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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 a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team and facilitated my other regularly scheduled meetings that are held at the start of each week. All meetings were productive and were focused on forwarding the Board-set mission of the Department.

The highlight of this week was, by and large, the groundbreaking of Fortis Academy on Tuesday morning. The event was a success and the attendance was exceptional. We were honored to have public officials in attendance including Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, state Senator Sylvia Garcia, and members of our Board of Trustees. Representatives from a plethora of other agencies, school districts, and entities were also on hand to witness history in the making. We are pleased with the visibility Fortis Academy is receiving within the community that supports public education for all learners and we look forward to realizing our goal to help students struggling with addictions. (Please see the vast coverage of the groundbreaking of Fortis Academy in the following pages of this issue of The Connector.)

As you know, our regularly scheduled October Board Meeting was held Wednesday and was preceded by two Board Committee Meetings, as well as a PFC Meeting. I am pleased to report the decision to move forward with the construction of the Academic and Behavior School-West campus. Thanks for your support and continued service to HCDE and the students within our county.

Today, I attended the Houston Recovery Initiative Meeting. Attending meetings around this topic is invaluable to us as we continue to tweak Fortis Academy's curriculum and overall program design.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Argument Driven Inquiry for Middle School; U.S. History: EOC and Beyond: Paper vs People;

It Takes Planning to Save the World!; Public Funds Investment Training; Free Editorial Cartoon Workshop for Students; Addressing Student Misconceptions in Science, K-3; Capturing Kids' Hearts; Workstation Make and Take for Algebra I; Workstation Make and Take for Grade 3; and Behavior Management Basics for Afterschool.

Looking ahead into next week, as discussed in last week's issue of The Connector, I will begin the week in Austin where I will serve as the Keynote Speaker for Region 13's Principals' Academy on Monday. I look forward to imparting advice and wisdom on aspiring educators.

Wednesday, Choice Partners is hosting its annual Food Expo at the Humble Civic Center where the main event of the exposition will be students from various school districts taste-testing prospective school menu items for their opinions as to what's good and what's not—according to the children's taste buds. That's always a fun event for all in attendance.

Next Thursday, I will meet with members of the Schools division during one of their ongoing administrative sessions. That meeting will be held here at the Administration Building and I will end the week with the Vendor Exhibit, which is being held at the Norris Conference Center in the Town and Country complex in west Houston.

Again, thanks for all you do for HCDE! I hope you enjoy this issue of The Connector, and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Skill Builder Session Provides Strategic Marketing Tips for Divisions



Last week, representatives from various HCDE divisions attended a marketing skill builder session from Communications and Client Engagement. Client Engagement Director Stephanie De Los Santos led the session, which provided tips for marketing each division based on services offered, audience, and other relevant topics. Skill builder sessions are held every other Thursday to help divisions build their skills in marketing, photography, writing, and more.

1st Head Start Meeting Agenda Includes Election of Policy Council



October's Policy Council Meeting highlights included an election of policy council members for 2017-2018 as Head Start hosted its first meeting for the school year. Elections were held for chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, and parliamentarian.

Photo: (left) New officers include Desiree Herrera, secretary, Barrett Station; Dolores Herrera, treasurer, Baytown; Jennifer Allen, chairperson, JD Walker; Latocha Mixon, vice chair, JD Walker; and Claudia Solorzano, parliamentarian, Sheffield. Venetia L. Peacock, senior director, recognized the officers after the election.

80 Teachers Funded for ESL/Bilingual Certification Training through 5-Year Grant Via ECPA



Eighty beginning teachers will have the opportunity to gain their English as a second language or bilingual state certifications through teacher certification coursework as Harris County Department of Education receives a \$83,000, five-year

grant through a partnership with The Ohio State University funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The teacher alternative certification program at HCDE is provided through the Educator Certification and Professional Advancement division headed by Lidia Zatopek, director.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

OCTOBER 17, 2017

Argument Driven Inquiry for Middle School

U.S. History: EOC and Beyond

Paper vs People

OCTOBER 18, 2017

It Takes Planning to Save the World!

OCTOBER 19, 2017

Public Funds Investment Training

Free Editorial Cartoon Workshop for Students

Addressing Student Misconceptions in Science, K-3

Capturing Kids Hearts

OCTOBER 20, 2017

Workstation Make and Take for Algebra I

Workstation Make and Take for Grade 3

Behavior Management Basics for Afterschool

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Breaks Ground on Fortis Academy for Recovering Teens



Elected officials and education leaders broke ground Tuesday on Harris County's first public recovery high school, designed to help students who

have completed a rehabilitation program remain sober while continuing their education.

