



In this issue...

- 2** *Academic and Behavior School East Receives Oliver Foundation Grant for School Garden*
- 3** *Head Start Celebrates Retirement of Humble Center Manager*
- 4** *Autism Summit 2017 Set for October 4-5 at HCDE Offers Resources to Assist Students with Spectrum Disorders*

FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

In less than one month, most Harris County school districts welcome students back. As all our calendars begin to fill, I'd like to remind you of our scheduled quarterly meetings held this week and continuing into next week. I appreciate the meaningful conversations we are having as we continue our focus on serving our districts and the children of Harris County.

During our July Board meeting, you approved new dates for our regular Board meetings, as well as the new 1 p.m. meeting time set to begin in August. Those dates are now reflected on our HCDE calendar. The calendar is delivered to employees and has been shared with the public through our HCDE News Blog and social media. Here is the online link to the new calendar: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4739/2017-18hcdecalendar_v2.pdf

This Thursday, I attended the Northwest Assistance Ministries monthly board meeting as NAM continues its Make Your Mark Campaign for a children's clinic and launches its back-to-school supplies distribution. We continue to share new Adult Education initiatives with NAM.

Next week I will meet with our HCDE Leadership Team on Tuesday with a full agenda as we roll out the new

school year. On Wednesday, I will attend the Harris County Precinct 2 Superintendents' Luncheon with Commissioner Jack Morman. I'll have news updates for you about that next week.

Our HCDE employees continue the four-day flex schedule this week and next but return to the five-day workweek on August 7. Mark your calendars as we ready and plan for Annual Staff Meeting on August 24 at the Kingdom Builders' Center. Employees arrive at 9 a.m. for registration, with our meeting beginning at 10 a.m.

Employees will hear from me about how "Service is the Key" as our theme for the Annual Staff this year. In that regard, I once again thank you for your service as the drum roll sounds louder and louder in anticipation of the new school year. New initiatives bring with them new excitement and renewed energy. Happy reading with this new issue of **The Connector**.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

- Board Meeting

Thursday, August 24, 2017

- Annual Staff Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Academic and Behavior School East Receives Oliver Foundation Grant for School Garden



Academic and Behavior School (ABS) East recently received a \$3,000 Healthy Choices Grant from the Oliver Foundation to enhance the school garden program. With childhood obesity on the rise in Houston, the garden program at ABS East will use nutrition and physical activity education to teach

the importance of healthy lifestyles to 75 students with disabilities.

The garden will serve as a central point for individual and collective learning about the source of food and natural elements that form the basis of healthy eating. Students will share garden responsibilities, plant fruits and vegetables, and make daily visits to the garden to water, weed, touch, and taste the food they're growing.

In addition to gaining positive food attitudes, students will also increase fine and gross motor skills and learn science concepts such as photosynthesis through the garden program.

Through previous grants from the Whole Kids Foundation in partnership with Unilever and Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, ABS East students participated in a garden groundbreaking event in May 2017. View more information on the groundbreaking event here: <https://goo.gl/3aTkH2>.



The Oliver Foundation Healthy Choices Grant aims to improve healthy eating and physical activity in children, families and communities in Texas. To learn more about the Oliver Foundation, visit www.oliverfoundation.com.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JULY 26, 2017

Test Prep Series for TExES

JULY 28, 2017

Best Plus Refresher (Adult Education teacher training)

Best Literacy (Adult Education teacher training)



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Celebrates Retirement of Humble Center Manager



Last week, Head Start staff celebrated the retirement of long-time employee Pamela Butler, Humble Head Start center manager. The 19-year retiring center manager has waved and hugged thousands of students off to kindergarten and even watched them graduate from high school.

View photos from Butler's retirement celebration here: <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HeadStart/Pamela-Butler-Retirement/>. (password: hcde1889)



Human Resources Hosts Second Watermelon Social at Irvington



HCDE Human Resources division held its second Watermelon Social event last week for staff at Irvington. Staff at North Post Oak enjoyed the refreshing summer snack on July 13. The Watermelon Social has become a staple for HCDE employees each summer as temperatures continue to rise. View the photos: <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/HumanResources/Watermelon-Social-Irvington/> (password: hcde1889)



New, Improved Work-Order Management System Underway for HCDE Maintenance



School Dude Maintenance Direct has reached HCDE as the official maintenance work-order system. Widely used by facilities

professionals, the platform optimizes daily operations within HCDE facilities by making work-order requests easy to submit and review. Department-wide

implementation is underway, as maintenance-led training sessions on navigating School Dude are being scheduled for all branches. Head Start received the training on July 20, when HCDE Facilities employee John Prestigiaco walked the employees through registration, submitting work order requests, accessing the software on mobile devices, viewing past orders, and following an ongoing work order's status.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Employees Attend Photography Skill Builder Session



The HCDE Communications division held a photography skill builder session for employees last week that served as a simple guide to better photography.

Multimedia Manager Dave

Einsel led the workshop. Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., along with staff from Communications, Teaching and Learning Center, Alternative Certification, Research and

Evaluation, and other divisions attended the session.

Participants gained basic rules for photography and tips to enhance their photos such as:

- Look behind you when taking photos at events.
- Get closer. Get lower. Get higher.
- Don't give up.

Communications staff will be hosting skill builder sessions focused on a different topic every other Thursday.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Autism Summit 2017 Set for October 4-5 at HCDE Offers Resources to Assist Students with Spectrum Disorders



Autism Summit 2017 will be held October 4-5 from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas. The conference provides autism

experts with breakout sessions on issues including autism legislation, transition services and testimonials from young adults with autism.

Registration for the second-annual summit hosted by HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center is \$150, with lunch provided both days. Register for the conference



at www.hcde-texas.org/register by title or date.

The summit features Carol Gray on October 4, consultant to children, adolescents, and adults with autism. Gray provides a class on "social stories," a tool that supports safe, meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals, and people with autism. Attendees all receive certification at day's end. October 5 provides insights from keynote Dorothea Lerman, director of the Center for Autism Disabilities at the University of Houston--Clear Lake.



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



On October 4-5, HCDE brings autism experts together with those affected by autism—parents, caregivers, educators, and people who are autistic. The Autism Summit 2017 is a second event which follows up on the progress of a previous conference. Attendees at that event were polled about future topics and speaker. The results bring

us several exciting presenters this fall.

Day one provides a certification in a methodology called “Social Stories” with consultant Carol Gray. The tool she uses chronicles stories among parents, professionals, and those people diagnosed with autism. The next day we will hear from Dorothea Lerman, director of the Center for Autism Disabilities at the University of Houston—Clear Lake.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 68

children are identified with autism spectrum disorder which is present in all races and socioeconomic groups.



As a leader in education methodology and best practices, HCDE is providing the community with pertinent and practical information about autism. Moreover, the comprehensive networks among attendees at the conference continue to prove invaluable to educators, families and caregivers in our Harris County community.

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 EVENTS:

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

- Board Meeting

Thursday, August 24, 2017

- Annual Staff Meeting

