

# The CONNECTOR

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for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

We are heading into the fourth week of the school year for both HCDE and most school districts within Harris County. I am pleased to report that all of our programs are running smoothly and efficiently. Our campus employees are in the full swing of the fall semester. Now that operations are well underway, I will soon begin making visits to our campuses. Since I never want to be a distraction to campus administrators, faculty, staff, or students during the early weeks of the school year, I usually begin making my rounds once school has been in session for a few weeks.

This week was a busy one at HCDE. I began the week, as usual, with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team. On Wednesday of this week, I hosted the first Focal Point meeting of this academic year. The meeting was successful, with numerous superintendents representing Harris County in attendance. We had a full agenda and we accomplished a great deal. I would consider this first meeting of school district executives from Harris County a productive one. We will meet again during the month of November and I look forward to Focal Point increasing its reach in public education this year. I will continue to keep this group engaged in partnering with HCDE as we increase our visibility and help students achieve in Harris County and beyond.

On Thursday, I hosted my American Leadership Forum (ALF) cohorts in an all-day meeting of the minds here at HCDE. This was yet another excellent opportunity to once again expand our visibility to a diverse group of professionals from across the city of Houston. This meeting was part of my one-year commitment to the ALF as I complete my requirements as part of the 2016-2017 class. The ALF is an excellent professional development vehicle. HCDE greatly benefits from the association with this distinguished group of local professionals and leaders.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, the schedule was chock-full of diverse trainings and workshops as we trained the trainers and empowered educators within Harris County. Throughout the week we hosted a vast variety of workshops including two Online Instructors' Training sessions, Parts I and III. In the content areas, we facilitated mathematics sessions including Improve Problem Solving in Operations and Algebraic Reasoning, as well as Fractions, Decimals, Percents, and

Operations in Grades 5 and 6. We hosted the Social Studies Leadership Group as well as Social-Studies Strategies for ELLs. We brought together science educators with a meeting of the Houston Science Educators Leadership Association as well as with the workshop, Raising the Bar: Literacy Strategies in Science. In the area of classroom management and innovative learning, we offered Knock the Walls out of Your Classroom and Connect Your Students Globally!, Snapshot: 21st Century- Raising the Academic Bar and Risk Mitigation, Strategies for an Effective Co-Teaching Program, as well as To Refer or Not Refer: On the Right Track-An Overview of RTI. In the area of reading and writing, we hosted STAAR and The Mentor Text: Sentence by Sentence, Building Better Writers for Grades 4 and 7 and Integrating Literacy Practices in Afterschool. We also empowered school district personnel by increasing their chances to increase their resources through a Quest for Grants Training Series: The Basics of Grant Writing. In the alternative certification realm, we hosted yet another Educator Certification and Professional Advancement (ECPA) Career Choice Recruitment Seminar, as well as a Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting. And if that wasn't enough, we helped keep students safe through a CPR and First Aid training class. HCDE continues to provide value, opportunity, and service as we help the students of Harris County achieve by offering these much needed opportunities for professional development to educators.

Please be reminded that the regularly scheduled September Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. Also next week, as you are aware, the TASA/TASB Convention will be held in Houston, Friday through Sunday, September 23-25, 2016, at the George R. Brown Convention Center. I will be attending the conference. I will also be participating in the TABSE Superintendent's Think Tank Session next Thursday, September 22, in the run-up to the TASA/TASB event. Again, opportunities such as these increase HCDE's visibility in the community that supports public education.

In closing, thanks again for your service to HCDE. I look forward to seeing you at next week's Board Meeting. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Center for Grants Supports Leaders from Districts/Charters



Center for Grants Director Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard hosted presenters for a three-person panel of experts for the Leadership Impact Meeting facilitated by the Teaching and Learning Center last week. The event was both valuable and useful to all in attendance.

### Schools Division Wears Yellow for Suicide Prevention Month



Academic and Behavior School West staff wear yellow to support suicide prevention awareness.

The HCDE Schools division staff wore yellow this week in recognition of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. This national awareness month helps promote resources and awareness around the issues of suicide prevention, how to help others, and how to talk about suicide without

increasing the risk of harm. For more information, visit <http://goo.gl/paCbKt>.

At Academic and Behavior School West, counselor Shantel Rayford led a suicide prevention assembly with students and staff on September 9. Through the presentation, literature regarding suicide warning signs was provided, and a candle lighting ceremony was held. It was stressed that no student stands alone. Rayford told students how important it is to seek help when feeling suicidal. Students were encouraged to wear yellow in commemoration for those who have passed due to suicide, and to bring awareness to such a prevalent problem in society.

