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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

This week started with our budget preparation workshop, facilitated by Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Jesus Amezcua. As mentioned in the last issue of **The Connector**, our budget process is a very long and tedious one. The budget workflow has many phases with multiple levels of review and preliminary approval before being presented to the Board. This past Monday morning, Dr. Amezcua provided the general overview for this year's budget process. Immediately following the budget meeting, I held a meeting with my Executive Leadership Team.

Also on Monday, I attended the IMPACT meeting for Harris County school district board presidents and trustees. The meeting was held at Spring Branch ISD and was facilitated, as usual, by former superintendent Guy Sconzo. It was a productive meeting that generated useful ideas regarding public education, not only across Harris County, but also across the state of Texas.

On Tuesday of this week, I met with the Leadership Team. The meeting was a productive one with the division directors of all of our programs and services, as well as with our campus principals. This meeting is always an informative one that lends itself to open discussion among management level staff regarding the various goings-on in the divisions, programs, and schools.

I also attended my regularly scheduled American Leadership Forum (ALF) meeting, as part of my responsibility as

a member of the class of 2016-2017. These meetings are always informative and educational. They serve as a great source of unique and exceptional professional development.

Next week, I will depart Houston late Tuesday to attend an all-day meeting in Austin, being held Wednesday with the UIL Board. I will be fulfilling my responsibility as a member of the State Executive Committee.

Also, next week, HCDE will be represented at the Houston Independent School District State of the Schools event. This event, usually held at the Hilton Americas in downtown Houston, is sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership and provides an update on the district's progress over the past year, and innovative plans for the year ahead.

In closing, please be reminded that this month's Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, February 28 at 9:00 a.m.

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

Upcoming Event: Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Crabb Named New Senior Director for School-Based Therapy Services at HCDE



Carie Crabb is the new senior director for Harris County Department of Education's School-Based Therapy Services. HCDE's team of highly-trained physical, occupational, and music therapists provide on-campus support for students throughout greater Harris County with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, and other challenges.

Crabb has 28 years of experience as a school-based therapist. After graduating from Houston Community College in 1988, she began working at HCDE as a physical therapist assistant and was assigned to Houston Independent School District. She later obtained her master's degree in physical therapy at Texas Woman's University and returned to HCDE as a physical therapist.

During her time at HCDE, Crabb has served Houston, Galena Park, Pasadena, Goose Creek and Humble independent school districts as a therapist. Crabb joined the management team in 2004, where she has partnered with various school districts, the Gulf Coast Co-op, and the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Early Childhood Intervention program.

Her expertise in physical therapy led her to serve as the HCDE center coordinator for clinical education for professional physical therapy and physical therapy assistant students who attend local colleges and universities. She has also served on the advisory boards for the Houston Community College and Wharton County Junior College Physical Therapy Assistant Programs and has been a guest lecturer for the Texas Woman's University doctoral program for physical therapy.

"I am committed to improving educational success for Harris County students through provision of high quality therapy services in partnership with the area school districts and charter schools," said Crabb. "I have been very fortunate to have a career I truly love and I'm excited about this next chapter at HCDE."

Crabb began her role as senior director on February 1, 2017. She replaced senior director Jean Polichino, who retired last month.

For more information about HCDE's School-Based Therapy Services, visit www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

FEBRUARY 6, 2017

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

FEBRUARY 7, 2017

ELA Leadership Meeting

Model Drawing for Grades 6-8

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

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

Special Populations Leadership Group Meeting

Build Your Bookshelf Series: Reading through the Timeline of New Historical Fiction Trends in Young Adult Literature

Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades 3-5)

FEBRUARY 9, 2017

Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades K-2)

Spanish Literacy PK-2

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

FEBRUARY 10, 2017

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Textbook/Materials Showcase

Bye Bye Biases: Leave them at the door

Coaching ELA Teachers: Instructional Coaching at a Glance, Part 2

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Harris County Department of Education Names 2017 Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awardees



Cypress-Fairbanks ISD's Jersey Village High School Gold Key recipient, Iliana Ramirez, senior, with her Gold Key Award photo.