"Fortis is a very important Latin term for strength and courage and determination," said Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, whose district includes the Fortis Academy site, previously HCDE's



Highpoint North campus. "You have certainly answered the question of 'What is right?' This is the right thing to do."

More than 10,000 drug- and alcohol-related offenses occurred in Harris County's 25 school districts during the past five years. Research also shows the risk of relapse is higher when students must return to their pretreatment schools. For many adolescents, their prior high school represents the environment of previous use and contact with friends who are still using drugs.

"We really need to get down to the root of the problem and help these children fight their addictions," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert. "We're going to assist kids with sobriety to make them whole again while they continue to achieve their academic goals."

Tuesday's event was attended by state Sen. Sylvia Garcia, a representative from Commissioner Jack Cagle's office, Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. Wanda Bamberg, Spring ISD Superintendent Dr. Rodney Watson, Houston ISD trustee Rhonda Skillern-Jones, and leaders from Houston's recovery community. Several educators from area school

districts including Huffman, Goose Creek, and Galena Park also attended.

Harris County Department of Education Board President Louis Evans said the event was historic not just for HCDE, but for Texas' largest county.



"We are here to mark the beginning of an exciting renovation that will culminate with the opening of Harris County's first public recovery high school: Fortis Academy," Evans said. "Thanks to superintendent James Colbert; our therapeutic partner, Turning Point; and the support of superintendents and recovery advocates across the county, we are poised to make history."

Fortis Academy, located at 11902 Spears Road in the Greenspoint area, will open in the spring with an initial cohort of 30 students. The school's principal, Anthony Moten, said the therapeutic component is critical in helping students maintain the sobriety they have achieved in counseling programs prior to enrolling in Fortis.

"My connection to this mission is personal. I've seen, up close and personal, the harm and the impact that drugs and alcohol have on families and adolescents," said Dr. Moten. "I'm committed and prayerful that Fortis Academy will be a life-saving and life-sustaining refuge for the adolescents of Harris County."

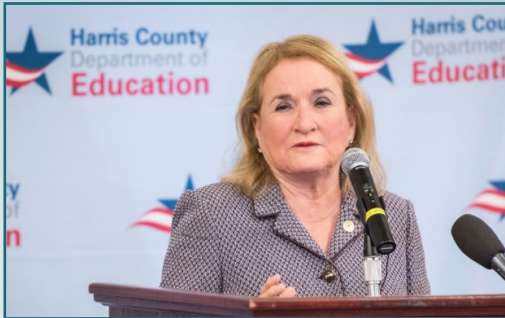
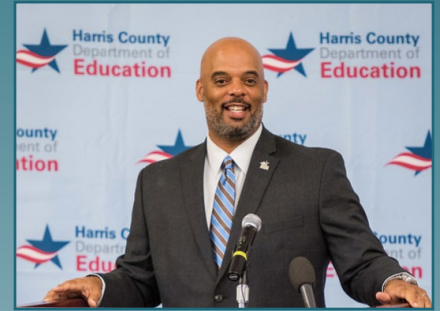


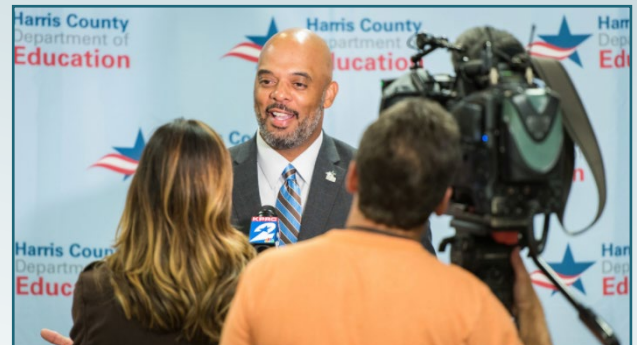
View the Fortis Academy groundbreaking video:

