

# 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...

As indicated in last week's issue of **The Connector**, I returned to the office last Thursday from TASA's Mid-Winter Conference. In addition to other events mentioned in last week's issue, I also attended Budget Training, met with various superintendents within Harris County, and had a meeting with Facilities staff and members of the Schools team to discuss the progress of Fortis Academy.

I began this week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team, followed by one with members of the Head Start Federal Review team as Head Start undergoes its regularly-scheduled federal review process. This review will focus on the operations within the HCDE Head Start centers. HCDE also hosted the regularly-scheduled IMPACT Meeting at the Administration Building this past Monday and it was a productive one.

On Tuesday, the Business Services division held its annual budget training for all managers and budget managers within the Department. This meeting included directors, managers, principals, and other individuals relative to the budget process. The meeting was informative and will ensure that our tight controls remain in place as we begin to plan for the next budget cycle. I extended the welcome to all staff in attendance.

Also, as mentioned last week, I spent time with a group of journalists from Estonia as part of a United States Department of State initiative focused on immigrants in the Houston area. The group met with various leaders and entities in Houston/Harris County. Our meeting was informative on both sides of the discussion.

I continue to meet with Harris County superintendents as I remain in touch with their evolving needs. It is important—especially at this time of year—that I am aware of how HCDE can improve its service delivery to our client districts as we systematically plan next year's budget.

Today, I am taking the opportunity to meet with various members of staff as I catch up on projects and other pertinent endeavors related to Department business.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week with the Executive Leadership Team and will head to Pflugerville to fulfill my responsibilities as a member of the UIL Board on Tuesday. Upon my return, I will resume my volunteerism efforts as a SuperMENTor within the Head Start division.

The rest of next week is filled with various Department meetings with staff, including a Head Start Lunch and Learn event, as well as Agenda Review—as we prepare for the upcoming Board Meeting. The HISD State of the Schools event is also next week and I will be in attendance, along with other Department representatives.

In closing, thanks for your service to HCDE. As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, February 28, 2018**

- Board Meeting

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Rising Up Teacher, Student Training Develops Social-Emotional Learning



The Rising Up teacher and student training is being promoted by CASE for Kids so that districts or organizations who want to implement CASE For Kids' social-emotional curriculum can do so on a more extensive level. Social-emotional learning, or 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.

This course focuses on the importance of peer-to-peer programming and the philosophy behind CASE for Kids' self-development curriculum. Teens train through the course in order to develop valuable life skills that will enhance their self-development. Focused on inspiring students to build resiliency and find growth in adversity, this mentoring program helps schools extend social-emotional guidance efforts on campus.



### HCDE Celebrates Texas Music Therapy Day



February 3 was Texas Music Therapy Day. HCDE celebrated our music therapists through the employee portal (HUB) and social media to recognize the important work they do in Harris County schools every day.

Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish

individualized goals by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

**FEBRUARY 8, 2018**

Digital Safety Academy

Online Instructor's Training - Part I

**FEBRUARY 9, 2018**

DBQ Project - Social Studies Follow Up

**FEBRUARY 10, 2018**

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### CASE for Kids Symposium Helps Educators Help Students through Social-Emotional Learning Best Practices



Social emotional learning opportunities were the focus of the CASE for Kids Winter Symposium hosted by the Center for Afterschool, Summer

and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, on Feb. 2. The symposium focused on demonstrating how caring adults influence the social and emotional well-being and skill-building of children and youth.

The symposium at Harris County Department of Education was offered to out-of-school time staff, including child care providers.

Workshops included topics ranging from communication, reframing conflict, and trauma and mindfulness for out-of-school time professionals.

One of the workshops examined how Hurricane Harvey continues to impact the mental health of

Houstonians, including students and educators.

“Those effects will be felt for a long time to come,” said Caruthers. “So we are equipping educators with the tools to identify the signs and deal with the effects of the trauma.”

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.



For more upcoming trainings offered by CASE for Kids, go to [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).