Harris County teen artists and writers from 18 area school districts and multiple charter, private, and home schools earn Scholastic Art & Writing Awards as regional sponsor Harris County Department of Education names the 2017 awardees.

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, 94 years old, provides young artists and writers in grades 7-12 with the opportunity to showcase their work as it identifies and documents their outstanding achievements. The mission of the Awards is to bring outstanding visual art and writing

created by teens to a national audience by showcasing the work and encouraging creativity and career development. Former Scholastic Art & Writing notables who won awards in high school include Truman Capote, Stephen King, Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, Robert Redford, and Zac Posen.

Access the complete list of student award recipients:

<http://www.hcde-texas.org/how-we-help-students/scholastic-art-writing-awards/scholastic-art-writing-awardees/>

List of awards ceremonies and receptions at galleries throughout Houston: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A2fAHj4pSLW67S2ct05Kli9ezsN8S2YIF9IX6ukmrxg/edit>

A total of 1,805 students earn Gold Key, Silver Key and honorable mention awards, along with American Visions and Voices nomination awards from Scholastic Art & Writing, a national competition hosted regionally by HCDE. Gold Key art winners (307); Gold Key writing winners (86); and American Vision awardees (10) now advance to the national competition in New York City. National medalists are announced in March.

The 10 American Visions & Voices Nominees are announced each year as “best of show” finalists in both art and writing to advance to national competition. Each nominee earns a \$250 scholarship from sponsor Texas Arts Supply, and one in each category earns a national medal to be announced in March. The five nominees for art awards are Chimi Abuede,

Elsik High School, Alief ISD; Alexis Cazares, Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena ISD; Vittorio Covarrubi, Strake Jesuit High School; Citlali Francisco, Kelb Intermediate, Klein ISD; and Nia Pereda, Bondy Intermediate, Pasadena ISD. The five writing nominees are Tiffany Ajumobi, The Kinkaid School, Mary Ann Hurtado, Klein Collins High School, Klein ISD; Sophia Li, St. John's School; Jillian Romero, Doerre Intermediate School, Klein ISD; and Julia Smith, St. John's School.

The following school districts, private schools, charter schools and home school students are represented in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards:

School districts: Aldine, Alief, Clear Creek, Crosby, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek Consolidated, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Katy, Klein, New Caney, Pasadena, Pearland, Spring Branch, and Tomball.

Charter schools: Harmony Schools, Impact Early College High School, Calvin Nelms Charter, and KIPP Academy.

Private: Annunciation Orthodox School, Concordia Lutheran, Duchesne Academy, Episcopal High, Emery Weiner, Founders Christian, Incarnate Word, Post Oak High, Presbyterian, River Oaks Baptist, St. Agnes Academy, St. John's Middle and Upper schools, St. John XXIII, St. Thomas High, Second Baptist, Strake Jesuit, The Kinkaid School, and the Village School.

Winning art and writing entries were judged from 6,171 entries at the regional level, HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Awards coordinator Andrea Segraves said. Segraves thanked the several hundred volunteer judges who assisted in selecting the awards.

“We celebrate the talent of these young artists and writers at multiple ceremonies throughout Harris County,” said Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert. “We are proud to sponsor this competition and look forward to showcasing the work of these amazing youth.”

For more information about HCDE's regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and opportunities to sponsor, judge and enter the competition, go to www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Conscious Discipline Expert Offers Advice to Teachers at Early Childhood Winter Conference



When faced with misbehavior or disrespect, many teachers naturally resort to traditional systems of reward and punishment. Gold stars, names on the board, isolation from the group – these tactics are often passed down as ways to control classrooms, but

since they are not grounded in brain science, they are often ineffective at helping students learn and develop. Conscious discipline may sound like the latest buzzword in early childhood and special populations education, but Elizabeth Montero-Cefalo says it's more than that.

