

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...

The start of a new year is often a time to review and reflect. While 2017 had its share of challenges, several critical milestones were reached - and those milestones will make 2018 a year for the books.

Our leadership team is starting the year with intense focus on goal-setting and aligning our work with the communities who need us most. An example of this: Our Adult Education division will be teaching English as a Second Language classes at a Tyson Chicken factory in the early morning hours before shifts begin. And did you know that our Grants division regularly compiles scholarship opportunities to send to area school districts?

Recently I also had the pleasure of walking the site of Fortis Academy, where renovations are well under way. Thanks to the hard work of school staff and facilities personnel, we are expecting to welcome the first students on March 5. This is especially impressive when you consider the damage sustained by the facility during Hurricane Harvey and the painstaking process of assessing that damage, remediating, and recalibrating.

I sincerely appreciate the Board of Trustees for committing time and resources to this project. It's one of many reasons why I join staff in showing our gratitude to the role board members play not just approving items that relate to projects like Fortis, but in forging the vision and keeping the plans on track. We are joining school districts across the state to thank

our board for their commitments and contributions to learners of all ages.

I hope to see all of you at the Board Appreciation reception before our regular board meeting, from noon to 1 p.m. on Jan. 24. Also this month, the Department's largest event of the year - the R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference - will draw 1,000+ educators to learn from national speakers and each other. If you're able to join us on the morning of Jan. 27, you will have the opportunity to see research-based practices shared among the most dedicated educators in the field. Former board member and conference namesake R.T. Garcia will also be present.

Fewer investments carry a bigger return than early education, which is why no matter how busy my week may be, I guard my time at the Humble Head Start center where I read to children. I'm looking forward to a new chapter...

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, January 24, 2017

- Board Appreciation
- Board Meeting

Saturday, January 27, 2017

- Early Childhood Winter Conference

Sunday, January 28-31, 2017

- TASA Midwinter Conference

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Launches 2018 with 2-Day Internal Conference



Head Start launched 2018 with a two-day, internal, team-building and training conference for staff from all 15 centers.



Senior director Venetia Peacock said the purpose of the conference was to refresh and equip staff with skills and resources which will benefit Head Start families and students.

Community partners presenting included the Collaborative for Children, the Honey Brown Hope Foundation, Alliance Work Partners, HEB, yoga trainer Nicole Peralta, BBC Bank and team-building expert Raymond Livingston. Topics included discipline, team-building, communication, positive guidance techniques, time management, and yoga and art for life.



View photos from the training: <https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/2018-HS-Training/G0000nQJ0TJIhI24/C0000N8n8o3I4jnQ> (password hcde1889)

Head Start Hosts Interview Fair Jan. 27



HCDE Head Start is hosting an Interview Fair on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd. for interested applicants. Available positions include teachers (Early Head Start and Head Start), teaching assistants, family services providers and cooks.

Since the last boosted social media post on Dec. 4, Head Start has received more than 70 applications for positions.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

JANUARY 8, 2018

Online Instructor's Training - Part I

JANUARY 10, 2018

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Teacher Tip: Use Music and Movement to Reach English Language Learners

The R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference is Saturday, Jan. 27. Get a glimpse of the valuable resources you'll receive by attending through our series of featured teacher tips from our superb presenters. This year, we supplement our grades pre-k through 2 curricula with optional sessions for educators who teach children ages birth-3. #ECWC18



Dr. Gilberto Soto is currently the professor of music education/guitar at Texas A&M International University and teaches early childhood, elementary and secondary bilingual music education courses. He is also an author and owner/director of Soto Academy of Music for children ages 2-18.

Lesson: It is important to employ the best practices for English language acquisition to help enrich the overall learning experience for English Language Learners. One such practice is labeling instruments, furniture and other items in the music classroom with their English names.

Also important is demonstrating what you expect from the students through modeling and verbal explanation. For example, beginning ELL students benefit when educators show visuals and real objects, use gestures and/or activate on prior knowledge before reading.

To learn more, attend Soto's session at the Early Childhood Winter Conference Saturday, Jan. 27 at the Kingdom Builder's Center, 6011 West Orem.

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Music and Movement to Enhance Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom

Music and Movement is a very valuable asset when it is linked to enhanced subjects such as motor skills, math, science, ELL/ESL, fluency level, language, mainstreaming and behavior management, among others through aesthetic and artistic learning experiences. This lecture is 100 percent hands-on, so be ready to move, sing and dance from the beginning to the end!

Learn more about the conference and register at www.hcde-texas.org/ECWC.

Board Appreciation Planned for January 24 with Theme: Helping Kids Soar to Success



HCDE joins school districts across the state in January to thank our HCDE Board of Trustees for their commitment and contributions to the students of Harris

County. This year's campaign is "Helping Kids Soar to Success."

A cake-and-punch appreciation reception is planned in rooms 100 A-C at 6300 Irvington on Jan. 24 at noon, before the scheduled board meeting. Employees will be in

attendance, with trustees as the guests of honor.

"Our board members serve countless hours working to enhance education in Harris County," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. "We thank them for providing vision and leadership for the Department. We have a few surprises to show our appreciation that day."

Each January, the Texas Association of School Boards organizes the School Board Recognition Month campaign to focus on the crucial role an elected board of trustees plays in our communities and schools. For more information, visit <https://goo.gl/ZfKLss>.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Early Childhood Winter Conference Gets Earlier – Jan. 27 Event to Include Track for Teachers of Children from Birth to Age 3



Early childhood educators throughout Texas will learn from national speakers and fellow educators at the 32nd Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference hosted by Harris County Department of Education. The conference, which typically draws more than 1,000 attendees, will take place on Jan. 27

from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Kingdom Builders' Center, 6011 W. Orem Dr. in Houston, Texas.

