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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

The Department resumed its normal business hours Tuesday, immediately following the Memorial Day holiday. I began the workweek, as usual, with my regularly scheduled meetings—starting with the Executive Leadership Team.

For all practical purposes, the academic year has come to a close with nearly all of our client school districts having ended the semester. Crosby ISD is the last remaining school district still in session, ending its spring semester Tuesday, June 7.

Our year-end recognition events have continued throughout this week. On Wednesday, I participated in the Academic and Behavior School graduation and grade promotion ceremony. I am proud of our students' accomplishments and of the staff who contribute to the successes of our students. The event was both rewarding and inspiring. It was an honor to be part of that experience.

Divisions and programs within the Department have hosted various recognition events and activities celebrating across-the-board achievements. Please see page 5 for a listing of URLs that direct you to photo galleries capturing those events. I encourage you to visit the online galleries.

Now that the academic year has come to a close, I am in the beginning stages of preparing for a Board Retreat wherein members of the Board will have an opportunity to review Board Policy and other related matters. Additional information regarding the retreat will be forthcoming.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following training sessions and workshops: Career Choice Recruitment Seminar related to Educator Certification and Professional Advancement; School Finance Council; Science Fiction: Teaching Chemistry with Children's Literature; Science Fiction: Teaching Physics with Children's Literature; and Tech It Out! Even as we wind down yet another year, HCDE continues to lead in Harris County as we provide

exceptional professional development.

As mentioned in last week's issue of **The Connector**, the Department will begin its ongoing Summer Flex schedule, effective Monday, June 5, 2017. This conservation measure allows for tremendous cost-savings related to energy efficiencies as well as conservation across many other areas of energy and resource consumption. During the Summer Flex schedule, the Department will extend its hours from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, to 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, with offices closed on Friday. For divisions needing to provide services to client districts on Fridays during the summer, the North Post Oak location will be open and available to staff within those divisions. The Summer Flex schedule concludes early August.

Please be reminded that a Special Board Meeting to consider the hearing examiner's recommendation from the May 18 hearing will take place at 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, June 13. Immediately following that meeting, a Board Budget Workshop will be held at 12:00 noon. Of course, the regularly scheduled June Board Meeting will be held **June 20** at its regularly scheduled time of 9:00 a.m.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you Tuesday, June 13, and as always, thank you for your service to Harris County Department of Education. I hope you have a relaxing weekend, and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

- 11:00 a.m.-Special Board Meeting to consider the hearing examiner's recommendation from the May 18 hearing.
- 12:00 noon- Board Budget Workshop

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

ECPA Director Attends Statewide Consortium and Local Symposium



Lidia Zatopek, director, HCDE Educator Certification and Professional Advancement (ECPA), attended the Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE) annual board retreat held in Port Aransas. As the CSOTTE Board Treasurer, Zatopek joined a two-day working session to plan the 2017 CSOTTE Fall Conference.

CSOTTE is a state non-profit organization dedicated to the continual support and refinement of preparation and development programs for certified school personnel in Texas. The Consortium functions as an umbrella organization of traditional and alternative certification institutions to promote quality programs in teacher education, develop preparation guidelines for the profession, and work with official policymaking groups and individuals to frame and promote professionally sound legislation, rules, regulations, and structures for educator preparation in Texas.

Zatopek also took part in the 5th Annual Houston East End Chamber of Commerce Education Symposium held at the Federal Reserve Bank. This year's theme was Building an Effective Workforce. The symposium was a call to action, bringing together leaders from industry, education, and community organizations to work on creating pipelines that put students on paths of success by preparing them to become the next generation of qualified workforce.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

MAY 30, 2017

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

JUNE 1, 2017

School Finance Council

Science Fiction: Teaching Chemistry with Children's Literature - (6 hours G/T credit)

Science Fiction: Teaching Physics with Children's Literature - (6 hours G/T credit)

JUNE 2, 2017

Tech It Out!

HCDE Blood Screening Held During Health and Fitness Month



HCDE employees were offered blood screening as part of Health and Fitness Month. The HR sponsored event helped employees stay on track with health concerns such as high cholesterol and other health concerns.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Hosts Job Fair for Early Childhood Teachers and Other Positions



HCDE Head Start is hosting a job fair to recruit teachers, teaching assistants, and other staff members to join any of its 15 locations spread throughout northeast Harris County. The recruitment

event will be held Friday, June 23, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at HCDE's Compton Head Start Center located at 9720 Spaulding St., Houston, Texas 77016.

