smile to the faces of the students at ABS-West and Harris County. Every year the Be Angel Foundation donates \$50 dollars toward purchasing gifts students with special needs and disabilities. It's a great feeling to be a part of this rewarding program that helps others. The staff, students, and parents are so grateful for this wonderful foundation!

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Highpoint East Teacher Eric Joseph Empowers Students with Knowledge about Post-Graduation Opportunities



When students at Highpoint East walk into Eric Joseph's social studies classroom their eyes are immediately drawn to the large, colorful "Knowledge is Power" poster hanging above the white board. This phrase is a teaching philosophy for Joseph. As a middle school teacher, he believes

knowledge and exposure to options after graduation allow his students to get excited about their futures.

Highpoint East is one of two alternative schools Harris County Department of Education offers for troubled youth. The school provides a safe and highly-structured learning environment with low student-to-teacher ratios and offers students the skills needed to succeed in both academic and social settings.

Joseph wasn't exposed to the idea of college at a young age, so he took a different route to get into the education field. When he was 19, Joseph had a job building drill bits at Hughes Christensen, a division of Baker Hughes in the Woodlands. He loved the job, but something changed after September 11, 2001.

"The events of September 11 made me realize I wanted to make a change," said Joseph. "I'm a people person, and I wanted to be able to use my career to help others."

After talking with a friend who attended Prairie View A&M University, he visited the campus and ultimately decided to attend. While at Prairie View, Joseph took a history class with Dr. James Jones, III that changed his life. He became a history major and studied under Jones throughout his time in college. After graduation, Joseph decided to combine his love of history with his desire to help others and became a teacher.

During his eight years at Highpoint East, Joseph has worked to provide his students with opportunities and resources he didn't have at their age. This year, Joseph was nominated as the event committee leader for the Highpoint College and Career Fair held in November.

The fair brought in representatives from Everest Institute and College, the U.S. Army Recruiting Office, Prairie View A&M University and Sheldon Fire and Rescue to talk with students about the opportunities available to them, applying for college, financial aid resources and more.

"I truly believe that knowledge is power, and to get my students excited about their futures I need to expose them to the different opportunities available to them," said Joseph.

Joseph's position at Highpoint East allows him to support and guide his students in a variety of ways, from establishing an educational foundation, to providing them with the knowledge and resources to take their next steps in creating purposeful lives.

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Community Relations

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

Earlier this week, more than 100 facility and security professionals attended Active Shooter training at HCDE. The event was hosted by the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, in partnership with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The purpose of the event was to help local leaders better prepare for such increasing incidents.

Ironically, as the training was underway, the unfortunate Ohio State tragedy was also unfolding. Later that afternoon, HCDE served as a resource to local media, discussing best practices and tactics usually employed in Active Shooter situations to keep students and other innocent bystanders safe.

By hosting this event, I am working towards meeting the Board's expectations of me to ensure that HCDE is presented in a positive and professional light, in all venues—community, political, educational, business, and board; maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents, elected officials, community leaders, and the HCDE Board. Further, per the Board's expectations, the needs and

accomplishments of the Department are being communicated in a variety of formats and HCDE is elevated through such platforms.



*HCDE serves as a resource to local media during the Active Shooter training as they discuss tactics employed during the Ohio State attack earlier that day*



*Superintendent Colbert with presenters from the Department of Homeland Security*

