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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

It was a productive week at HCDE. As usual, I began the week with my regularly scheduled meetings, including my Monday morning meeting with ELT. At that time, we continued discussions and brainstorming on how we could offer assistance to Harris County school districts in the aftermath of the storm. The meeting was filled with great ideas and offered reassurance that our programs continue to move forward in meeting the needs of the students and educators of Harris County.

Thanks for your attendance and support at both the Board Budget Committee Meeting and the regularly scheduled Wednesday Board Meeting. I am pleased that for the third consecutive year, the Department was able to propose a tax rate of 0.005195, below the effective tax rate of 0.005236. (Please visit the following link to the press release disseminated immediately after Wednesday's meeting.) <http://blog.hcde-texas.org/2017/09/20/hcde-board-reduces-tax-rate-remains-below-effective-rate-for-third-consecutive-year/> This is a significant accomplishment and speaks to the Department's successful and systemic business model. Again, thanks for your support of this item. It further ensures our efficiency as responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.

To that end, please see in this issue of The Connector an excerpt from the area newspaper, Community Impact, where HCDE is highlighted in several current editions through an infographic entitled, What Does the Harris County Department of Education Do? It is timely and informative, and even provides visibility to Fortis Academy. It is a great piece that underscores the benefits HCDE provides the taxpayers of Harris County. (Also visit following link to view the actual document: <https://communityimpact.com/houston/cy-fair/city-county/2017/09/19/harris-county-department-education-cyf/>) The piece appeared in the following editions: Cy-Fair, Tomball/Magnolia, Lake Houston/Humble/Kingwood, and Katy.

For the remainder of the week, I attended other standing meetings while ensuring the consistency of HCDE programs and services with so many of our employees having been affected by Hurricane Harvey.

I am pleased to report that we have offered employees the opportunity to participate in an employee giving campaign through payroll deduction via the Education Foundation of Harris County. Employees may elect to have funds deducted each payroll period to benefit Hurricane Harvey-impacted employees. Collected monies will be evenly distributed among impacted employees. All processes will flow through the proper payroll functions and systems and all contributions will be tax deductible.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following workshops and training sessions: Harris County English Language Arts Leadership Team; Harris County Social Studies Leadership Team; Effective Grant Research; and School Finance Council. The Department continues to serve as a leader in professional development for educators across Harris County and beyond.

Looking ahead into next week, HCDE will host its regularly scheduled IMPACT meeting on Monday. Later that day, I will be involved in a meeting regarding the Fortis Academy Development Plan. I will be in Austin on Tuesday and Wednesday making a site visit to an Austin area recovery school, University High (powered by the University of Texas), as we prepare to open Fortis Academy. Also accompanying me on this site visit will be Mr. Mays, Dr. Moten, and Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker. (They will also make a site visit to another leading recovery school in Laredo, Texas next week.) Upon my return to the office Thursday, I will attend my monthly Northwest Assistance Ministries Board Meeting and will also attend a lunch meeting with representatives from the United Way.

Again, thanks for your ongoing service to and support of HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Upcoming Events:
Wednesday, October 18, 2017
Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Teaching and Learning Center Upcoming Events



HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center is gearing up for a year filled with innovative and effective professional development opportunities for educators. The division is hosting several large conferences and events during the 2017-2018 school year, in addition to their weekly workshops and

customized sessions for districts.

Autism Summit

Oct. 4-5 (Presenter: Carol Gray)

The Autism Summit covers issues related to autism legislation, transition services, and testimonials from young adults with autism spectrum disorder.

Making Teachers Better not Bitter

Oct. 12 (Presenter: Tony Frontier, Ph.D.)

Participants are provided a comprehensive roadmap to help schools and districts move beyond judgement as the driving force behind systems of teacher evaluation and empower teachers as the central, active agents in the process.



Writing Strategies for Goal-Directed Instruction

Jan. 18 (Presenter: Jennifer Seravallo)

In addition to understanding the qualities of good writing, participants go beyond writing checklists and tips that tell writers what to do, and instead learn how to craft explicit, clear strategies for students.

Dyslexia Summit

Jan. 23

The Summit dives deeper into strategies, accommodations, and evidence-based instructional practices that the general education teacher can use with ALL students.

