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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

We are now in the throes of the wrap-up of another academic year. This has been both a year of triumph as well as one of unspeakable trial for nearby Santa Fe ISD and others across the country. While I am proud of the year HCDE has had, my thoughts remain with that district, its families, and the many other districts that have suffered similar circumstances.

I pray that next year is a better one for students across the nation and I look forward to an exceptional 2018-19 school year, as we head into the summer months. This is our time of planning: honing in on our best practices and preparing to execute innovative approaches in teaching and learning.

I began this week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team and I also met with the administration of AB-West to discuss plans regarding their new campus. This is an exciting time for the staff of that campus. They are long overdue for a modern, state-of-the-art facility.

On Wednesday, the Therapy Services division held its annual end of year festivities. I had the honor of speaking to this committed group of people who challenge students across Harris County to overcome obstacles and to reach their fullest potential.

On both Wednesday and yesterday, I conducted interviews for the Chief Communications Officer position. Today, I will wrap up the week in my standing meetings with staff.

This week in teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following workshops and training sessions: Elementary STEM with IEEE K-5; Secondary STEM with IEEE 6-12; The Grant Budget: It's Not Just About the Math; Story Maps 101: Visual

Storytelling with Maps; Visioning Schools of Promise; and Guided Reading and Differentiation for Grades 3-6. Even through the last days of the school year, HCDE continues to offer quality professional development opportunities for our client school districts.

Looking ahead into next week, please be reminded that the Department will be closed in observation of Memorial Day on Monday, May 28. We will resume normal operating hours Tuesday, May 29. The Special Board Meeting will take place at noon on Wednesday, May 30. On Thursday of next week, I will fulfill my responsibilities as a member of the Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) Board at our regularly scheduled board meeting.

Also, please note that we will soon resume our summer flex schedule. Doing so allows the Department to conserve resources by significantly reducing energy costs. The summer flex schedule will begin June 4 and will run through August 10.

In closing, thanks for your continued service to HCDE. I look forward to seeing you at Wednesday's meeting. I trust you will have a relaxing Memorial Day weekend, and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Thursday, May 31, 2018**

- AB West Graduation

**Wednesday, June 20, 2018**

- Board Meeting

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Unconventional Graduation 2018: Doors Once Closed, Now Open for Harris County Department of Education GED Grads



View our GED photo album: <http://bit.ly/2x2Wvmg>

Doors previously closed are now open as 88 Harris County Department of Education GED graduates move forward with their lives.

Family, friends and teachers applauded the unconventional class of 2018, who ranged in ages from 17-60.

County Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. lauded the accomplishments of GED graduates.

“When you walk across the stage today, you transition to another phase in life,” Colbert said. You have a lot to be proud of.”

Star Rodriguez was motivated to resume her education because of her three children.

“I wanted to be a leader in their eyes,” she said. “You have to get a job. You have to earn money. I wanted my children to see that they can get ahead in life. I want them to know that it’s not okay for them to fall short.”

The unconventional graduation 2018 promoted the successes of students who learn or relearn tasks like solving algebraic equations and organizing persuasive essays. While many use their GEDs as a stepping stone to higher education or a better job, others want the equivalency diploma to prove they can do it.



HCDE provides free adult education classes in 65 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Classes include English as a second language, GED preparation and workforce development. Partnerships with churches and community centers allow adult learners to go back to school in their own communities.

Neighborhoods include inner-city Houston, Cy-Fair, Goose Creek, Hardin, Klein, Liberty, Cleveland, Pasadena, Baytown, Galena Park, Spring Branch and Katy. For ESL, GED or workforce classes, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

For more information about Adult Education or attending classes, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

**MAY 21, 2018**

Elementary STEM with IEEE K-5 (6 hours G/T update)

**MAY 22, 2018**

Secondary STEM with IEEE 6-12 (6 hours G/T update)

**MAY 23, 2018**

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

**MAY 24, 2018**

Story Maps 101: Visual Storytelling with Maps

**MAY 25, 2018**

Guided Reading and Differentiation for Grades 3-6

**MAY 26, 2018**

Visioning Schools of Promise



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Fifth Ward Center Manager Wanda Vinson Reaches Families through Head Start



With close to 35 years of education experience, Fifth Ward Head Start Center Manager Wanda Vinson has seen many students and their families benefit from the Head Start program. Although her role as a center manager involves dealing with logistics, compliance and safety standards, what Vinson finds most rewarding is developing relationships with Head Start families to help each child grow.

The North Carolina native credits the teachers throughout her own childhood for her zeal for education. They gave her confidence to learn and explore, something she has passed on to her Head Start students for more than 30 years.

“The Head Start program promotes confidence, self-esteem and resiliency,” said Vinson. “If students develop confidence and good social skills at an early age, it can take them far.”

As an experienced center manager, Vinson is a liaison between students, staff and families. She ensures students and teachers have a safe learning environment and that families understand their role in their child’s learning. A large part of a center manager’s job is establishing partnerships with the families and helping them understand they are advocates for their children.

“We want parents to understand that Head Start is a school readiness program, not just a daycare,” said Vinson. “All kids can learn and if you give them the right setting. They can engage and be successful, even in their early years.”

