

# The CONNECTOR

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



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

I began this week with a meeting with the Executive Leadership Team followed by a site visit to the Sheffield Head Start Center. I was pleased with the systems in place at the location and I commend our Head Start staff for the work they do to ensure school readiness for young learners.

The Board held its Special Call Board Meeting this past Tuesday, as well as a meeting of the Developmental Committee to discuss the progress of the Recovery High School. I look forward to bringing forth that item, along with several others, in consideration for your approval.

Also this week, I met with the chief executive officer of Northwest Area Ministries (NAM). That meeting was productive as we discussed establishing even more community partnership opportunities.

I trust that each of you remained safe and dry during Wednesday's tornadic weather across the city. It was necessary for employees at certain locations to shelter in place either in an interior area or stairwell. Because the Irvington location was positioned in the middle of the tornadic activity according to real-time radars, it was necessary for staff at the Administration building to take shelter in both of the building's stairwells. Fortunately, the weather system passed over without incident as far as the Department is concerned.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS); Frog Math: Predict, Ponder, Play/Group Solutions (6 hours, Gifted and Talented update); Education Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar; National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS 400; Summer

Learning Symposium; and Science Fiction: Teaching Weather with Children's Literature (6 hours, Gifted and Talented credit).

Next week, after my weekly Executive Leadership Team meeting, I will attend the IMPACT Meeting. IMPACT is a professional group comprised of Harris County area board members and board presidents.

The Leadership Team will meet Tuesday and I will also be attending meetings at both NAM as well as with AROSC—the recovery school association.

Beginning next week, HCDE will enter its most intense period of the budget planning process. Each division director within the Department will present a projected budget. During that process, the presenting directors will discuss their respective divisions' SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Outcomes, and Threats) analysis and will answer questions related to the projected budget to members of the Department's Budget Committee. The process is very thorough so that by the time the budget is presented to the Board, it has been vetted at various levels. To that end, I look forward to bringing the budget to the Board for approval once this phase is complete.

In closing, thanks again for your service to Harris County Department of Education. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**, and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

**Upcoming Event:**  
**Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, April 18, 2017

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### New Community Collaborations Underway at Adult Education

Several new workforce initiatives are underway at Adult Education. Adult Education Director Eduardo Honold is working with United Way of Houston and Workforce Solutions to develop a contextualized entrepreneurship and English as a second language program for family childcare providers who work with Bright Beginnings. Bright Beginnings is an organization founded to improve the quality of daycare in Houston. Director Honold met with the organization to plan a course set to launch in July 2017. The course teaches business management and accounting software management and also delivers specialized ESL instruction.

Adult Education is also launching two new classes in certified nurse assistant training for English language learners. Since a class at the Irvington Learning Center was successful, two new classes are planned in Pasadena and Baytown. HCDE is collaborating with BC Houston Health in this endeavor. Thirty students will receive over 100 hours of vocational instruction and practical field training along with specialized English language classes. Graduates will help satisfy the growing demand for bilingual certified nurse assistants in the Houston area.

In other division news, eight adult learners completed the “Communication for Conflict Resolution” class at company TAS Concrete. The class was designed to improve the communication skills of staff at the company, a collaborator with HCDE in site-based workplace literacy since July 2016. The class supports TAS employees moving into managerial and supervisory positions within the company. Our staff developed a contextualized curriculum designed around issues that arise in daily operations of a construction company.

### Choice Partners Vendor Orientation Held



Representatives from companies that have been awarded a Choice Partners contract attended Vendor Orientation on Wednesday, March 29. The event is designed to help sales staff understand how to grow their Harris County businesses using HCDE's purchasing cooperative, now that these companies have been vetted and board-approved.

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### MARCH 28, 2017

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Frog Math: Predict, Ponder, Play/Group Solutions (6 hours G/T update)

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

#### MARCH 29, 2017

National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS 400

#### MARCH 31, 2017

Summer Learning Symposium

Science Fiction: Teaching Weather with Children's Literature (6 hrs G/T credit)



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Students Attend HCDE Center for Safe and Secure Schools Leadership Day



Last week, area junior and high school students attended the Center for Safe and Secure School's Leadership Day workshop led by TEEN TRUTH speaker J.C. Pohl. The workshop was designed

to help students understand that being an effective leader is about more than producing dances, rallies, or

theme days. It's about building an inclusive culture that attends to the social and emotional needs of all students on campus.

The student attendees were a mixture of potential leaders on campus including current student council members. They left with a greater understanding of the critical issues currently affecting school climate and empowered to develop a comprehensive action plan to address the identified concerns.

