

The CONNECTOR

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



WEEK OF JANUARY 16, 2017

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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

I trust you remained safe and dry during this week's flood event. The Department resumed its normal operating hours Tuesday after being closed for the Martin Luther King Holiday. I traveled to Austin Monday evening to fulfill my commitment as a member of the Executive Committee of the UIL. I returned to Houston late Tuesday, at the conclusion of the UIL meeting.

As you are aware, the city experienced widespread flooding Wednesday, and HCDE, along with most area districts, colleges, and universities, delayed its normal hours of operation by two hours. Today, I attended the Regional Education Legislative Meeting, hosted by Mayor Sylvester Turner, and I also participated in a conference call with Northwest Assistance Ministries discussing workforce development opportunities.

Next Thursday is a busy day for the Board. Please be reminded that the Audit and PFC committee meetings will precede the Board Appreciation Reception that takes place at 12:00 noon in the 100 Rooms, just off from the lobby at the 6300 Irvington location. The Board Meeting will take place immediately after the reception in Room 400. Again, all of this is next Thursday, January 26.

Also, next week, we are celebrating the retirements of two outstanding employees, both having served 28 years in their respective positions. Les Hooper's reception will be held Wednesday, January 25 at 2:00 p.m., and Jean Polichino's reception will take place Friday, January 27 at 2:30 in the HCDE Conference Center, Room 503. Mr. Hooper has served as the Executive Director of Facilities, and Mrs. Polichino as the Senior Director of School-Based Therapy Services. HCDE will certainly miss these consummate professionals who have given years of dedicated service to HCDE.

Please be reminded that HCDE will host the 31st Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference next Saturday, January 28 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Kingdom Builders Center, located at 6011 W. Orem Drive in Houston (77085). Board members who plan to attend will be recognized at the beginning of the event. Your attendance is not required.

Next week, I will be attending the North Harris County Alliance Leadership Council Meeting, in addition to the aforementioned events, and other regular meetings with my Executive Leadership Team.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following workshops and training sessions: Defining Academic Rigor and Aligning Vertically for STAAR Success; Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion, and Energy; Writing, The Inking of Your Thinking; Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion, and Energy; Building Academic Vocabulary through a Language Rich Environment; Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification; Manuel Scott/Freedom Writer: How to Create an Unquenchable Thirst for Education in Young People/How to Reach "Unreachable" Youth Today; Integers and Algebraic Reasoning in Grades 6-8; School Finance Council for school district business officials from the 26 Harris County school districts and beyond; and Winning Strategies L.E.P.

In closing, HCDE looks forward to honoring you at next Thursday's Board Appreciation Reception. Not only during the month of January (which is designated as Board Appreciation Month), but throughout the year, I appreciate your service to the students and citizenry of Harris County.

Have a great weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, January 25

Les Hooper's Retirement Reception at 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 26

Public Facilities Corporation Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Board Audit Committee Meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Board Appreciation Reception at 12:00 noon

January Board Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Friday, January 27

Jean Polichino's Retirement Reception at 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 28

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Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



Texas Tribune Story Highlights HCDE with Story about Successful Student

View a recent story and video which was featured on the Texas Tribune website about Highpoint East student Amari Harrison. Amari looks forward to going back to her home school and graduating this May.

Story: https://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4413/tribtalk_011717.pdf

Video: <https://youtu.be/iU3DWebak78>

Popcorn Social Held at Irvington



Employees at Irvington took a few minutes to share a popcorn snack and network on Friday, January 12. The socials are held monthly by Human Resources for teambuilding.

CASE for Kids Brings Film Producer J.C. Pohl to Empower Youth through Leadership Program



CASE for Kids sponsored a January 13 workshop for youth in afterschool called Rising Up, developed by founder J.C. Pohl. Pohl's program focuses on a message of strength and personal power which he strives to instill in teens. He designed Rising Up to provide self-development to create stronger students who are resilient in the face of adversity.



Pohl's messages include ending teen suicide, stopping bullying, and building resilient students. As a film producer, he inspires youth to be leaders through their own film productions.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Facilities Executive Director Les Hooper's Retirement Reception Set for January 25



Facilities Support Services Executive Director Les Hooper will be honored at a retirement reception January 25, 2017 at 2 p.m. at 6300 Irvington in rooms 100 A and B. Les retires with 28 years of service to HCDE. Please join Facilities Support Services and HCDE employees as we pay

respect to Les for his years of dedication and service to Harris County schools and the community. HCDE is also celebrating the retirement of School-Based Therapy Services Senior Director Jean Polichino next week on January 27, as mentioned in last week's issue of The Connector.

View Les Hooper's reception invite: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4415/retirementinvite_leshooper.pdf.