Qualifications for Head Start Teaching Assistant, Early Head Start Teacher, and Head Start Teacher include experience working with young children and in interest

in early childhood education. Those who hold child development associate (CDA) degrees are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates may reserve interviews by calling 713-696-2177 or by emailing HSeducation@hcde-texas.org.

In addition to the Compton Head Start center, HCDE provides services to facilities in Baytown, J.D. Walker, Pugh, Fonwood, Humble, Fifth Ward, Channelview, Coolwood, Dogan, Barrett Station, San Jacinto, Sheffield, and Tidwell. Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially, and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition, and financial services to the families.

Head Start Hosts End-of-Year Celebration at Irvington



Head Start hosted its annual end-of-year recap and celebration on May 26 at Irvington. The event was destination themed. Each of our 15 centers selected a destination such as France, Italy, India, and Mexico and prepared food along with a theme-based booth for judging. Employees also were costumed in attire from each country or destination. See the photos on SmugMug (password is hcde1889).

<http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HeadStart/End-of-Year-Meeting-052617>



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Summertime is Showtime for 10 Area Schools at Annual Kids' Day at Hobby Center Event June 22



Kids hit the big stage at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts at Zilkha Hall for the annual Kids' Day at Hobby Center June 22, 800 Bagby St. Rehearsals begin at noon and the curtains rise at 6 p.m. for the hour-long performance. The students in elementary and middle school attend afterschool programs funded through Harris County

Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

The event gives students opportunities to learn from local professional artists in CASE after-school summer programs. Kids' Day at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts is the culminating event. Students perform or display their artistic works ranging from movie-making to stage combat to theatre at the Hobby Center.

Artist professionals like Samuel Dinkins of Dinky Drums work with the students for several weeks in their summer afterschool programs. Other artists come from nonprofits such as FotoFest, Puppet Pizzazz, Ensemble Theatre, and the Brazilian Arts Foundation.

School districts participating include Pasadena, Alief, Aldine, Clear Creek, Galena Park, and Spring Branch.

"Hobby Center is a state-of-the art facility and the staff there allows our students to see the nuts-and-bolts as well as the glitz that accompanies theater and performance," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director. "Fine arts are an essential element in education, and this curriculum allows us to showcase the value of fine arts in shaping a well-rounded individual."

Capturing Kids' Hearts Workshop Leaders Share Tip for End of Day



"What ends your time with your students...the bell, or you?" asks Debi Lokey, Leadership Development Senior Strategist, Flippen Group, on HCDE's News Blog.

Flippen Group is one of HCDE's professional learning partners. Its workshop series, Capturing Kids' Hearts, is one of the most popular that takes place at 6300 Irvington.

"Finishing strong with a positive, meaningful message is a great way to send your students on their way," continues

Lokey. "You can use quotes, videos, short stories, class mottos, or pledges to end each class."

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a curricula created by the Flippen Group to provide strategy and training for teachers and administrators to achieve success in the classroom. HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center provides classes at our headquarters June 7-8.

Go to <https://blog.hcde-texas.org/> to read more teaching tips and news about HCDE.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

End-of-Year Highlights from Divisions Featured on SmugMug

Following are some end-of-year highlights from our divisions available through SmugMug (password hcde1889).

Head Start: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HeadStart/End-of-Year-Meeting-052617>

School-Based Therapy Services: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/TherapyServices/2017-Staff-Appreciation>

AB East Garden Groundbreaking: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/Schools/AB-East-Garden-Groundbreaking>

CASE for Kids End-of-Year: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/CASE/2017-End-of-Year-Celebration>

HR Health and Fitness Month: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HumanResources/Health-and-Fitness-2017>

Adult Education GED Graduation: <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/AdultEducation/2017-Graduation-Ceremony/>

AB West Graduation: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/Schools/AB-West-Graduation>

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Cheered by Families and Staff, Students at Specialized School Mark New Chapter in their Education



Three graduating seniors from the Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior School West were recognized, and more than two dozen students were promoted to middle school and high school at

a graduation ceremony Wednesday that drew parents and staff from area school districts.

AB West Principal Victor Keys, joined by HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. and Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker, praised the students and their families for overcoming obstacles, and thanked all who had provided support along the way.

"Our students have worked really hard and they have done an outstanding job getting along," Keys said. "We have a saying here: 'without them there is no us'."