### ESL Contextualized Classes Begin with TAS Concrete

Adult Education is partnering with site-based partner  TAS Concrete, one of Houston's largest specialty contractors, to begin training approximately 800 employees to improve their English, as well as safety and productivity skills. Workplace classes take place in the evenings and on Saturdays, with 50 students at various worksites in contextualized English, or classes that specifically teach English and workplace terminology. A workforce grant will fund the classes. The venture is part of

HCDE's strategy to reach out to local employers who are committed to improving the skills of their workforce.

Workforce registration days begin this month for fall classes at numerous Adult Education locations throughout Harris County. The classes attract adult students interested in obtaining, retaining, or advancing in a job or developing a career pathway. The students receive additional support from counselors and transition specialists to overcome educational and personal barriers to employment in the careers of their choice.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Head Start Policy Council Kicks Off New Year with New Slate of Representatives, Alternates at 15 Centers



The Head Start Policy Council held its first meeting of the year and welcomed a new slate of council representatives and alternates. Thirty members are on the council along with HCDE Trustees Don Sumners and Michael Wolfe. The meeting included orientation and fellowship.

### Research and Evaluation Institute Partners with Choice Partners to Create Voting Forms for Food Selection Process



The Research and Evaluation Institute collaborated with Choice Partners Food Cooperative to prepare voting forms for the Food Expo October 6. The students and adults will taste over 400 food products provided by 97 vendors. Once sampled, the tasters complete the forms to decide if they would buy or serve the products at school. Information is used by the Food Expo to select vendors for the following year.

### ECPA Principal Certification Grad Selected as Assistant Superintendent in Colorado



Educator Certification and Professional Advancement shares a success story as graduate Rupak Gandhi, class of 2011, was named the new research, data, and accountability officer/assistant superintendent of Harrison School District in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Gandhi had served as a leader in Houston ISD upon graduating from the academy at HCDE.

### Adult Education Student Uses Education, Skills to Buy First Car

Adult Education student Manurica Cheatman was one step away from being homeless when he registered for the Adult Education Youth Demonstration Project class last February. As a student/employee who has continued to build his workforce skills while working on his GED, he purchased his first vehicle this month as he completed the program. Cheatman works as an insulator through a grant project with Houston Galveston Area Council. The car makes it easier for Cheatman to get to his job at Building Specialty, Incorporated as he continues down a path to success, said Dr. Eduardo Honold, director of Adult Education.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Backpack Safety Tips Issued for 2016-2017 School Year from Harris County Department of Education's School-Based Therapy Services



Those books in your children's backpacks are important, but practice caution as students take to the hallways and travel home carrying heavy loads.

Jean Polichino, Harris County Department of Education School-Based Therapy Services senior director and occupational therapist, urges parents to

consider several factors in consideration of their child's back health.

Backpack safety tips:

- Choose the right size backpack: A small student needs a small backpack.
- The backpack should fit snugly, with the backpack bottom at or slight below the waistline.
- Load the heaviest items closest to the child's back.
- Observe the 10 percent rule: A 50 pound student should only carry five pounds.

Awareness about the potential strain of backpacks is a back-to-school initiative from Harris County Department of Education's School-Based Therapy Services division in collaboration with the American Occupational Therapy Association.

HCDE physical, occupational and music therapists work with children in school settings through partnerships with school districts in greater Harris County. For more information, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices](http://www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices).

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

Online Instructor's Training - Part I

To Refer or Not Refer: On the Right Track - An Overview of RTI

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement (ECPA) Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

Online Instructor's Training - Part III - Summer Cohort

#### SEPTEMBER 13, 2016

Snapshot: 21st Century; Raising the Academic Bar and Risk Mitigation

Improve Problem Solving in Operations and Algebraic Reasoning

Quarterly Operations Board Meeting Has changed to Workshop# 10764

#### SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association

Social Studies Leadership Group

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

Knock the Walls out of Your Classroom and Connect Your Student Globally!

Strategies for an Effective Co-Teaching Program

#### SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

Raising the Bar: Literacy Strategies in Science

Quest for Grants Training Series: The Basics of Grant Writing

Social Studies Strategies for ELLs

Fractions, Decimals, Percents, and Operations in Grades 5-6

CPR and First Aid

#### SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

STAAR and The Mentor Text: Sentence by Sentence, Building Better Writers Grades 4 & 7

Integrating Literacy Practices in Afterschool

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Shortage of Area Bilingual Teachers Prompts Recruitment Story with Telemundo 47 to Promote Teacher Alternative Certification Program



Prompted by area districts reporting a shortage of bilingual teachers in greater Harris County, Educator Certification and Professional Development (ECPA)

is reaching out for bilingual candidates for its Teacher Alternative Certification program. Classes begin next month for the program.