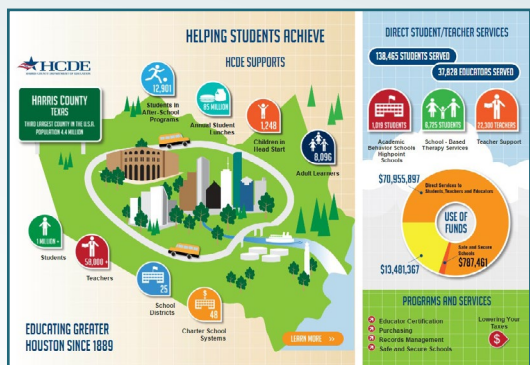
HCDE Employees Attend Social Media Boot Camp



HCDE employees were invited to attend Social Media Boot Camps this week hosted by the Communications and Creative Services division and led by Chief Information Officer Helen Spencer. The sessions focused on the set-up and training aspects of HCDE social media accounts, and included effective strategies for using these platforms to tell our story.



HCDE Teams Gain Prestigious AVA Digital Award



Harris County Department of Education Client Engagement staff members Louise Henry, Juan Lopez, and Justin Jannise and the Technology division team have earned the Platinum AVA Digital Award for the Harris County Department of Education infographic. The entry competed with 2,500 international entries.

AVA Digital Awards is sponsored and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. The platinum designation is the top award given by the organization.

The digital infographic gives facts and illustrates how HCDE services support learners throughout Harris County. View the infographic at www.whatishcde.org.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Choice Partners Vendors Showcase Variety at San Antonio Meeting



More than 30 members attended the HCDE Choice Partners Member Training and Vendor Showcase in San Antonio on January 11. Those in attendance, including school districts, colleges and charter schools, earned CEUs

while learning about what makes a purchasing co-op legal and how to distinguish between construction and maintenance.

Members also had a chance to meet with 14 vendors, chosen from a wide variety of industries including technology, finance, facilities, and more. Local, statewide, and national vendors participated in the showcase, representing the depth of contracts and other purchasing solutions that Choice Partners provides.

Next up, Choice Partners purchasing co-op will hold a similar meeting in the Dallas-Fort Worth area on April 5.



HCDE English, Language Arts Workshops Focus on Developing Love of Reading



HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center hosted multiple English/Language Arts workshops last week focusing on developing a love of reading in students. The first workshop, "What Successful Readers and Writers Do," provided

educators with strategies to get students actively involved in daily lessons and leave them wanting to read more.

The HCDE Literacy Collaborative workshop with Chris Lehman took secondary teachers through exercises on close reading and made this process real and accessible for all

learners. Educators also received a copy of his book, "Falling in Love with Close Reading," and left ready to tackle any reading assignment with students.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Four VISTA CASE for Kids Staffers Volunteer at Houston Food Bank for MLK Day of Service



Four CASE for Kids AmeriCorps VISTA employees committed to a day of service at the Houston Food Bank on January 13 for Martin Luther King Day 2017. The VISTA CASE for Kids employees are Angel Hillsman, Ashley Davis, Natasha Howard, and Munirah Jinwright.

As a collective team with other AmeriCorps volunteers throughout Houston, the four sorted and boxed 5,000 pounds of food. The day of service was a commitment to fight poverty. Food bank statistics reveal that of the 800,000 hungry Houstonians fed each year, 97 percent are not homeless. Eighty-seven percent of the Food Bank's food goes to food pantries throughout greater Houston.



ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 17, 2017

Defining Academic Rigor and Aligning Vertically for STAAR Success

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy

Writing: The Inking of Your Thinking

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy

JANUARY 18, 2017

Building Academic Vocabulary through a Language Rich Environment

JANUARY 19, 2017

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification

Manuel Scott/Freedom Writer: How to Create an Unquenchable Thirst for Education in Young People/How to Reach "Unreachable" Youth Today

Integers and Algebraic Reasoning in Grades 6-8

JANUARY 20, 2017

School Finance Council

Winning Strategies L.E.P

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale

In an effort to meet the Board's goals of me related to this element of performance to:

- **Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence**

Next week, the Department will celebrate two employees who are retiring after 28 years of service.

Receptions will be held for both Jean Polichino, Senior Director for School-Based Therapy Services and Les Hooper, Executive Director of Facilities. Both employees have served both HCDE



Jean Polichino, Senior Director for School-Based Therapy Services



Les Hooper, Executive Director of Facilities

and their respective divisions with the utmost of dedication and loyalty.

I congratulate both employees on their successful careers with HCDE and wish them nothing but the best upon their retirements from the Department.

Through recognizing these employees at the retirement receptions and through other recognition vehicles within the Department, I am striving to achieve the Board's goals of me to establish a culture among the staff where all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance, and to ensure an environment of consistency and fairness with respect for all individuals.

HCDE BOARD

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Position 4, Precinct 3

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Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

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