### Baytown Head Start Center Hosts Art Showcase for Families, Community

Students at the HCDE Baytown Head Start Center held a classroom art showcase for parents and community members last week. The theme of the showcase was transportation, so in addition to learning about different types of transportation and safety, each classroom chose an art project centered around the theme.



Students were also encouraged to take their partially-finished art projects home to complete them with their parents and guardians to create a family connection. Baytown Head Start families and community members were invited to each classroom to view the art projects.

### NIMS Certification Offered by Safety Division



Every campus will respond to some type of emergency in 2017, whether it's a fire, storm, flood or active shooter. HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools helped area schools stay up-to-date with National Incident Management System (NIMS) certification. The latest, most advanced course was offered on March 29 and 30 at HCDE's Irvington offices at no cost to member districts.



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Tumy to Serve on Presidential Panel for National Council of Teachers of English 2017



Kelly Tumy, English language arts and social studies director for the Teaching and Learning Center, will serve on the Presidential Panel for National Council of Teachers of English 2017. The topic for the panel focuses on “Re-imagining the Canon through Modern Lens—What is the Impact of Generation Z on Literature Today?”

### Research and Evaluation Institute Employee Presents at TASB Seminar

Dr. Andres Garcia of the HCDE Research and Evaluation Institute presented at the TASB Winter Governance and Legal Seminar in Corpus Christi in March. His presentation called “Understanding Student Discipline and its Effect on Student Achievement” focused on how attendees could improve student achievement through greater awareness of the impact of student disciplinary practices. The session reviewed the status of disciplinary data for Texas school districts. It also included a discussion of implications for school policy and disciplinary practices.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### CASE for Kids Coordinator Featured in National AfterSchool Association E-Newsletter



Adrian Fields, CASE for Kids coordinator, is featured in the National AfterSchool Association e-newsletter this week. The newsletter is sent to the afterschool community throughout the nation.

Fields is recognized as an up-and-coming leader in afterschool through the organization’s Next Generation in Afterschool.

From a field of 125, the NAA chose 33 young leaders “who possess passion, creativity, and commitment to youth; who embrace professional development; and who embody the NAA core competencies.”

As one of the 33 afterschool young leaders who will shape the next generation, Fields was asked this question: “What impact do you hope to make through your work in afterschool?”

His reply is published through the e-newsletter: <http://naaweb.org/next-generation-of-afterschool-2017#AdrianFields>

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Little Houses to Make Big Literacy Impact through ‘Groomed for Literacy’ Collective with HCDE Adult Learners, City of Houston Library



*Photo: (left) Harris County Department of Education teacher Clifton Hypolite helps adult learner Leonardo Cordova with finishing touches on a prototype “little house” which will hold library books. The collaborative between HCDE Adult Education and the City of Houston Library System provides 50 mini libraries for barber shops located in targeted neighborhoods with low-literacy, low-income youth. The workforce class taking on the project provides a combined GED class with Core Curriculum for construction.*

Fifty little houses which could make a big literacy impact in needy children’s lives are being constructed and painted by adult learners enrolled in workforce development classes at Harris County Department of Education. The event will be held on April 7, from 10

a.m. to noon at 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas.

The collaborative program created by the Houston Public Library called “Groomed for Literacy” provides the wooden boxes filled with books to barber shops in targeted areas with low-literacy, low-income youth who have low access to quality books.

The boxes feature a barber shop storefront décor complete with red-white-and-blue barber poles. Supplies were donated by the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation and the Little Free Library organization. Other partners in the project include the City of Houston Health Department, Scenic Woods Library, Hott Blocc Barbershop (pilot location), and My Brother’s Keeper.

“Our adult education students involved with this project can connect with this cause to promote

literacy among youth as many of them return to school to better themselves,” said Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. “They see the value in this program and are offering to volunteer their time to encourage youth to read.”

This past fall, students in an adult education workforce development class constructed the little houses. After painting is completed, the Houston Public Library will work with local barber shops to implement the program. Service areas include Fifth Ward, Third Ward, East Little York, Independence Heights, Clinton Park, Sharpstown, Gulfgate, Hobby, and several dozen additional neighborhoods.

Several of the students putting finishing touches on the little houses are enrolled in a construction class through HCDE. The basic construction and safety skills class is called Core Curriculum Certification.

Student Leonardo Cordova took the class with a number of other employees laid off from General Electric last December.

“It’s a good feeling to help other people,” said Cordova. “I look forward to volunteering to get the job done.”

