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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

It's hard to believe that the 2017-2018 academic year is nearly upon us. Our Schools division faculty and staff have been preparing for the new year since the conclusion of last year. Our client districts will also soon return to session and HCDE remains ready to provide them with our exceptional programs and services, as usual.

As mentioned in the last issue of **The Connector**, the Department returned to its regular schedule as of this week. We have discontinued the Summer Flex Schedule and we have resumed our normal hours of 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

We began this week with an IMPACT Meeting. The meeting was well-attended and thanks to Trustee Don Sumners for his participation. Among those in attendance were the superintendents from both Crosby and Pasadena ISDs. The event was facilitated by retired superintendent, Dr. Guy Sconzo.

I am pleased to report that as of Tuesday of this week, I completed my quarterly meetings with the Board of Trustees. I value both the input and dialogue from each of you and I look forward to us continuing to work together as the team of eight as we gear up for yet another academic year.

I attended numerous meetings this week in preparation for the start of the year. Our programs and division staff have been tweaking services and implementing programs to ensure ongoing excellence. I anticipate all the new year has to bring.

I continue to prepare for the 2017-2018 Annual Staff Meeting which takes place Thursday, August 24 at the Kingdom Builders Center. All board members are encouraged to attend.

Reserved seating will be available for board members, and those in attendance will be recognized. Employees will register and have a continental breakfast beginning at 9:00 a.m. The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. The venue is located at 6011 West Orem Drive, Houston (77085).

In the area of teaching and learning this week, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Integers, Equations, and Algebraic Reasoning, and an Online Instructor's Training. HCDE continues to equip both educators and students, alike, with toolkits for success in advancing education.

Please be reminded that the regularly scheduled August Board Meeting is next Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. Both the PFC and Audit Committee Meetings will be held before the 1:00 Board Meeting.

Next Friday, I will be attending the Houston Recovery Initiatives meeting. This meeting will be enlightening as we continue the building of our recovery school program. I am very excited about our ground-breaking endeavor in public education.

As always, I appreciate 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 Events:

Wednesday, August 16, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

- Board Meeting

Thursday, August 24, 2017

- Annual Staff Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

20-Year Adult Education Teacher Wins Employee Satisfaction Survey and Student Approval



Twenty-year Adult Education division teacher Jennifer Stoot was recently selected to receive a free lunch from community partner Bocca Deli. The Research and Evaluation Institute annually surveys employees about HCDE services and provides a drawing to encourage participation.

Stoot teaches workforce and GED mathematics at the Irvington Learning Center at 6315 Irvington. The veteran teacher is looking forward to more “ah-ha” moments with her students in the coming school year.

She shared this story about her joy of teaching as she collected her gift card:

“We may never know the impact that we make on a student’s life,” she said, recounting the days she spent teaching a young man math in a workforce construction class. “I never thought he was listening or even interested in what I was saying.”

One day the young man explained that his family upbringing encouraged silence. He had been actively learning while listening. A smile accompanied his personal thank you to her.

“Even though his body language said otherwise, he was paying attention,” she said. “And that smile made my day.”

HCDE Math Workshop Builds Conceptual Understanding Using Algebra Tiles



Math teachers from Pasadena ISD, Huffman ISD, and Our Lady of Guadalupe School attended this week’s math workshop titled “Integers, Equations and Algebraic Reasoning in Grades 6-8.” Teachers learned to build conceptual

understanding by using algebra tiles to represent variables and constants.

Teachers also learned strategies for helping students use the tiles to solve algebra equations, substitute in variable expression, and arrange like terms.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

AUGUST 8 2017

Integers, Equations, and Algebraic Reasoning

Online Instructor’s Training



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

RFPs Solicited for Afterschool Vendors Like Artist Boat through HCDE's CASE for Kids



Students take a kayak tour of a watershed through Artist Boat, an afterschool vendor which provides services through Harris County Department of Education.

Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) is soliciting a request for proposals from afterschool vendors to provide programs and services to students in elementary through high school for

afterschool vendor, Artist Boat served students through a summer watershed project with kayaking, science experiments, murals, and coastal waterway field trips. The unique career exploration experience for middle school students in Clear Creek ISD combined science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). The summer enrichment activities through Artist Boat nonprofit is one of the varied services provided by out-of-school time vendors.

"This program demonstrates the life-changing experiences students can have through their afterschool program," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. "Students actually see how actions in the Galveston Bay watershed impact the health of the bay through a project that combines science both inside and outside of the classroom."

The summer program included students from Clear Creek Intermediate School 21st Century Learning Centers, a federally funded afterschool program provided through the Texas Afterschool Centers on Education and HCDE's CASE for Kids.

out-of-school time programs and services in greater Harris County. Service providers offer classes ranging from fine arts, STEM, STEAM, numeracy, literacy, career exploration, and sports.