A piece of that partnership is exposing families to different opportunities. Learning is everywhere for children, so Vinson and her team help families engage their children in meaningful activities outside of the classroom. From free events in the community, to providing books for children to take home, Head Start provides a variety of options for engaging activities.

HCDE Head Start centers also work with families on setting and reaching goals. Whether a parent’s goal is to go back to school or earn a certain job, staff keep track of each family’s goals and help parents reach them. The program also provides additional health, nutrition and financial support.

Vinson plans to retire at the end of the year, but she fondly remembers her time as a center manager and the impact Head Start has made on families.

“We are life changers for our families,” said Vinson. “We don’t only focus on the child, we focus on the whole family.”



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Kids' Day at HP Provides STEM, Marketing Opportunities for Afterschool Programs



CASE for Kids, in collaboration with Hewlett Packard Enterprise and HP Inc., hosted Kids' Day at HP on Friday, May 18, 2018. The event is held annually at the HP Houston campus.

first- through third-place winners receiving trophies, some students went home with equipment prizes donated by HP.

#### **The winners:**

##### **Robotics:**

- 1st place – Benbrook Elementary School, Houston ISD
- 2nd place – Academy of Accelerative Learning
- 3rd place – Francis Elementary School, Aldine ISD

##### **Marketing:**

- 1st place – Academy of Accelerative Learning
- 2nd place – Goodman Elementary School, Aldine ISD
- 3rd place – Francis Elementary School

##### **Overall:**

- 1st place – Academy of Accelerative Learning
- 2nd place – Benbrook Elementary School
- 3rd place – Francis Elementary School

##### **Speed Demon:**

- 1st place – Miller intermediate, Alief ISD
- 2nd place – Park Place, Houston ISD
- 3rd place – Goodman Elementary School



Prior to Kid's Day, afterschool programs receive curriculums developed by CASE for Kids to help students prepare for the event. The purpose of this

Kids' Day was to allow students to use LEGO Mindstorm robots to program, design and market their ideas. Students are then judged based on two criteria, robotics and marketing. They also compete in a separate category called Speed Demon, where they maneuver their robots through obstacles built by HP engineers. In addition to the

### School-Based Therapy Services Holds Staff Appreciation Day



School-Based Therapy Services held its annual Staff Appreciation Day on May 23 for its several hundred staff members. The theme for this year's event was "Dare to be Different." HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. and Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker gave appreciation and administration remarks along with Therapy Services Senior Director Carie Crab.

unique way to create art using recycled materials. During the presentation, Manier demonstrated his art skills and invited therapists to participate. For more information, visit <https://www.grantsecoart.com/>.



The guest speaker was Grant Manier with Grant's Eco Art, a program that inspires, motivates and teaches a



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Teaching Untaught Histories: Japanese Custodial Detention List



Several dozen middle and high school history teachers throughout greater Houston took advantage of “The Untold Story of the Department of Justice Incarceration of People of Japanese Ancestry” held at HCDE on May 19. The free event which also included a stipend was co-sponsored by the National Japanese American Historical Society, San Francisco; the National Park Service; and the Houston Japanese American Citizens League.

The mission of the society is to educate the public about contributions of Japanese Americans to American society. The workshop took a look at the Custodial Detention List and how being placed

on the list impacted the lives and communities of Japanese families in America. The workshop also examined the custodial detention list and the political policies and climate that led to the incarceration of both citizens and aliens of Japanese ancestry within hours of the Pearl Harbor bombing.

The intent in sharing the analysis and narratives was to provide history teachers with teaching materials to introduce the history in classrooms. Cole Chemical CEO Donna Cole attended the workshop in support of the educational efforts.

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Instructional Management

To meet the Board's expectations of me as it relates to this element of performance to

- Establish effective mechanisms for communication to and from staff in instructional evaluation, planning, and decision making
- Oversee annual training for increased student learning and conducts periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the planning process
- Ensure that goals and objectives form the basis of curricular decision making and instruction, and communicates expectations for student achievement
- Ensure that appropriate data are used in developing recommendations and making decisions regarding the instructional program and resources
- Establish a system for regular evaluation of instructional programs to meet student instructional needs and to attain desired student achievement

Last Saturday, the Adult Education division held its annual graduation ceremony as 88 students received their



GEDs. This unconventional graduation ceremony promoted the successes of students who learn or relearn tasks like solving algebraic equations and organizing persuasive essays. Many will use their GED as a stepping stone to higher education or to a better job.



It is always rewarding to participate in this exciting day of the lives of our Adult Education students. Hats off to them for achieving this milestone. Many of our students juggled family and employment responsibilities as they attended classes to realize this dream.

**By HCDE serving this population of students and doing so successfully, I am working to meet the Board's expectations for HCDE to identify the learning needs of the students and develop a process that ensures that each student's learning goals are met or exceeded; investigate best practices for student achievement; and utilize effective practices that maximize achievement of student potential.**

## HCDE BOARD

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*Position 3, At Large*

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*Position 5, At Large*

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, June 20, 2018**

- Board Meeting