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### Head Start Winter Newsletter Now Available

The Winter 2018 issue of the Head Start newsletter is now available. The issue includes articles about community partnerships, Head Start staff recovering from Harvey, the importance of the center based management teams and more. View the newsletter here: <https://goo.gl/1qVTrr>.



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Promising Practices for Priority Schools Leadership Summit at HCDE on Feb. 6 Targets Turnaround Schools



School leaders and experts on turnaround schools gather to strategize for “Promising Practices for Priority

Schools” on Feb. 13 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas.

Focus or priority schools are Texas schools which are targeted for low graduation rates and low achievement in reading and math.

“There is a fierce urgency of now to change the trajectory of schools that serve students of color and from poverty,” said Deirdre Williams, officer for Harris County Department of Education’s Educator Certification and Professional Advancement.

“This summit will be a safe space for leaders in turnaround schools to share their challenges and to gain insight into addressing those challenges.”

The summit is headlined by national presenter, social-justice authority and author Laurence “Larry” Payne, host and the voice of Dialogue Houston. A panel of school turnaround thought leaders lead discussions on change. A breakout session focuses on instructional leadership.

Moderator for the summit is Deirdre Williams, an HCDE leader credited for her school turnaround work and expertise in developing systems to improve schools. Kelly Brown, associate professor of educational leadership at Lamar University presents on cultural competence, social justice and leading for equity and facilitates the panel discussion.

Turnaround experts include Tory Hill, superintendent of Sweeney Independent School District; Tangela Hughes-Beston, principal at Youens Elementary, Alief ISD; Nicole Moore, chief school officer-south area, Houston ISD; Christopher Pichon, senior director for school administration, Galena Park ISD; and Valerie Vogt, chief academic officer, Lamar Consolidated ISD.

Breakout sessions include RTI, formative assessments, effective turnaround leadership, data-enhanced PLCs, supporting new teachers, and power standards.

Early bird registration for \$75 is available until Feb. 6, with a cost of \$150 thereafter. To register, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/register](http://www.hcde-texas.org/register) (workshop number 11759). For information, email [LeadNow@hcde-texas.org](mailto:LeadNow@hcde-texas.org).

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Hosts Celebrations to Recognize Teen Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Winners

*Select art to be displayed in month-long Galleria exhibit*



Harris County Department of Education hosts events to highlight the talents of more than 1,600 local teens who earned Scholastic Art & Writing Gold and Silver Key

Awards. Regionally sponsored by HCDE, the Awards showcase art and writing from Harris County students in grades 7-12 in public, private and home schools. In addition to the artist ceremonies and receptions, Gold and Silver Key art will be on display for public viewing in multiple venues across Houston.

New this year, 9-12 grade Gold Key winners will have their artwork on display at the Galleria Mall from March 1-21, 2018. The exhibit will be located on level 1 outside of Saks Fifth Avenue for public viewing during normal operating hours.

Silver Key artwork from 9-12 students will also be on display from March 1-21 at Texas Art Supply, and 7-8 grade Gold and Silver Key winners will have their artwork displayed from March 27-April 1 at the Midtown Arts and Theater Center Houston (MATCH).

Here is the list of receptions and ceremonies planned throughout March:

**Artist Ceremony at Ballroom at Bayou Place, March 20 for 9-12 grade students.** Students receive Gold and Silver Key Awards at the Ballroom at Bayou Place, 500 Texas St. Houston, Texas 77002. Gold and Silver Key Writing: 5 – 6:30 p.m. Gold and Silver Key Art: 7 – 8 p.m.

**Artist Ceremony at Midtown Arts and Theater Center Houston, (MATCH), March 28 for 7-8 grade students.** Students receive Gold and Silver Key Awards at MATCH, 3400 Main Street Houston, Texas 77022. Silver Key Art and Writing: 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Gold Key Art and Writing: 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

For the complete list of Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recipients and for more details, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

**About Scholastic Art & Writing:** Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. The program has an impressive legacy of being the first to acknowledge creative talent and is today's largest source of scholarships for creative teens. [www.artandwriting.org](http://www.artandwriting.org).