HCDE's AB campuses serve students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and have been referred by



their home campus's Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee. Each classroom at an AB campus is staffed with a highly qualified, certified teacher and an educational aide who serve up to six students – providing small group instruction.



Colbert praised the school's leadership, teachers, and educational aides – as well as the students' families.

"I just want to say a big thank you to parents. We appreciate the support you provide to the students every single day," Colbert said. "We have a staff that is absolutely dedicated to serving our fine school districts. We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated staff who absolutely love your children."

In 2015-2016, more than 800 students from Harris County school districts were served at a specialized HCDE-operated campus, where 100 percent of students are considered to be at-risk. HCDE also provides special education services through school-based therapists who travel to campuses, homes, or wherever students receive their education.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Aging Workforce, Robust Construction Climate Fuels Need for Workforce Apprenticeship Programs: Harris County Department of Education, Adaptive Construction Solutions Collaborate through Innovate Partnership



HCDE Instructor Clifton Hypolite works with student Anthony Serrata Jr. in a skilled workforce training class.

With the blitz of baby boomer retirees in industry and construction, the shortage of skilled workers is ever so prevalent. That gap is closing thanks to a growing partnership between Harris County Department of Education and Adaptive Construction Solutions. While HCDE supplies adult academic remediation,

Adaptive Construction Solutions, an Apprenticeship USA program, offers career training and employment.

HCDE is currently serving 102 apprentices who are military veterans training to become iron workers. The model is so successful that it is being replicated and expanded into other occupational areas per the demands of area companies.

Navy veteran Anthony Serrata Jr., 24, is eight weeks into a three-year program which will build his construction and academic skills while he is also being paid. He says he instantly felt a kinship with the other men who are in his small class and gets all the help he needs from his two HCDE teachers: a trades teacher and a math/reading remediation teacher.

“My goal was to find a trade that is meaningful and will help me be successful,” said the father of two. “We’ve all made mistakes, but this program helps us get back on track.”

While the construction teacher is showing students how to handle tools and measure materials, the academic teacher is called upon to give students a refresher course on fractions for measurement. Both teachers are available at all times to the adult learners.

Later in the day, students and teachers move to the corporation for on-the-job training.

Adult education and literacy programs in the state are now funded through the Texas Workforce Commission through

the U.S. Department of Labor in a move to help students acquire skills needed for the workplace.

Through the model, remedial math and language curriculum is customized by HCDE’s Adult Education division to fit the needs of local employers. The foundation course is the basic National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) core instruction which teaches construction fundamentals such as construction math, hand and power tools, construction drawings, and safety. Employees move on to specializations after gaining the certification.

Besides the attrition of skilled workers who are retiring, robust construction in is another force driving the demand for a new generation of skilled workers.

“So much construction is occurring in the greater Houston area, and it’s projected to reach into the year 2040, so we had to take innovative steps to meet industry demands,” said James Carnes, U.S. Department of Labor.

HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. said the Department is uniquely positioned to offer support as its adult education program reaches throughout Harris County, with 200 highly qualified adult education teachers and 50 learning centers ranging from Alief to Spring Branch to Liberty.

Success of the program with HCDE is bringing additional referrals for partnerships, according to Carnes. The attrition rate of the apprenticeship program is very low, he explained.

“With the case of classroom instruction, these students need training, support, remediation—the whole nine yards,” Carnes said. “Harris County Department of Education provides the tools needed for remediation needed in the program. All the parts fit together.”

For information about HCDE Adult Education programs and services, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale

In an effort to meet the Board's goal for me as it relates to this element of performance to

- Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;
- Seek systematically to improve the climate by obtaining and utilizing feedback from employees of the Department;
- Model and support responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas;
- Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence;
- Ensure fair and equitable management practices; and
- Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management.



Last Friday, the Head Start division held its annual end-of-the-year celebration with its employees. The event had

a multi-cultural theme, and brought about team-building activities that will also drive the division's goal-setting for the next year.

Employees and units within the Head Start division were recognized for accomplishments achieved throughout the year, as well as employee milestones. It was an honor to have been part of this annual event in the life of one of our most essential program divisions.

By the Head Start division continuing this tradition, I am striving to meet the Board's expectations of me to establish a culture among staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance; and ensure that all supervisory staff administers personnel practices with consistency and fairness—with respect for the individual, among other related indicators.



HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

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Tuesday, June 13, 2016

- Board Meeting