32nd Annual Early Childhood Winter Conference

Jan. 27 (Presenter: Dr. Becky Bailey)

Attend this one-day professional learning conference and learn easy-to-implement, research-based strategies designed for students in pre-kindergarten through second grade.



To register for these workshops or find more, visit www.hcde-texas.org/register or call 713-696-1315.

Teaching and Learning Center Launches 2017-2018 Professional Learning Catalog



The Teaching and Learning Center recently launched the 2017-2018 Professional Learning Catalog listing all workshops and conferences held throughout the year. From digital learning courses, to science and language arts, the

HCDE Teaching and Learning Center provides customized professional learning opportunities to raise the level of excellence in education.

View the 2017-2018 Professional Learning Catalog:
<http://online.anyflip.com/elaw/xpdu/mobile/index.html#p=1>

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Harris County ELA Leadership Team

SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

Harris County Social Studies Leadership Team

SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

Effective Grant Research

SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

School Finance Council

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

School-Based Therapy's TxSPOT Shares Resources for Children Traumatized by Hurricane Harvey



School-Based Therapy Services provides resources

schools and learning to FAQs for special education issues resulting from Hurricane Harvey. Some information is available in Spanish. The division is urging educators to share the resources:

for physical and occupational therapists statewide through a website www.txspot.org, which stands for Texas School-Based Physical and Occupational Therapy. Specialized support is offered this month after Hurricane Harvey devastated the school community. In an effort to provide support resources for students traumatized by Harvey, the division is using TxSpot as a platform to provide information and resources. Resources range from articles on effects of trauma on

<http://www.txspot.org/Lists/WhatsNew/Displaycus.aspx?ID=91&Source=http%3A%2Fwww%2Etxspot%2Eorg%2Fdefault%2Easpx>

Celebrating Citizenship

HCDE Facilities employee Juan Nieto was celebrated by friends and coworkers this week for gaining his U.S. Citizenship.



Nieto began as a maintenance worker at HCDE in 2015, and in May of 2016 he earned his GED through Adult Education classes. HCDE staff celebrated with an American-themed event.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Seeking Presenters for 2018 Early Childhood Winter Conference



HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center is seeking educators with innovative and effective ideas to present at the 2018 Early Childhood Winter Conference in January. Anyone interested in presenting should fill out the form located at <https://goo.gl/XD5eaX>.

Presentation proposals are selected by the committee and notifications will be sent by November 3, 2017. For more information, contact Rosa Murillo at 713-696-1308 or rmurillo@hcde-texas.org.

Find more information on the Early Childhood Winter Conference at www.hcde-texas.org/ECWC.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

National Art.Write.Now.DC Exhibition Showcases Work from Harris County Students



The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recently kicked off the Art.Write.Now. DC exhibition at the U.S. Department of Education on Sept. 15 showcasing art and writing from 33 Harris County students.

This regional highlight also showcases the efforts of Harris County Department of Education to enrich the local community with the arts and to encourage students to be part of the Scholastic Awards' legacy.

Supported by the HCDE Board of Trustees and their respective school districts, 22 Harris County students traveled to Washington D.C. on Sept. 15 to view their artwork on display and receive recognition for their creativity and talent. Additionally, Aldine ISD art teacher Birgit Langhammer attended the event to represent and pay tribute to her student Freddy Diaz, a senior in Aldine ISD who passed away in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

Each year, the Art.Write.Now program features the year-long exhibition as well as a touring exhibition showcasing original works by teens from across the country. Curated, produced and presented by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the nonprofit which administers the Scholastic Art

& Writing Awards, each exhibition showcases a selection of inspiring and innovative work by teens from across the country who received national honors in 2017.

The students who attended are **Samantha Kelly**, Houston ISD; **Karen Flores**, Pasadena ISD; **Grace Sanders**, St. John's School; **Emma Pulaski**, Episcopal High School; **Rachel Koch**, Episcopal High School; **Summer Elliott**, Clear Creek ISD; **Allyson Su**, Katy ISD; **Helen Wang**, Pearland ISD; **Sarah Hambly**, Spring Branch ISD; **Allison Maeker**, Klein ISD; **Sri Varanasi**, Katy ISD; **Jennifer Castillo**, Aldine ISD; **Ashley Liu**, Klein ISD; **Edward Bustos**, Cy-Fair ISD; **Savannah Moore**, Humble ISD; **Franklin Nwora**, KIPP; **Chimi Abuede**, Alief ISD; **Sasha Vermeil**, Episcopal High School; **Mia Sanchez**, Klein ISD; **Alexandra Bellon**, Tomball ISD; **Saranna Zhang**, Spring Branch ISD; and **Jayasurya Dileep**, Klein ISD.



