

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...

It's been a productive week at HCDE. As usual, I began the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team. Consistent with this time of year, much discussion was centered around next fiscal year's budget. We also discussed the status of the various divisions, programs, and campuses throughout the Department.

After the meeting with the ELT, I met with one of the HCDE board candidates. As mentioned in last week's issue of **The Connector**, I extended an invitation to each of the board candidates. One responded in the affirmative, and we had an informative meeting related to the Department and its overall operations.

Our Human Resources division hosted a mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training this past Tuesday, and another one was held earlier today. I attended Tuesday's session and it was both interesting and enlightening. I am confident that the managers, directors, and others in attendance gained significant knowledge from the presentation. Also, on Tuesday, I met with my mentee, Kermit Ward, an aspiring superintendent.

Yesterday, I continued in my role as a SuperMENTor through our Head Start male reading initiative. As always, I believe that I enjoyed the reading session far more than the kids. This is a very rewarding program, and as always, I encourage both men throughout the organization and on our board to become involved.

Today, we began our budget hearing process which will run through April 26. Division directors and principals will come before the committee and justify their proposed budgets for

the next fiscal year. This process better informs the committee and me as we proceed with finalizing a proposed budget for your review.

This week, in teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings, workshops, and/or professional groups: Harris County Social Studies Leadership Team; CPR/First Aid and AED; and Building Community. HCDE continues to serve as a community leader in the professional development realm.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin with a meeting of the ELT and then head to Austin to fulfill my responsibilities as a member of the UIL Board. I will return to the office Wednesday, the day of our regularly scheduled committee and Board Meeting.

Friday, we will reconvene our budget hearings and I will also attend the Good Reason Houston Leadership Council, as mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**. This progressive group was formerly known as Cradle to Career. It is a council of leaders from all sectors of the community and I expect great initiatives to come from this impressive collaboration of thought leaders.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you at Thursday's Board Meeting. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

As always, thank you for your support to HCDE.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Wednesday, April 18, 2018

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Adult Education Presentation at Junior League Luncheon Reveals Successes at Spring Branch Development Center Adult Learner Program



Laura Segura, Spring Branch Family Development Center development manager and public relations, Sara Espinoza, HCDE Adult Education, Ricardo Barnes, SBFDC executive director, and May O'Brien, program manager, HCDE Adult Education

Adult education is one of the high-demand services at the Spring Branch Family Development Center (SBFDC). Since 2001, almost 6,000 adults have been served there with more than five million hours of instruction through a collaboration with Harris County Department of Education Adult Education.

Adult Education's longstanding partnership with Spring Branch Family Development Center was the topic at a Junior League of Houston Luncheon this month as the center asked Adult Education manager May O'Brien to give a history of service to the Spring Branch adult learner community.

"English language ability is directly linked to how quickly immigrants can adapt to mainstream society and achieve success as workers, community members and parents of their school-aged children," O'Brien said. "I believe the success stems from the emphasis on collaboration and the mutual ownership of the program and student advancement."

To complement HCDE's instruction provided by its highly qualified teachers, the SBFDC provides technology resources for online learning, three large classrooms to HCDE along with space to store instruction materials so that teachers see the center as their home base, she said. Center staff support the community learning efforts and see each level of student English language acquisition as a milestone.

Statistically, the support pays off. Seventy percent of adult learners advance one or more grade levels by the time they leave the program, said O'Brien, who has worked within the Spring Branch community as HCDE Adult Education manager for 17 years.

One of those success stories is a student named Rudis Elias who started studying at the center four years ago. With 800 hours of instruction behind him, Elias has advanced from introductory English language learner classes to advanced. This year he obtained his high school equivalency degree and will participate in graduation at Harris County Department of Education this May.

"He is the perfect example of how hard work and opportunity to study English can unlock the goals and dreams of immigrants," said O'Brien.

For more information about HCDE Adult Education classes, including ESL and GED, visit www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

APRIL 11, 2018

Harris County Social Studies Leadership Team

APRIL 12, 2018

CPR/1st Aid and AED

APRIL 13, 2018

Building Community



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE CASE for Kids VISTA Members Participate in National Service Recognition Day this April



CASE for Kids AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTAs) Ruqia Osman, Stephanie Cruz-Cordero and Javier Lopez attended Houston's National Service Recognition event held at City Hall this month as they were celebrated as

community volunteers. The event kicked off with a welcome speech from OneStar Foundation Commissioner Mary Grace Landrum and a proclamation from Mayor Sylvester Turner, followed by an appreciation speech from District A Council Member Brenda Stardig. The event ended with a celebratory reception where attendees were able to meet and network.

