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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

I began this week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team followed by the Special Called Meeting of the Board. To that end, I would like to congratulate our new Board President Louis Evans and Vice President Eric Dick. I extend a hearty welcome to both Trustees Dick and Moore, and I look forward to working with both of you. I am confident that your leadership will help HCDE continue to advance its mission.

I continued my SuperMENTor volunteer responsibility within our Head Start division yesterday. This week, I read a book to the students about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as we approach the national holiday in his honor. The SuperMENTor experience is a very rewarding one and I encourage you to consider becoming involved.

Also, this week, the first Feasibility Committee Meeting was held. That committee is composed of President Evans, along with Trustees Trautman and Sumners, with Trustee Sumners serving as the chair.

Tomorrow, I will be fulfilling my responsibilities as a member of the 2016-2017 class of the American Leadership Forum (ALF) by attending the Taking Stock Retreat—a follow up from the group's first retreat that served as a class kick-off experience. The retreat will take place in Navasota, Texas at the Camp Allen Retreat Center.

Looking ahead, the Department will be closed on Monday, January 16, 2017, in recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. The Department will resume its normal business hours Tuesday, January 17. I will depart Houston on Monday afternoon heading to Austin for my UIL State Committee Meeting, where I serve on the UIL Executive Board. I will return to Houston Tuesday evening after that meeting.

Please be reminded that the January Board Meeting will be held Thursday, January 26, at 1:00 p.m. Immediately prior to that meeting, we will honor you, our Board, at a reception in observation of School

Board Appreciation Month. The Board Appreciation reception will take place at 12:00 noon in the 100 Rooms of the 6300 Irvington Boulevard location. We look forward to welcoming our newest trustees, expressing gratitude to our departing trustees, and recognizing our remaining Board Members. Meanwhile, we are also expressing our appreciation through an active social media campaign honoring our Board, throughout the month of January.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, we hosted the following training sessions and workshops: Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Cell Structure and Function; Online Instructor's Training, Part I; Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291)- ELAR Sessions Only; Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy; Harris County Department of Education's Dyslexia Summit; National Incident Management System (NIMS) 100, 200, 700, and 800; Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy; STAAR: A Vertical Alignment Look at RC1, Grades 6-8; Make THEM THINK! What Successful Readers and Writers Do; Biology EOC: A Closer Look at the Mechanisms of Genetics; Charter School Roundtable; Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar; HCDE Literacy Collaborative: Falling in Love with Close Reading; and Active Learning. HCDE continues to serve as one source for all learners as we offer value, opportunity, and service to the citizenry of Harris County.

In closing, our staff looks forward to recognizing you in observation of Board Appreciation at 12:00 noon, January 26. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and have a relaxing weekend.

Upcoming Events:

- January 25, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.: Les Hooper's Retirement Reception
- January 26, 2017 at 12:00 noon: Board Appreciation Reception
- January 26, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.: January Board Meeting
- January 27, 2017: Jean Polichino's Retirement Reception

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Famed Freedom Writer Manny Scott Engages Educators to Equip At-Risk Youth January 19 at HCDE



Freedom Writer Manny Scott, portrayed in a MTV hit movie, will inspire and motivate educators through a workshop scheduled for Thursday, January 19 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas.

The former dropout, whose character was portrayed in the 2007 movie starring Hillary Swank and Patrick Dempsey, shares five proven methods to engage, equip and empower unmotivated youth to take charge or their own success.

Those same tools were used to reach him in his troubled youth.

As a writer and national speaker, Scott is a sought-after, dynamic presenter who has traveled with his famed Freedom Writer teacher Erin Gruwell to inspire and equip educators to make a difference. He is also a doctoral student who studies the ways culture affects change.

To register for the workshop, go to www.hcde-texas.org/register and search by date (Jan. 19). Media wishing to attend the event, please email cvaughn@hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-0756.

HCDE Offers Emergency Management Training at No Cost to School Districts



HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools offered training for National Incident Management System (NIMS) certification on Tuesday at no cost to member school districts in Harris County. Norman Williamson from IMSolutions provided training, assessment, and same-day certification to professionals involved

in school safety or emergency management.

NIMS training is valuable to the school community by allowing them to achieve certification all in one day rather than stretching the eight-hour online course across days or weeks.

The next NIMS training will be held February 15-17 at HCDE.

Senior Director Jean Polichino's Retirement Reception Set for January 27



School-Based Therapy Services Senior Director Jean Polichino will be honored at a retirement reception January 27, from 2:30-4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington in room 503. Jean retires with 28 years of service to HCDE. She has led her division

since 2007. Please join School-Based Therapy Services and HCDE employees as we pay respect to Jean for her dedication to educating children and support to school-based therapy best practices. View the invite: <https://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4410/jean-polichino-retirement-invitation-for-print-002.pdf>

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE's Role in Innovative 'Women in Construction' Model Recognized through \$20,000 Texas Workforce Commission Award



A \$20,000 award given to the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium at the Texas Workforce Conference highlights the work of Harris County Department of Education in supporting a construction training program for women.

The innovative, workforce-context classes supported the S&B Engineers and Constructors' "Women in Construction" training program.

The award allows the consortium and HCDE to share an innovative, workforce and education training model which elevates women in the construction industry.

"We are proud of this model and the work we have done with our workforce partner S&B Engineers and Constructors," said HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert. "This award allows us to share this model and replicate it with other adult education providers through conferences and meetings."

