

The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education
for the HCDE Board of Trustees



WEEK OF NOVEMBER 13, 2017

VOLUME 3/ISSUE 61



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

It's been a productive week for both HCDE and me. I started the week, as usual, with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team, and I also had the opportunity to meet with Lloyd Graham, superintendent of La Porte ISD, one of our client school districts.

I continued the week with various committee and interdepartmental meetings. Especially of note, one of those related to Fortis Academy. All meetings were valuable and are helping to forward HCDE's mission to teaching and learning as we meet the unique and ever-evolving needs of the learners of Harris County.

I also attended the Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) regularly scheduled board meeting, to fulfill my responsibility to the entity. This group is a force to be reckoned with, and HCDE is fortunate to be in partnership with NAM as we have similar goals as it relates to empowering the citizenry of Harris County.

I conducted Agenda Review in preparation of the November Board Meeting. Please be reminded that this month's meeting will be held Wednesday, November 29, 2017.

To that end, I have enjoyed making my rounds meeting with you—the members of the Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees. It is always a pleasure to have the opportunity to showcase, in the form of an annual report, and expound through dialogue, the great strides the Department has made. These annual one-on-one meetings

provide a platform for two-way communication, and provide time for us to delve into the weeds of the inner-workings of the Department, as necessary. I am pleased with the work that we have accomplished as a team of eight over the past year.

This week, in teaching and learning, HCDE offered the following trainings and workshops: Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291)-Math Sessions only; Dyslexia: 504 and RTI—How They All Fit Together; The Grant Budget: It's Not Just About the Math; and Cultivating Curiosity Through Literacy. HCDE continues to lead as a provider of top-notch trainings and workshops as we help the educators of Harris County learn innovative techniques to take back to their respective classrooms through our 'train the trainer' model.

It's hard to believe that we are already wrapping up the week prior to the Thanksgiving break. That said, the Department will be closed next Thursday and Friday and will return to normal operating hours on Monday, November 27. Looking ahead into next week, we will be gearing up for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

The Connector will resume upon our return during the week of November 27.

In closing, I look forward to meeting with the remaining members of the Board of Trustees and I wish you a relaxing weekend and a festive Thanksgiving Holiday. I am thankful for your service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Save the Date for Head Start Bates Car Giveaway



Each December, employees at Bates Collision Centers give away rehabbed cars to two HCDE Head Start parents in need. The model and make of the cars remain a surprise until they are revealed at the gifting ceremony.

This year, the car giveaways will be held on December 12,

from 10-11 a.m. at the Baytown location, and December 14, from 10-11 a.m. at the Channelview location.

More information will be available as the dates get close.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

NOVEMBER 14, 2017

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291) - MATH Sessions ONLY

NOVEMBER 15, 2017

Dyslexia, 504 and RTI How They All Fit Together

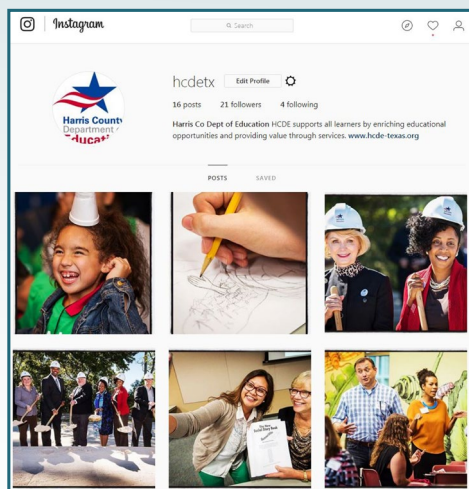
NOVEMBER 16, 2017

The Grant Budget: It's Not Just About the Math!

NOVEMBER 17, 2017

Cultivating Curiosity Through Literacy

Find HCDE on Instagram



Harris County Department of Education recently created an Instagram account to share photos and significant moments with the public. From afterschool programs, to Head Start events, to our schools, HCDE's Instagram account will feature photos that demonstrate our commitment to serving Harris County students.

Find HCDE on Instagram by searching Harris County Department of Education or "hcdetx."



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Out-of-School Time Conference Focuses on ‘Social and Emotional Learning’ as Forward-thinking Afterschool Leaders, Front-Line Staff Plan for Future

VIEW PHOTOS FROM THE CONFERENCE: [HTTP://BIT.LY/2IWNC3K](http://bit.ly/2iWNC3K) (PASSWORD HCDE1889)



Several hundred area out-of-school time leaders and front-line staff gathered for the CASE for Kids 2017 Out-of-School Time Conference on Nov. 10-11. Social

and emotional learning issues related to afterschool youth were at the core of the conference. Those involve students acquiring skills related to self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness.



Karen Pittman, keynote, sociologist and CEO for the Forum on Youth Investment, opened the conference to out-of-school

time leaders with this call to action: “Our goal is not to celebrate youth that beat the odds; our goal is to change the odds,” said Pittman, who formerly served the Clinton administration as director of the President’s Crime Prevention Council.

Hosted by the Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, the conference held at the HESS Club in Houston, Texas included a panel



discussion with community leaders led by CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. The conversations centered on how to integrate social and emotional learning theory and practice, outreach and advocacy efforts to best support Houston area youth. Students from the University of Houston-Downtown Center for Public Policy helped

facilitate the critical conversation. Data collected will be compiled into a report by HCDE’s Research and Evaluation Institute.

“As we continue to support out-of-school time professionals in gaining knowledge and skills in our field, we are specifically looking for additional social and emotional resources and interventions that supports our front-line staff,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director. “We must support each other as we continue to get stronger and heal from Harvey.”

Front-line afterschool staff gathered Saturday for a panel discussion on students affected by Hurricane Harvey and their emotional needs.