<https://youtu.be/U5d7kMOVSHo>

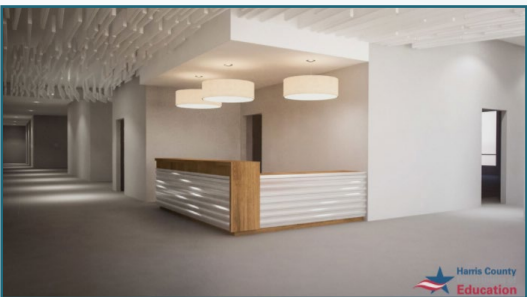
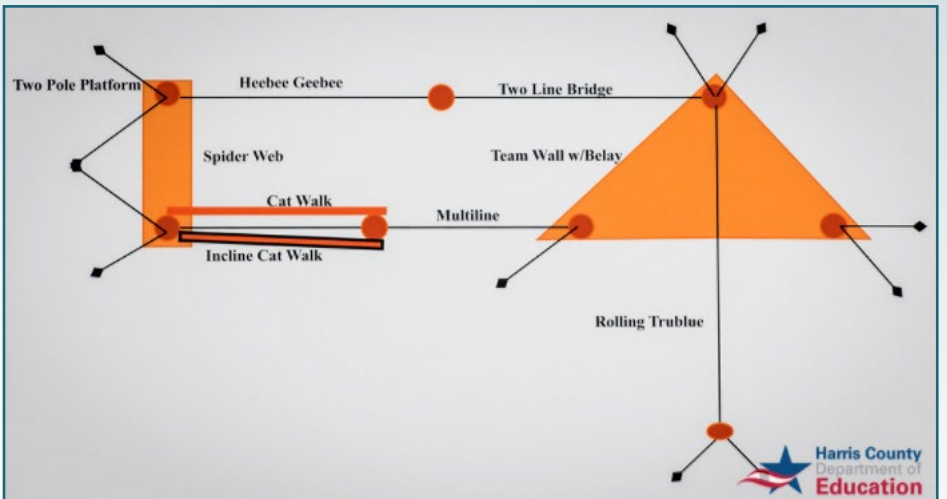
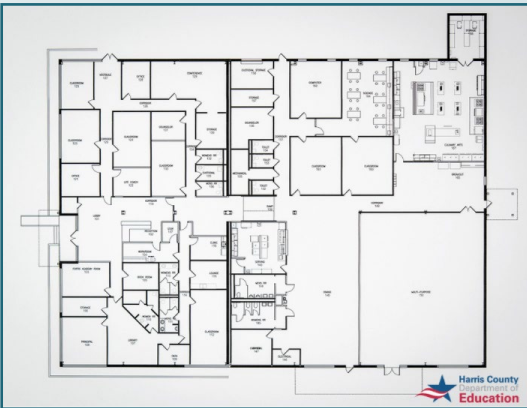
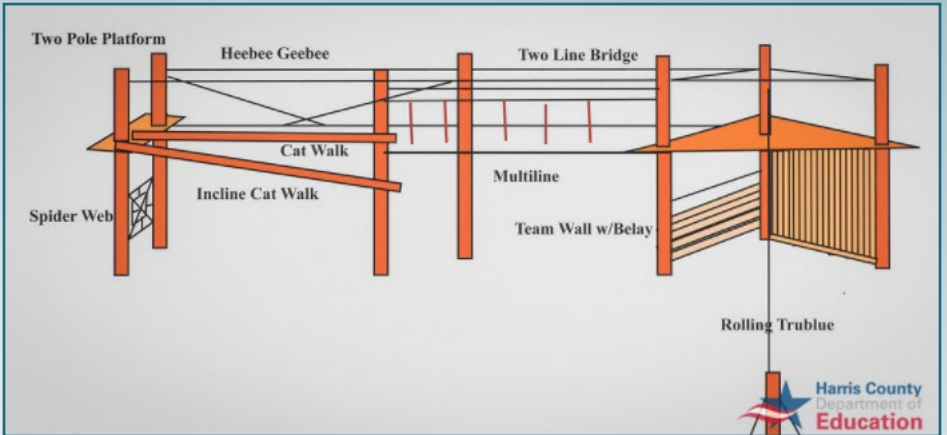
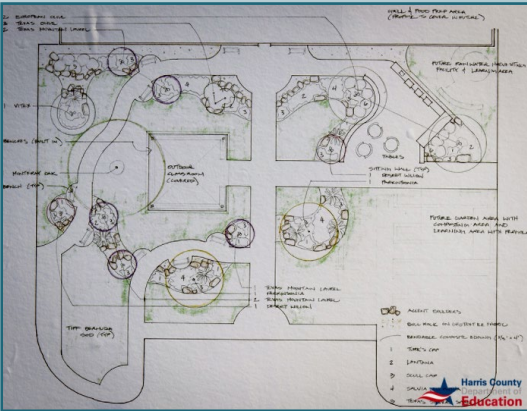
View photos from the groundbreaking event (password is hcde1889): <http://goo.gl/tKesbB>

For more information about Fortis Academy recovery high school, go to www.hcde-texas.org/recoveryschool.









Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Lights On Afterschool Recognizes Children Affected by Harvey through Celebration at Children's Museum



Lights On Afterschool, the national awareness-raising day to support afterschool, will be held locally in Houston on Thursday, October 26 from 3-5 p.m. at the Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz.