For more information on the Art.Write.Now program, visit www.artandwriting.org/what-we-do/art-write-now/. For information on submitting works to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic.

Exhibition Location and Dates

- **Art.Write.Now.DC 2017-18:**
Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Education, September 15, 2017– July 31, 2018

Art.Write.Now.Tour 2017-18:

- *Tulsa, OK, Center for Creativity, Tulsa Community College, Oct. 2–Oct. 28, 2017*
- *Lexington, KY, The Living Arts & Science Center, Nov. 10, 2017–Dec. 26, 2017*
- *Elmira, NY, The Arnot Art Museum, Jan. 12–Feb. 24, 2018*
- *Youngstown, OH, The Butler Institute of American Art, Apr. 1–June 3, 2018*

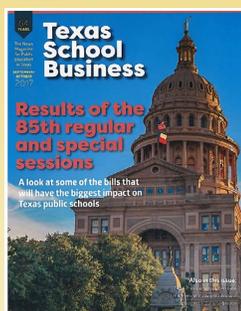
Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Popular Author, ELA Lecturer Presents for Leadership Group September 19



University of Notre Dame Literacy Education Professor Dr. Ernest Morrell presented at the English Language Arts Leadership Group September 19, a professional development group led by ELA director Kelly Tummy. Morrell, a renowned presenter and author of eight books, addressed a group of 100 educators with the topic of reading strategies.



Director Featured in Texas School Business Column for September/October Issue

Research and Evaluation Director Darlene Breaux is featured in the September-October issue of Texas School Business through a column called "In the Spotlight." Editor Dacia Rivers interviewed Breaux. View the article: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4915/texaschoolbusiness_091817.pdf

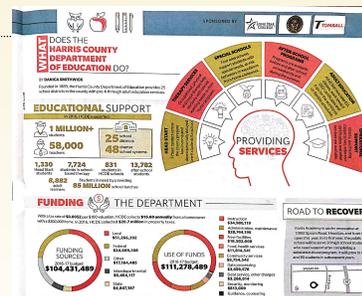


Plantgistix Preparing Backpacks for Head Start Students

The Plantgistix Community Outreach Committee is stuffing backpacks this week to deliver to nearly 500 Head Start students on September 25. The backpacks are filled with classroom essentials including folders, glue sticks, colored pencils, and more. To learn more about Houston-based business and community partner Plantgistix, visit www.plantgistix.com.

Community Impact Features HCDE in Select Current Editions

HCDE is highlighted in several current editions through an infographic entitled, What Does the Harris County Department of Education Do? It is both timely and informative, and even provides visibility to Fortis Academy. It is a great piece that underscores the benefits HCDE provides the taxpayers of Harris County. (Also visit the following link to view the actual document: <https://communityimpact.com/houston/cy-fair/city-county/2017/09/19/harris-county-department-education-cy/f/> The piece appeared in the following editions: Cy-Fair, Tomball/Magnolia, Lake Houston/Humble/Kingwood, and Katy).



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

Work with other community and governmental entities and educational organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way



HCDE is committed to seeing Harris County educators and students through the immediate post-traumatic stress phase of Hurricane Harvey as they attempt to find normalcy within the walls of schools throughout the county.

Our School-Based Therapy's TxSPOT is working to share resources for children who have been traumatized by this event. Through its statewide website, the division is providing support by using TxSpot as the platform to provide information and resources.



Resources range from articles on the effects of trauma on schools and learning as well as FAQs for special education issues resulting from the event. Some information is also available in Spanish.

Additionally, HCDE's Head Start is working with Plantgistic Community Outreach to stuff backpacks this week to deliver to nearly 500 Head Start students on Monday. The backpacks are filled with essentials including folders, glue sticks, colored pencils, and other school supplies.

By ensuring that events such as these are facilitated by HCDE divisions, campuses, programs, and services, I am working to meet the Board's goal to communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department in a variety of formats, through communication with the media, community, school districts, and other forums. It is essential that HCDE continues such efforts through good and challenging times within the community.

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

- Board Meeting