Information and applications are available through CASE for Kids. Deadline to register is Sept. 12, 2017:

http://www.afterschoolzone.org/default.aspx?name=Approved_Vendors

Afterschool vendor Artist Boat represents one of the innovative programs being introduced to youth in greater Harris County this year. As a CASE for Kids

Online Training Series Offers Guidance for Grant Professionals



HCDE's Center for Grants Development division is hosting a series of online seminars tailored for grant professionals this fall titled "Quest for Grants Series." The online seminars will focus on best practices for grant writing, diversifying funding through government grants, effective grants research, and more.

Each session costs \$25 for in-county participants and \$45 for participants out of the county. Those interested can register at www.hcde-texas.org/register and search by "Quest for Grants."

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Back-to-School: HCDE Provides Tips to Keep Children Safe in the Digital World



Technology and digital devices are ingrained in our children's daily life from an early age. With the increase in cyberbullying incidents

over the past 10 years, many parents worry about the safety of their child in the digital world. Harris County Department of Education's Digital and Virtual Learning Manager David McGeary provides safety tips to help keep children from harm and become positive digital citizens.

5 tips to keep kids safe in a digital world:

1. Talk to kids about digital safety at a young age and do it often.
2. Be a part of your children's online experiences. Know the sites they visit and games they play.
3. Don't allow young children to spend unsupervised time online. Keep the family computer in a common area in the home. Keep charging devices out of private areas like bedrooms.
4. Enforce this rule: If you won't do something face-to-face, don't do it online. (Discuss social interactions.)
5. Humanize online social interactions. Remind them that behind every pixelated avatar is a human being.

McGeary suggests that while children may be getting information about safe online behavior from their school, students who have regular discussions with their parents about digital safety are more likely to be vigilant and self-advocate when something goes wrong online. He also suggests parents become partners in their child's online experiences.

"Take interest in the sites your children visit and the games they play," said McGeary. "If kids are engaged in constant discussion about the digital realm, they are much more likely to approach a parent or guardian if something out of the ordinary occurs."

Next, don't allow children to spend unsupervised time online, especially when they are younger. It may be helpful to place a family computer in a common space like the living room or home office so that parents can see the screen content. Keeping device chargers out of bedrooms can also help keep children off their devices while in private areas.

McGeary also emphasizes one key piece of advice when discussing social interactions online – if you wouldn't do something face-to-face, don't do it online. Research shows that victims of cyberbullying have often bullied someone online themselves. By humanizing the online space and developing empathy for others, parents can help their children break the cycle of victim-and-victimization.

"Encourage children to engage in social activities that humanize online social interactions like sending an email to a distant family member or posting encouraging statements to friends via social media to remind them that at the end of every pixelated avatar is a human being," said McGeary. For more resources on cyberbullying and digital safety, visit <http://www.cyberwise.org/digital-citizenship-resources>.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Head Start hosts Community Screening of “The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation”



Harris County Department of Education Head Start, in partnership with Harris County Public Health, hosts a free community screening and panel discussion of the acclaimed documentary “The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation” on August, 26, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington Blvd.

Nearly 24 percent of American children are born into poverty today, facing multiple adversities with potential life-long consequences for their physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development. The purpose of this screening is to bring together a diverse audience to promote meaningful conversation and local action to improve conditions for families with young children

in Harris County.

“It’s vital for communities to support programs that build healthy and caring communities for our children at an early age,” said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. “This screening is a way to connect families, organizations and community, and promote early child health and well-being.”

A light breakfast will be provided at the event and parking is free. Participants will also receive a certificate for two hours of professional development for attending.

RSVP for the community screening at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/13470968289>. Find more information on this series at <http://www.raisingofamerica.org/>.

Value

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

HCDE Plus Assists School Districts

The Business Services division has a new endeavor beneath its umbrella called HCDE Plus. Since its recent inception, the program has already received requests from McAllen ISD to train purchasing and accounting staff as well as principals and other district representatives on various federal guidelines. To date, 75 people have registered and other districts are requesting training. Districts will pay HCDE for these professional development offerings.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to:

- **Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness; and**
- **Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration**



HCDE trained math teachers from Pasadena and Huffman ISDs, as well as teachers from Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

The teachers were trained to present integers, equations, and algebraic reasoning for grades 6-8 in an innovative way in an effort to better engage their students for advanced teaching and learning.

Teachers learned to build conceptual understanding by using



algebra tiles to represent variables and constants. They also learned strategies for helping students use the tiles to solve algebra equations, substitute in variable expression, and arrange like terms.

By HCDE continuing to offer such effective and innovative trainings and workshops to the educators within and beyond Harris County, I am ensuring that not only are HCDE's staff exposed to quality professional development, in an effort to stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration, but I am also ensuring the same for educators and professionals in education across the city and county.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

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- Board Meeting

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- Annual Staff Meeting