The event is hosted by the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance, a collection of local organizations which support afterschool.

Locally, Lights On Afterschool! will celebrate the organizations and afterschool providers who kept the lights on for students during Hurricane Harvey and in the storm's aftermath.

About 150 children invited to the event from Alliance organizations come from areas in Houston which were heavily affected by the storm. Children will trick-or-treat in designated areas of the museum with their afterschool community from 4-5 p.m.

Event highlights include remarks by the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time; an afterschool rally; post-Harvey: Afterschool in Houston discussion; and a STEM interactive science experience called "air blaster" provided by museum staff.

A recent study completed by Harris County Department of Education's Research and Evaluation Institute circulated to local afterschool communities reported 80 percent of afterschool sites said they expect to see changes in enrollment because of Hurricane Harvey. Over half of the respondents provided afterschool programs and services in Harvey's aftermath, and many depleted resources and exhausted personnel during the weeks following the storm.

National statistics show that 11.3 million children are alone and unsupervised from 3-6 p.m. Even though more youth than ever before are in afterschool—10.2 million—for every child in a program, two are waiting to get in.

The Greater Houston Lights On Alliance is comprised of the following organizations:

CASE for Kids, Education Foundation of Harris County, Harris County Department of Education, YMCA, Houston ISD, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor Sylvester Turner, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston, Councilmember Rodney Ellis, United Way of Greater Houston, Children's Museum of Houston, South East Texas After-School Association (SETAA), and Harris County Precinct 2.

View invite: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4945/lights-on-2017-invitation.pdf> .

Dr. Amezcua Provides Presentation on EDGAR to San Benito ISD Administrators



Most campuses will respond to some type of emergency during the school year, whether it's a fire, storm, flood, or active shooter. HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools helped area schools stay up-to-date with National Incident Management System (NIMS) certification this week. The course included introductions to the Incident Command System, National Response Framework, and more.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

MORE Church in Amarillo Donates Items to Head Start Families Affected by Hurricane Harvey



Members of the MORE church in Amarillo, Texas collected donations in the form of water, cleaning supplies, clothing, diapers, bed linens, car seats, and 10 Home Depot gift cards for Head Start families

affected by Hurricane Harvey. On Saturday, Oct. 14, a team of members drove to the Irvington Building to deliver the items for families in need.

A month ago, church member Jennifer Scroggins approached the leaders of MORE with an idea to help

those suffering from Hurricane Harvey by collecting items to donate. The leaders agreed and set a plan in motion. They spent the month allowing members of the church and community to donate items.

“This is our way of helping members grow as well as bringing some small amount of relief to a few families in Houston,” said Administrative Sr. Pastor Lyndal Waldrip. “We continue to pray for all of those affected by the hurricanes this summer.”

The donations will be distributed to Area I Head Start families who have indicated a need for certain items.

Operation School Bell Donates Uniforms, Announces 50th Year Anniversary Celebration to Include Head Start



Operation School Bell hosted by the Assistance League of Houston delivered once again on October 12 to families of 4-year-olds who attend Fonwood, Dogan, and Pugh Head Start centers. This year, the League celebrates its 50th anniversary. Throughout the years, the nonprofit has donated over 10,000 uniforms to our Head Start children. Plans for their celebration to be held next year at Williams Tower are forthcoming with Head Start contributing photos and anecdotes for the exhibit.



TLC's Lisa Felske Leads Workshop for Channelview ISD Educators



Educators from Channelview ISD attended the Argument-Driven Inquiry (ADI) workshop this week led by Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske. During the workshop, participants learned how ADI can help all students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be proficient in science. They also had the opportunity to participate in all eight stages of an actual ADI lab investigation from start to finish.



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; and**
- **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**

This week, HCDE hosted the groundbreaking event for Fortis Academy—Harris County's first public school to assist students who are in recovery from substance abuse and other addictions. This initiative will be immeasurable to countless families and students throughout Harris County. It will also provide a safe and productive haven for the school districts within Harris County who currently have no alternative to assist students who are struggling with such issues.

At Tuesday's event, public officials including Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and state Senator Sylvia Garcia



and a host of other stakeholders were in attendance. We are excited about this ambitious endeavor and look forward to continuing to evolve to meet the needs of the students of Harris County. The event was widely covered in local media outlets; thus, increasing the program's visibility within the community.

By developing a program such as Fortis Academy, we are ensuring that the needs of a different population of students is being met. In doing so, we are assisting school districts, families, and most importantly—our students within the county.

I am working to meet the Board's goals for 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 and 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, November 29, 2017

- Board Meeting

