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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

It's hard to believe that we're already approaching Spring Break. This academic year is moving at a rapid pace. I started this week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team followed by a meeting with the Leadership Team this past Tuesday. I also met with Mr. Tom Brooks, the Executive Director of the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department on that day. The meeting was informative as I learned more about the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs.

On Wednesday, Human Resources executive director Natasha Truitt and I met with officials from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) as they performed a regularly-scheduled review of our organization and compensation structure, ensuring alignment with comparable education entities across the state. Also, I had the pleasure of visiting both Academic and Behavior School-East (during Career Day festivities) and Highpoint East. The ABS-East career day was a well-organized event, with 15 agencies and businesses represented to expose our students to possible future careers. Among the many groups represented were the Texas Department of Safety (DPS), Houston Fire Department (HFD), and Houston Police Department (HPD). It was an impressive event with all students engaged in the process of learning about what is possible for them upon completion of ABS-East. (See page 2.)

Yesterday, I fulfilled my monthly American Leadership Forum responsibility as a member of the 2016-2017 class. As mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**, The American Leadership Forum (ALF) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to join and strengthen diverse leaders to serve the common good. This occurs through a yearlong Fellows Program in which leaders engage in dialogue, explore differences, and build relationships. ALF strengthens its Fellows' capacity to address public issues collaboratively and it also builds a strong leadership network to work for positive change in our community.

Earlier today, I met with representatives from the Association of Recovery Schools. This meeting consistently provides additional enlightenment as we also propose to educate students who are in recovery from substance use disorder. I also visited Academic and Behavior School-West, proudly referred to as Home of the Knights. I am pleased to say that all of our campuses are providing impeccable service to both the students and districts we serve.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Positive Behavior Management Online; Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar; Quest for Grants Training Series: Grants for Afterschool—How to Get and Sustain More Funding; Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Interdependence and Environmental Systems; and Structure and Clear Limits. HCDE continues to offer value, opportunity, and service to the learners and educators of Harris County.

Please be reminded that next week, March 13-17, HCDE—along with the 25 Harris County school districts—will be closed for Spring Break. The Department will resume its regular schedule Monday, March 20, 2017. Also, be reminded that there is no regularly scheduled Board Meeting during the month of March. The next Board meeting will be held Tuesday, April 18, 2017.

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

Upcoming Event:
Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 18, 2017

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

SCENES FROM THE ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOL-EAST CAREER FAIR 2017

Yesterday, 15 agencies and companies participated in the school's Career Fair event for students in the Adaptive Behavior Program. It was a great day of learning and exploring for the students at ABS-East. The following entities were represented-allowing our students a realistic perspective of the various career paths that are open to them: Texas Department of Public Safety (TDPS), Houston Fire Department (HFD), Houston Police Department (HPD), Everest Institute, ARC Labs, MIAT, Buffalo Wild Wings, Franklin Beauty School, VAST, Stuffed Baked Potato Factory, Edubalicious Treats, 5 Star Catering, Divas Dent, 90.9-KTSU, and Parris Foundation.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Lookabaugh Named Executive Director of Facilities Support Services at HCDE



Gregory Lookabaugh is the new executive director of Harris County Department of Education's Facilities Support Services division. Formerly senior manager of facilities planning, Lookabaugh brings more than 35 years of experience working with educational institutions to his new role at HCDE. His main duties include leading an extensive team of employees as they consult in departmental operational reviews, training, facility design, and construction management assistance, as well as facility maintenance and operations management.

Lookabaugh holds a bachelor's degree in engineering/industrial technology from Lamar University. His many professional accomplishments include serving as a life member of the Texas Association of School Business Officials and as a board member of the Custodial Management Association of Texas. In 2009, Lookabaugh assisted the United States Department of Energy in preparing the Guide to Operating and Maintaining Energy Smart Schools to educate school districts across the nation in energy conservation.

Many conferences and organizations have sought Lookabaugh's expertise in facilities management. He was a keynote speaker at the Ohio Association of School Business Officials Facility Masters Conference in 2016, and he regularly presents at both the annual and midwinter TASBO conferences.

A veteran of the US Navy, he received an honorable discharge in 1981. He lives in Montgomery, Texas.



HCDE Staff Goes Texan for Rodeo

Staff participated in the citywide Go Texan day on March 3. Throughout the city, Houstonians don boots, jeans, hats, and big belts to kick off the rodeo. View photos on SmugMug (password is hcde1889:

<https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HumanResources/Go-Texan-Day-2017/i-45vpQ5h>

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

MARCH 6, 2017

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

MARCH 7, 2017

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments

Quarterly Operations Board Meeting

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

Workstation Make and Take Comparing Numbers for Pre-K and Kindergarten

Improve Problem Solving in Operations and Algebraic Reasoning (Grade 2)

MARCH 8, 2017

Quest for Grants Training Series: Grants For Afterschool--How to Get and Sustain More Funding

Introduction to Restorative Principles and Circles

Digging Deeper: Applying Webb's Depth of Knowledge to the Science Classroom

Capturing Kids Hearts

Workstation Make and Take Comparing Numbers for Grades 1 and 2

MARCH 9, 2017

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Interdependence and Environmental Systems

MARCH 10, 2017

Structure and Clear Limits

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Purchasing Co-Op Rolls Out Time-Saving JOC Trades Contract



JOC Trades Rollout on Wednesday, March 8, where they networked with each other and heard a presentation about the intricacies of government purchasing.