Landrum is the public representative for OneStar, which is Texas' state service commission which administers \$14.3 million in federal funding per year to Texas AmeriCorps programs.

AmeriCorps VISTA is a national service program designed to alleviate poverty. President John F. Kennedy originated

the idea for VISTA, which was founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993. AmeriCorps VISTA members work on projects that build the capacity of their organization. Projects can vary and are not limited to: developing outreach and marketing campaigns, building a social media presence, creating a program database, writing grants, managing a program in its first year, and recruiting volunteers.



Thousands of local leaders nationwide honored AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers this month by participating in recognition events, issuing official proclamations, and taking to social media in a nationwide show of appreciation. This initiative is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and Cities of Service.

TLC 'Star' Directors Join KPRC April 10 to Lend STAAR Testing Advice to Parents About Easing Stress



Teaching and Learning Center Senior Director Dr. Frances Watson-Hester and English language arts curriculum director Kelly Tummy answered questions for KPRC about STAAR testing during several morning news slots on April 10, the day testing began. Topics ranged from alleviating student stress to new rules and test measurements. View the coverage: <https://youtu.be/66Bp6LpT9uk>

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Celebrates Occupational Therapy Month in April



HCDE celebrates the more than 100 occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants who work with students in

school districts and charter schools across Harris County for Occupational Therapy Month.

Occupational therapists provide support to students in special education to help them to participate in desired daily school activities or “occupations.” They help children to fulfill their role as students by supporting their academic achievement and promoting positive behaviors necessary for learning.

School occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants support academic and non-academic outcomes, including social skills, math, reading and writing, behavior management, recess, participation in sports, self-help skills, prevocational/vocational participation, transportation and more. They also provide support to struggling learners who are not yet in special education to get them the help they need to be successful at school.

HCDE recognizes all the hard work that our occupational therapists and occupational therapist assistants do for and on behalf of the students in and around Harris County. They make a difference every day in the lives of children!

Spring Symposium with CASE for Kids Provides Daylong Training for Afterschool Professionals



Seventy afterschool professionals throughout Houston gathered for the 2018 Out-of-School Time Spring Symposium provided by CASE for Kids on April 6. Offerings included topics

ranging from “How to Create a Robotics Team K-12” to “Blooming Gardens and Blooming Minds” with Urban Harvest. Educators gained expertise in social-emotional learning with topics like “Trauma and Mindfulness for

Out-of-School Time Professionals.” The topic of space geography was studied hands-on with play dough as attendees built scale planet models in a workshop entitled “Journey into Space.”



CASE for Kids provides the workshops as an afterschool intermediary to help equalize access to afterschool, summer and enrichment opportunities throughout greater Harris County.



2nd Annual Schools Division Chess Tournament Video

The Schools division hosted the 2nd annual Chess Tournament for students in our Academic and Behavior Schools in March. Watch video highlights from the tournament and hear about benefits of the tournament from students and parents at <https://bit.ly/2qogy84>.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale

In accordance with the elements of performance associated with this category to

1. Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;
2. Seek to systemically improve the climate by obtaining and utilizing feedback from employees of the Department;
3. Model and support responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas;
4. Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledging excellence;
5. Ensure fair and equitable management practices;
6. Demonstrate skill in anticipating, managing, and resolving conflict; and
7. Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management.

therapists and occupational therapy assistants who work with students in school districts and charter schools across Harris County.



HCDE recognizes the hard work that our therapy staff contributes on behalf of the students in and around Harris County. They truly make a difference.

By the Department participating in recognizing our staff, I continue to work towards the Board's goal to:

- Ensure that every person is treated with respect and dignity;
- Implement effective management practices ensuring all policies are supported by the effective procedures;
- Direct administrators to accomplish the mission, goals, and objectives of the Department;
- Monitor progress, evaluate staff performance, and hold staff accountable as appropriate; and
- Effectively delegate authority with responsibility, and monitor staff to ensure that support programs and services are cost effective and are of high quality.



April is Occupational Therapy Month. HCDE recently celebrated occupational

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

- Board Meeting