### HCDE Offers 'Make and Take' Workshops for All Grade Levels



The HCDE Teaching and Learning Center offered "Make and Take" math workshops throughout the week for educators of all grade levels. From pre-k to algebra I, each workshop was tailored for a specific grade level. During the workshops, participants created 10 workstation activities to use in their classrooms immediately.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Estonian Journalists Visit HCDE for Best Practices in Education



Superintendent Colbert shares information about HCDE services with the three Estonian journalists.

Visiting journalists from Estonia interviewed several Harris County Department of Education adult learners about their experiences

the two cities. The story will be told in their native Estonian language and will air through their news agency.

The crew of journalists included LeeAnn Dance, U.S. State Department

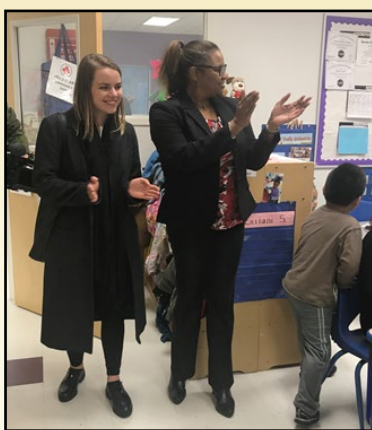


Journalists meet with Diego Diez, an El Salvador doctor who immigrated into the United States and attended the Adult Education certified nursing assistant and now is a supervisor at Belmont Village Assisted Living.

consultant; Kira Evve, radio and TV documentary reporter; Aleksandr Hussainov, social media reporter; and Tarmo Korol, cameraman.

with education in the United States this week. They also met with HCDE leaders to learn about innovative education programs that might be replicated in their country, a northeastern European Baltic state. Estonia, with a robust economy, is a developed, independent country that borders Finland, Latvia, Russia and the Baltic Sea.

The State Department contacted HCDE to host the visiting journalists after selecting Washington, D.C. and Houston, Texas as two locations for the journalists to explore. The interviews about educational opportunities will be used for a documentary about their experiences in



The journalists join in an instructional song with Sheffield Head Start students with Venetia Peacock.

The journalists interviewed Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., Head Start senior director Venetia Peacock, Adult Education director Eduardo Honold and Educator Certification and Professional Advancement director Lidia Zatopek. In addition, they documented the success stories of adult education students Diego Diez, an El Salvador doctor who immigrated to the United States and became a certified nursing assistant through HCDE's workforce program and Chhayamba Nupu Lama, a Tibetan monk who is studying to complete his GED.



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Management of Administrative, Fiscal and Facilities Function

In accordance with the Board's goal of me to

- **Oversee a budget development process that results in recommendations based on Department priorities and available resources;**
- **Oversee budget implementation in a way that ensures appropriate expenditures of budgeted funds and provides for clear and timely budget reports;**
- **Ensure that the Department's investment strategies, risk management activities, and purchasing practices are sound, cost-efficient, and consistent with policy and law;**
- **Implement and oversee a planning process that results in goals, targets, or priorities for major areas of operation;**
- **Monitor effectiveness of operations against appropriate benchmarks; and**
- **Recruit and maintain high-quality, professional staff at all levels**

HCDE's Business Services division has kicked off its budget planning season for the



2018-2019 fiscal year. I attended a budget training session last week, and this week, the division hosted a training for all budget managers and others related to the HCDE budget process. This group included directors, managers, principals, and administrative staff.

In doing so, this will ensure that our budget processes remain clearly refined and that controls are in place and strictly adhered to.

Through processes such as these, this helps to ensure that I meet the Board's goal of this element of performance to:

- **Serve as a conservative financial leader;**
- **Look for ways to improve programs and services without greater expenditures and with concern for cutting expenses and costs to public schools for service without sacrifice to high quality services; and**
- **Recommend the annual budget to maximize resources and manage the budget while exercising prudent judgment.**

## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

- Board Meeting