The keynote speaker is international presenter Becky Bailey, founder of Conscious Discipline, a whole-school solution for social-emotional learning and self-regulation. The bilingual keynote speaker is Gilberto Soto, musical motivator, guitar aficionado and music professor at Texas A&M International University.

Traditionally the conference served teachers of grades pre-k through second grade, but this year a new birth-to-age 3 learning track benefits teachers of the earliest learners.

“One of the challenges we face as early childhood educators is finding high-quality conferences,” said Maria

Del Socorro Solis, principal at Farias Early Childhood Center in Houston Independent School District. “This conference is perfect for the type of early childhood educator who really wants to grow in his or her profession. We know we greatly benefit from national speakers at conferences, but we also have teacher (presenters) because we know that teachers learn from other teachers.”

SESSION TOPICS INCLUDE:

- special education
- bilingual education
- social emotional learning (SEL) strategies
- how to empower parents in the community
- disability-related needs and inclusion
- behavior and classroom management

Attendees will also have the opportunity to network and experiment with new research-based strategies.

For more information about the conference, go to www.hcde-texas.org/ECWC. Register for the conference at www.hcde-texas.org/register (search by date). Cost is \$110 before Jan. 27 and \$135 at check-in.

HCDE Teaching and Learning Center Hosts Cybersecurity in Education Conference



HCDE hosts the Cybersecurity in Education Conference on March 27 from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. for districts interested in providing safe and

productive online experiences for students. Attendees will learn best practices and strategies, and gain resources through expert, hands-on instruction led by the FBI, Infragard, local law enforcement, the TEA and other specialists in the field of cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity is a top concern for most K-12 institutions and school districts are becoming frequent targets for

cyber-attacks. The conference features keynotes, breakout sessions and vendor presentations to help arm districts with the information and strategies needed to keep information safe.

Specific topics of discussion include understanding the cyber threat landscape, “hackenomics,” digital citizenship and safety, hacker principles and curriculum, and data privacy and protection.

Find more information and register at <https://goo.gl/M8D7fP>.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Hosts Winter Symposium Feb. 2 for Area Afterschool Providers



CASE for Kids provides a day of training with interactive, hands-on workshops on Feb. 2 from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at 6300 Irvington for out-of-school time providers. The Winter Symposium focuses on social emotional learning (SEL)

opportunities. The symposium focuses on demonstrating how caring adults influence the social and emotional well-being and skill-building of children and youth. SEL is the process

through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Attendees learn how to connect research and best practices to activities to use in the classroom to promote SEL. Ideas and activities to assist in planning for summer learning will also be highlighted. Cost of the workshop is \$40 and includes lunch. Register or call 713-696-1331 for information.

More than 100 Attend Early Childhood Community Screening at HCDE



On Dec. 16, more than 100 community members and educators attended a screening of “The Raising of America” and panel discussion on the importance of early education at HCDE. The event, hosted by HCDE, Harris County Public

Health and YMCA of Greater Houston, featured panelists from Texas Children’s Hospital, Collaborative for Children, Project GRAD Houston and Children at Risk. The panel discussion was moderated by Children at Risk President and CEO Robert Sanborn.

Also in attendance were Houston City Councilwoman Karla Cisneros and HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker, who opened the event.

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 was to bring together a diverse audience to promote meaningful conversation and local action to improve conditions for families with young children in Harris County.



CASE for Kids Part of Out 2 Learn (out2learnhou.org) Collaborative



CASE for Kids is part of a new collaborative called out2learnhou.org. The web resource is coordinated by the United Way of

Greater Houston as the lead, with CASE for Kids Harris County Department of Education, the city of Houston and Houston Endowment as partners.

Out 2 Learn public-private partnership has three main strategies: quality, access and connections. Several CASE for Kids leaders sit on the Out 2 Learn Coordinating Council. Through a contract with United Way, CASE for Kids provides technical assistance,

coaching and training to support the quality programming strategy.

The partnership was organized to provide a cohesive vision for connecting parents with out-of-school time programs and resources. It features 350 programs for children provided by 21 organizations and includes a searchable database with maps and filters. Out2learnhou.org is funded by Houston Endowment which has pledged \$2.1 million for three years to this community endeavor. Read more in this Houston Chronicle article: <http://www.chron.com/news/education/article/New-website-connects-Houston-parents-with-12482138.php>

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale 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**



Last week our HCDE employees resumed their routines to prepare for students returning to our schools this week. On Jan.4-5, HCDE Head Start staff gathered at Irvington to prepare for the new semester, with team-building exercises and professional development. Staff built camaraderie by working together. Community partners provided training. In doing so, our partners learned more about what we do and who we are. In turn, we benefitted from their expertise in subjects like nutrition, personal finance, positive communication and time management.

Employees feel valued when they are

offered the opportunity to better themselves by exploring new best practices and



instructional strategies. We were proud to host 220 Head Start employees who were eager to begin the new semester, along with community partners like HEB, Alliance Work Partners and BBC Bank. Together we learn from each other. Together we're better.

These activities correlate with the Board's expectations of me to:

- **Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;**
- **Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence;**
- **Demonstrate skill in anticipating, managing, and resolving conflict; and**
- **Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team-building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management.**

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