As an Adult Education and Literacy contractor for the Houston-Galveston Area Council, HCDE's Adult Education

division collaborated with United Way THRIVE of Houston and other organizations to implement the Women in Construction Project, a customized, hiring-and-training program. The program resulted in 15 women completing S&B Engineers and Constructors' 12-week, on-the-job training program in pipefitting while the female students also gained contextualized math instruction from HCDE. This program led to jobs with S&B, a starting wage of \$18, benefits, and the possibility of additional training.

The award from Adult Education and Literacy State Leadership funds was given in December 2016 to recognize exemplary program performance and support innovation through dissemination of information about models and proven practices within the state.

"The funds will be used to develop conference presentations highlighting the Women in Construction Project in AEL and workforce development conferences across the state," said Eduardo Honold, director of HCDE Adult Education.

For information about workforce development GED or ESL classes offered through Harris County Department of Education Adult Education, visit www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation.



Judges Gather to Consider Art, Writing from 8,748 Student Entries

Art and writing volunteer judges throughout Harris County helped judge 8,748 student art and writing entries through our regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards on January 6 at our conference center.

Scholastic Art & Writing is available to creative teenagers in grades 7-12 from public, private, and home schools throughout the United States.

Each work of art and writing is blindly adjudicated, first locally through the more than 100 affiliates, including HCDE. After regional judging, entries are judged nationally by panels of judges comprised of renowned artists, authors, educators, and industry experts. Works are judged on originality, technical skill, and emergence of personal vision or voice.

Regional Gold, Silver, and Honorable Mention Awards are announced on February 3.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Awarded Meritorious Budget Award for 2016-2017 Budget Year by Association of School Business Officials International

The Association of School Business Officials International has awarded Harris County Department of Education its Meritorious Budget Award for excellence in budget presentation for the 2016-2017 budget year.



The award promotes and recognizes excellence in school budget presentation and enhances school business officials' skills in developing, analyzing, and presenting a school system budget. HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Finance Jesus Amezcua leads the Business Services division which prepares the budget.

"This award is given to school districts that meet or exceed a rigorous review by professional auditors, so we are very proud of our Business Services division which prepares the report and its commitment to financial transparency," said HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert.

ASBO is a professional, international organization founded in 1910 that provides programs and services to promote the highest standards of school business management practices, professional growth, and effective use of education resources.

2 HCDE Leaders Featured in Texas School Business January Issue



Two HCDE leaders were recently highlighted in Texas School Business in the "Who's News" section. Chief Information Officer Helen Spencer is featured along with Chaney Williams-Ledet, curriculum and compliance officer for Educator Certification and

Professional Advancement. View the article: https://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4409/texasschoolbusiness_010117-002.pdf

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 9, 2017

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Cell Structure and Function

Online Instructor's Training - Part I

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

JANUARY 10, 2017

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy

Harris County Department of Education's Dyslexia Summit

National Incident Management System (NIMS)~100,200,700 & 800

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy

JANUARY 11, 2017

STAAR: A Vertical Alignment Look at RC1-Grades 6-8

JANUARY 12, 2017

Make Them THINK! What Successful Readers and Writers Do

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at the Mechanisms of Genetics

Charter Roundtable

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

JANUARY 13, 2017

HCDE Literacy Collaborative: Falling in Love with Close Reading

Active Learning

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Special Populations Summit Celebrates, Deepens Understanding of Dyslexia



More than 80 area educators and administrators attended HCDE's 2017 Dyslexia Summit on January 10 to celebrate the unique brilliances and creativity of students with dyslexia. Throughout the day, participants collaborated with experts in the field to deepen their understanding of dyslexia.

Neuhaus Education Center, presented inspiring and educational messages about its early identification and treatment through evidence-based instruction.

Educators also heard testimonials from students at The Briarwood School in Houston and participated in

a Q&A session with a panel of experts including Dr. Tracy Weeden, Cristen Reat, Mary Yarus and Great Day Houston's Debra Duncan.



Fifteen percent of the population has a language-based learning disability, with dyslexia being the most common. The summit's keynote speaker, Dr. Keith Magee, along with Dr. Tracy Weeden and Dr. Regina Gooden with



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me as it relates to this element of performance 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



Friday, January 6, 2017, art and writing volunteer judges examined nearly 9,000 student entries in the HCDE Conference Center. HCDE is the regional sponsor of Scholastic Art & Writing. This program is available to creative teenagers in grades 7-12 from public, private, and home schools throughout the United States.

HCDE administers the program in partnership with schools and school districts throughout Harris County. Regional Gold, Silver, and Honorable Mention Awards will be announced February 3, 2017.

About Scholastic:

The Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to identify students with exceptional artistic and literary



talent and present their remarkable work to the world through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Through the Awards, students receive opportunities for recognition, exhibition, publication, and scholarships. Students across America submitted nearly 320,000 original works during the 2016 program year across 29 different categories of art and writing.

Through this program, I am ensuring that I achieve the Board's goals to maintain HCDE visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents, elected officials, community leaders, and the HCDE Board. Additionally, it offers the opportunity to be open to the ideas of others to enhance HCDE's programs and services.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Louis Evans, III
Position 4, Precinct 3

Vice President

Eric Dick
Position 2, Precinct 4

Erica Lee Carter

Position 6, Precinct 1

George Moore

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:

Retirement Reception - Les Hooper

Wednesday, January 25, 2017
2:00 p.m.
100 Rooms

Board Appreciation Reception and January Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 26, 2017
12:00 Noon, 100 Rooms
1:00 p.m., 400 Rooms

Retirement Reception - Jean Polichino

Friday, January 27, 2017
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
500 Rooms