Harris County Department of Education Adult Education provides opportunity for adult learners to enroll in GED or English as a second language classes while also preparing them for new careers in the construction industry. For more information about classes, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Department of Education Baytown Head Start program Recruits Students for Immediate Openings



Baytown parent Tiana Toliver stands with daughter, Hannah.

Harris County Department of Education Head Start Baytown Centers are recruiting students ages 6 weeks to 3 years old for Early Head Start and ages 3 to 5 for Head Start. The Early Head Start Center is located at 1319 N. Pruett St. and the Head Start center at 1725 N. Pruett St. These programs ensure future success for students both academically and socially and provide comprehensive health, education, nutrition, and financial services to the families.

Tiana Toliver, parent to current Baytown Head Start student Hannah, credits the HCDE Head Start program for changing her life back in 2011. After leaving an abusive marriage, and not sure what to do next, Toliver enrolled her oldest child in Head Start and found she excelled in the

classroom. While her daughter was attending Head Start, Toliver obtained a certificate in medical coding and billing to support her family.

Since 2011, Toliver has had three children attend Head Start and has seen the benefits it provides.

“Both of my daughters that moved on to elementary school are currently on the honor roll at Goose Creek CISD,” said Toliver. “I believe that is a result of the knowledge and support they received from the teachers in HCDE’s Head Start program.”

HCDE provides services through 15 Head Start centers located in northeast Harris County. Additional locations include J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, La Porte, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell.

For information about enrollment or locations, call (713) 672-9343 or visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart).

### Summer STEM Programs Keep Young Brains Blooming



Lisa Felske, curriculum director for science at the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE, shared tips for teachers on HCDE’s news blog about the many opportunities

in and around Houston for students to get science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activity this summer.

Summer STEM programs offer countless benefits for students who want to keep their minds engaged during time off from school. Stepping away from the more rigid structure of the traditional classroom, these science camps encourage trial, failure, and creative experimentation, which are essential to becoming future leaders in science and technology. Luckily, for those in the Houston area, there are many exciting opportunities going on right here in Harris County, including Rice University’s Alexa Café: All Girls STEM Camp, and the University of St. Thomas’ Camp Cardiac.



# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### AB School East to Gain Community Garden



Academic and Behavior School East will soon start a community garden and food and nutrition education program with the award of a \$500 grant to the Education Foundation of Harris County via ScottsMiracle-Gro Foundation. Sharvon Pipkins, Center for Grants Development, acquired the grant which will transform a vacant schoolyard into an edible community garden at HCDE AB School East.

The garden will be used by 75 students in grades 6-12 at the school.

### AB School West Students Win First Tee Champions Golf Challenge



Two Academic and Behavior School West students, Luther Cunningham and Enrique Mendoza, participated in the Annual First Tee Champions Golf Challenge on March 26 and, paired with other First Tee golfers, won the challenge. AB School West's physical education teacher Tamara Powers assisted Principal Victor Keys with the student participants during the challenge.

# Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

## Community Relations

In an effort to meet the Board's expectations of me as it relates to the following 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



Joyce Akins (left), Center for Grants Development and her team contributed to the success of HCDE's Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, along with members of The Learning Center. Andrea Segraves (right) serves as HCDE's coordinator for Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

The Department received notification that HCDE has been selected as the recipient of the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers 2017 Gold Key for Excellence in the Field award among 100 national regional

affiliates.

The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards is a tremendous undertaking that HCDE has sponsored for many years for student artists and writers in Harris County. Spearheaded by Andrea Segraves of the Teaching and Learning Center, this program brings about systemic and extensive organic collaboration from numerous divisions within HCDE to ensure its success, including the Center for Grants Development, Communications and Creative Services, and especially



Andrea Segraves (TLC), HCDE's Scholastic Art and Writing Coordinator

the Facilities group. There are numerous moving parts required to ensure the quality of this project and HCDE is proud to be the recipient of such a monumental award. Hats off to all staff within the Department who contributed to HCDE being selected. The award will be presented in June at the National Ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City and Ms. Segraves will accept the award on behalf of HCDE.

**As a result of the Department continuing the tradition of sponsoring Scholastic Art and Writing, I am striving towards meeting the Board's goal for me to function as the primary ambassador for the Department in all venues—community, political, educational, business, and board. I am also ensuring that HCDE maintain visibility and involvement within the community with ISD Superintendents, community leaders, and the HCDE Board.**

## HCDE BOARD

### Board President

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## UPCOMING BOARD EVENT:

**Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, April 18, 2017