“Adult behavior regulates child behavior,” Montero-Cefalo said at Saturday’s 31st Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference. Her featured presentation on conscious discipline asked teachers not just to focus on the child’s behavior but to reflect on their own as a way to bring more love – and ultimately more learning – into the classroom.

Conscious discipline is a brain-based, comprehensive self-regulation program that has reached more than three million children. It’s the brain child (so to speak) of Dr. Becky Bailey, an internationally recognized expert in childhood education and developmental psychology. One of conscious discipline’s most recognizable practices is the “I love you” ritual, which seeks to ensure first and foremost that children feel safe and loved – necessary prerequisites before children’s frontal lobes can be activated and problem-solving can take place.

Teachers who kneel to make eye contact with students and establish loving connections with them, either through words or through touch, are already practicing conscious discipline. Bigger disciplinary challenges require more self-regulation and understanding of the neural pathways that lead to decision-making.

Dr. Bailey will be the keynote speaker at next year’s Early Childhood Winter Conference on January 27, 2018. More info about her work can be found at www.consciousdiscipline.com.

Build your Bookshelf Series: Reading through the Timeline of New Historical Fiction Trends in Young Adult Literature



The newest exploding trend in young adult books is historical fiction – with a twist! This week’s Build your Bookshelf workshop focused on reading through the timeline of new historical fiction trends in young adult literature. Educators looked at timelines and wars with both real and imaginary boundaries as they explored how to use new young adult titles to engage readers. Books included, “The Hired Girl” by Laura Amy Schlitz, “These Shallow Graves” by Jennifer Donnelly, “The Blackthorn Key” by Kevin Sands and “Salt to the Sea” by Ruta Sepetys.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CGD Employees Coordinate Conference Luncheon, Grants Network Meeting

Seven area districts attended the Center for Grants Development HCDE District Grants Network in January. The event held at HCDE promoted grant opportunities for the districts and detailed updates in programs. Districts attending the meeting organized by director Gayla Rawlinson included Alief, Aldine, Cypress-Fairbanks, Galena Park, Humble, Sheldon, and Pasadena.



Center employees Joyce Akins, Dr. Vida Avery, and Martha Silva-Froude teamed up to coordinate the Community Leaders' Luncheon held during the R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference January 28. Over 40 guests attended, including representatives from the Children's Museum of Houston, City of Houston, Clear Creek ISD, Houston ISD, University of Houston and University of Texas Health Science Center. The luncheon was held to thank ECWC sponsors and others in the community that support early childhood initiatives.

Math Make-and-Take Equips Klein Teachers with New Math Materials for Classrooms



Teaching and Learning Center Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan equipped Klein ISD Epps Island kindergarten teachers last month with math materials through a make-and-take math workshop. The teachers created 10 engaging activities for geometry. The school recently received a distinction in student progress for its innovative practices.



Music Therapists Attend Leadership Workshop at HCDE

More than 30 music therapists from across Texas attended the Music Therapy Leadership Group workshop held by HCDE's School-Based Therapy Services last week. This free, full-day workshop focused on defensible assessments, yoga, collaboration, and implementing neurologic strategies in the classroom.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations Professional Development

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me as it relates to these elements 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;
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way;
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration; and
- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitors staff development for effectiveness.

This week, HCDE hosted a Music Therapy Leadership Group workshop which was attended by area HCDE



school-based therapists, and many from other parts of the state. It was hosted by the School-Based Therapy Services division. HCDE's school-based therapists meet the unique needs of students in schools across Harris County.

Without HCDE's School-based Therapy Services division, the needs of many young learners would go unmet. HCDE continues to meet the needs of the school districts in Harris County through value, opportunity and service.

By HCDE facilitating this training, I am meeting the Board's goals of me to:

- Assess any new and effective development tools available;
- Determine professional development applicability to staff;
- Ensure that HCDE is presented in a positive and professional light;
- Maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD superintendents; and
- Articulate the needs and accomplishments of the Department.



HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENT:

Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 28, 2017
at 9:00 a.m.