News partner Telemundo 47 featured both program instructor Dr. Chaney Ledet and former student Valeria

Gomez, who is currently a bilingual teacher in Aldine ISD. The news story aired on September 9 and 12. Upon graduating from the program, student Gomez taught two years in Aldine before being promoted to bilingual literacy coach. Gomez continued to receive support from ECPA through monthly professional development sessions. This year, she is the response to intervention coordinator and coaches other teachers. She credits her success to the extensive, ongoing training and personalized support during and after completing the teacher training program at HCDE.

View the story: <https://youtu.be/rhuJa7Xy2tw>

### Snapshot Profiler, Investigative Journalist Dan Korem Trains Educators at HCDE

Snapshot profiler and investigative journalist Dan Korem trained area educators to make behavioral reads this week at a workshop titled “Snapshot: 21st Century: Raising the Academic Bar and Risk Mitigation.”



“The intent of sharing this valuable information is to promote school safety while also improving classroom achievement and empowering student leadership,” said Ecomet Burley, director of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, the HCDE division that hosted the training.



Korem, the author of Snapshot—Treating People Right the First Time, shared his innovative Korem Profiling System® to show educators how to use the system with students and personnel to raise academic or leadership bars.

The event was covered by KTRK ABC 13 but has not aired yet. View photos from SmugMug (password is hcde1889): <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/CSSS/Snapshot-Workshop-with-Dan/>.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Communication and Client Engagement Hosts Area Public Relations Professionals



Communication and Client Engagement hosted nearly 30 area public relations professionals last week for the Houston Area School Public Relations Association September meeting. The meeting was sponsored by HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools and included a presentation by Director Ecomet Burley on the upgraded Safe Schools Alert system to benefit local school districts.

### Educators Improve Problem Solving Strategies through HCDE Workshop



Area math teachers improved problem solving strategies this week at a workshop hosted by the Teaching and Learning Center. Day one of the two-day workshop focused on computation without algorithms to give students an alternative to the standard algorithm and strengthen understanding of place value. During the second day, educators focused on model drawing for grades 2-5. They were also provided with hands-on tools for teaching strategies such as conceptual understanding of multiplication.

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Highpoint North Students Explore Math through 2016 Olympics Project



Students in math teacher Celeste Chizer's class at Highpoint North recently explored math through the 2016 Olympics Data Gathering Project. The students gathered 2016 Olympic data for selected countries and created charts and graphs displaying the data.

"The Olympics project was a result of trying to bring real world experience to the first two weeks of school," said Chizer. "This project incorporated a breakdown of various sports in the Olympics where students could explore the math associated in those areas."

In addition to creating graphs to organize the data, they presented their final projects to the class and responded to questions from their peers.

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Professional Growth and Development

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration



This week, I hosted the first Focal Point I Executive Leadership in Action meeting of this academic year. This form of professional development is very effective for superintendents as it offers an opportunity for brainsharing which is beneficial to all in attendance. With HCDE being at the forefront of this necessary collaboration for Harris County superintendents, it exemplifies our commitment to consistent professional growth and development at all levels in the area of education.

Also, this week, I hosted the American Leadership Forum class of 2016-2017. This meeting goes toward fulfilling my year-long obligation to this group which is grounded in unique professional development and meshing a diverse group of community leaders into a small class. The goal is to create a synergical effect as we all go about in our professions to make Houston a better place.

Next week, I will be participating in the Texas Association of Black School Educators (TABSE) Think Tank Session during the Texas Association of School Administrators/Texas Association of School Boards (TASA/TASB) conference. The Think Tank Session allows superintendents to collaborate and discuss innovative ways to advance public education, and it also allows superintendents to mentor those aspiring for the superintendency. I participate in these sessions each opportunity they are available.

Finally, I will be attending the TASA/TASB Conference next Friday through Sunday at the George R. Brown Convention Center. There, superintendents from across the state will hear Commissioner of Education Mike Morath along with renowned authors Simon T. Bailey and Richard Gerver. TASA/TASB is a great opportunity for public school executives to convene and have thoughtful discussions regarding improving school district operations.

**By participating in these professional development opportunities, I am meeting the Board's expectations of me to assess any new and effective development tools that are available, and determine their applicability to HCDE staff, schools, programs, and services.**



## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

**September Board Meeting**  
**September 20, 2016**  
1:00 p.m.  
Room 400