Performer SaulPaul, part rapper and part singer songwriter, entertained and shared his story about his troubled youth followed by a successful recovery and graduation from University of Texas with honors. SaulPaul has performed multiple TED talks and has made his mark throughout the nation at music festivals, namely South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. Most recently he performed at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

In addition to practical and innovative workshops, other highlights from Saturday included a showcase of materials from the SMART Zone, a free, comprehensive collection of resources available to all Harris County out-of-school time programs.



CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education, provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

AB School West Honors Staff in Military and Students Learn about Military Services



AB School West held its annual Veterans Day assembly on Nov. 9. All staff at AB School West who served in any branch of the military were honored. Students learned what being in the military involves.

“Everyone learned an important lesson that should not be taken for granted in that freedom isn’t free, and many have sacrificed a lot on a daily basis for the American people,” said Dr. Victor Keys, principal.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KTRK Reporter Surprised at HCDE for Media Honor Roll Award



Reporter Christine Dobbyn was surprised through Facebook Live with the Media Honor Roll Award she dropped by to receive. Her story involved a CASE for Kids community event at the Houston Food Bank. View the video:

<https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx/videos/10155914235284510/>

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Houston Area Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Day Empowers Area Teens with Career Options



Through the Houston Area Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Day, high school students are learning that GIS technology applies to a majority of 21st Century career paths. From disaster relief to medical fields, GIS is the way of the future.

Students from five school districts visited Harris County Department of Education on Nov. 16 where Houston-Galveston Area Council members assembled GIS labs, drone stations, geocaching, mobile command vehicles and provided GIS trivia. The annual event gives the teens a global view of how GIS works, especially in instances like Hurricane Harvey.

“There are great opportunities in this technology-driven career,” said HCDE Teaching and Learning Center science curriculum director Lisa Felske, who helped coordinate the event. “Students learned how all these agencies worked together to provide updated information at a city and county level. There was incredible information shared between companies, agencies and government during Hurricane Harvey.”

GIS computer software is used for creating maps that are used for analyzing and reporting information such as weather, elections, flood prediction and more.



The hard-hit city of Silsbee, Texas near Beaumont is still recovering from the effects of Harvey, and Silsbee High School human geography teacher Erin Smith says GIS is continuing to help her city recover and plan for the future. Her students are helping with that effort.

Her students are learning to use ArcGIS software from a company called Escri this semester. They'll apply that knowledge to help with disaster relief in a community still ailing from Harvey.

“We'll plot it out in times of hurricanes and disasters and include which routes to avoid what routes for emergency management to take and examine the problems we encountered during Hurricane Harvey so we can learn how to better prepare,” said Smith, whose “human geography” class studies how people interact throughout the world.

This year's GIS Day focused on Harvey and how GIS played an integral part in planning, response, and recovery.

Teens from Silsbee participated along with six other high schools in Houston, Spring, Conroe and Aldine ISDs.



The event was hosted by HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center led by science curriculum director Lisa Felske and the Houston-Galveston Area Council's Geographic Data Workgroup. Numerous emergency response teams brought GIS-powered vehicles to the event held in the Conference Center and extending into the Irvington parking area.

Felske says future plans for GIS studies include a grant from Kinder Morgan which will allow her to create professional development for teachers who want to learn to use GIS software with their students. To learn more about the free training, email lfelske@hcde-texas.org.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Board Relations

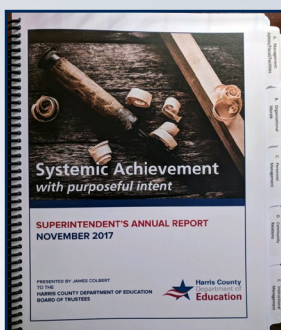
In an effort to ensure that I meet the Board's expectations of me as it relates to the following elements of performance related to Board Relations to:

- Maintain a positive and professional working relationship with the Board;
- Keep the Board informed of significant issues as they arise, using agreed-upon criteria and procedures for information dissemination;
- Respond in a timely and complete manner to board requests for information that are consistent with Board policy and established procedures; and
- Provide recommendations and appropriate supporting materials to the Board on policy issues and matters for Board decision.

This week, I began meeting individually with members of the Board of Trustees and reviewing my annual report and self-appraisal.

The report is detail-oriented and covers the board-set goals for the superintendent. The areas of review are:

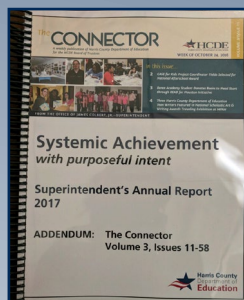
- Management of Administration, Fiscal, and Facilities Functions
- Organizational Morale
- Personnel Management



- Community Relations
- Instructional Management
- Professional Growth and Development
- Board Relations

In addition to those areas of prescribed evaluation, I have also included in the report a section entitled Above and Beyond, along with three appendices:

Appendix I contains the detailed Media Log (an annual review of media coverage that the Communications division has maintained for over a decade) that provides an extensive review of coverage the Department has received this past year; Appendix II contains the agenda for all Executive Leadership Team meetings since the last annual report; and Appendix III contains the agenda from all Leadership Team meetings I have conducted since the last annual review. Additional components include an addendum which is a compilation of Issues 11-58 of the weekly Board newsletter, The Connector; as well as a video of the year in review.



By ensuring that the Board is kept informed through this medium, as well as through the individual meetings we are having, in addition to other regular contact, I am striving to meet the Board's goal of me to ensure that there is a consistent flow of relevant information between the Board and the superintendent, thereby further ensuring good Board Relations.

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

- Board Meeting