“Very useful,” said co-op member Bahman Yazdani, associate director, Energy Systems Laboratory, Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station. Yazdani exchanged

Choice Partners, HCDE’s purchasing cooperative, held an event for Harris County-area businesses and government entities to discuss a new contract that will increase efficiency. Thirty-five members and 16 vendors attended the

business cards with a rep from Aggieland Construction, one of the newly-awarded contract holders also present at the event.

The on-call JOC trades contract “lowers overhead cost,” explained Stephen Kendrick, contract compliance specialist, HCDE. He added that it also simplifies the procurement process by allowing member entities to contract directly with the trades specialists they need, rather than going through a larger contractor and sub-contracting for specific needs.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Spring Street Studios Reception for Regional HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Awardees Kicks off Spring Break 2017 with 600 Artworks, Readings from Writers



Photo: Featured mixed media Gold Key Award artwork from Summer Elliott, Clear Springs High School, Clear Creek ISD. Elliott’s entry now advances to national judging in New York City.

Several hundred high school teen artists and writers kick off Spring Break 2017 by attending an artist reception and celebration Saturday, March 11, from 2-4 p.m. at Spring Street Studios, 1824 Spring St., Houston, TX 77007. About 600 art works will be displayed at the gallery through the Harris County Department of Education

Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

A reading from featured teen writer Mary Ann Hurtado, Klein Collins High School, Klein ISD, is part of the festivities. She reads from her humor entry: “From Sea to

Shining Sea.” Hurtado earned one of five “best in class” American Voice nominations at the national level from HCDE. More teen writers and artists will be on hand for the meet-and-greet event.

The free, high-energy reception is one of four celebrations planned in March. For more information about Scholastic Art & Writing, go to www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic.

About Scholastic Art & Writing: Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation’s longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The program has an impressive legacy of being the first to acknowledge creative talent and is today’s largest source of scholarships for creative teens: www.artandwriting.org.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Harris County Department of Education Administrator to Lead Texas Alliance of Black School Educators



Kimberly McLeod, Harris County Department of Education assistant superintendent for Education and Enrichment, was sworn in as president of the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators, Saturday, February 25 during the organization's

32nd annual state conference held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, Texas.

McLeod's ambitions to lead the organization are enriched by her leadership experience. She currently oversees six divisions in her daily professional capacity at HCDE.

As she begins her three-year term, McLeod said that creating momentum and sustainability within an organization of 1,000-plus volunteers will be challenging yet rewarding.

"Our volunteers remain passionate in their drive to support TABSE as the organization continues to empower educators," she said. "As their leader, their enthusiasm is my inspiration."

As McLeod settles into office, her goals are to extend focus on governance and policy, to help local affiliates strengthen their programs for a more local impact and to focus on leadership preparation and development throughout the state. Her term ends February 2020.

TABSE membership is open to anyone who teaches or serves children of African descent and who shares their mission of empowering those leaders with the skills they need to exact their desired outcome.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Univision 45 Tells Student Success Story at AB West



Univision 45 Houston anchor/reporter Rebecca Suarez shared a good news story about student Angelica Garcia, a student at Academic and Behavior School West with visual, auditory and orthopedic challenges. Since being

at AB West the past two years, sister Maria Garcia says Angelica is learning to communicate with family and is

happy as she begins her school day. As she practices her independence, she is learning sign language and is working in her life skills class to accomplish tasks like matching, sorting, and reading.

View her story through our blog:

<https://blog.hcde-texas.org/2017/01/09/angelica-finally-thrives-at-hcdes-academic-and-behavior-school-west/>

View Angelica's story through the Univision 45 story:

<http://uni.vi/UD8E100BQwp>

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

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



Photo: Featured mixed media Gold Key Award artwork from Summer Elliott, Clear Springs High School, Clear Creek ISD. Elliott's entry now advances to national judging in New York City.

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Saturday, March 11, from 2-4 p.m. at Spring Street Studios, 1824 Spring St., Houston, Texas 77007. About 600 art works will be displayed at the gallery through the Harris County Department of Education Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

A reading from featured teen writer Mary Ann Hurtado, Klein Collins High School, Klein ISD is part of the festivities. She will read from her humor entry: "From Sea to Shining Sea." Hurtado earned one of five "best in class" American Voice nominations at the national level from HCDE. More teen writers and artists will be on hand for the meet-and-greet event.

The free, high-energy reception is one of four celebrations planned in March. For more information about Scholastic Art & Writing, go to www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic.

As a result of HCDE's regional sponsorship of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, I am working to meet the Board's goals for me to maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD superintendents, elected officials, community leaders, and others. It also provides a platform for me to communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department in a variety of formats.

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 Summers
Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman
Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING BOARD EVENT:

Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 18, 2017

