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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

This has been a short, but productive, week at HCDE. Many districts have already completed their school year. By next week, all districts will have closed. We, too, are in the final stages of closing out this year and beginning the process of decompressing and regrouping for the next academic year.

The Department was closed on Monday in observation of Memorial Day. We resumed normal operating hours Tuesday, and upon our return, I conducted a variety of internal meetings with staff. Of course, the special call meeting of the board took place Wednesday, and I thank you for both your attendance and support of HCDE during that meeting.

Yesterday, Academic and Behavior School West hosted its graduation ceremony. I was pleased to participate in the festivities. It is always an honor to watch our students realize dreams that, at one point in their lives, seemed so out of reach. I wish the best to each of yesterday's graduates.

Today, I held my standing meetings with staff, and tomorrow, I will participate in the Aspiring Principals' Showcase and Exhibit, powered by the Educator Certification and Professional Advancement division. It is always a pleasure to share my experience and encourage aspiring administrators as they work towards elevating their careers in public education.

I am pleased to share that HCDE's professional development resources received statewide visibility (and likely beyond) in the May 29 issue of the Texas Tribune. Our Restorative Practice initiative within Spring ISD's Bammel Middle School was spotlighted in a very positive manner. There has been a noticeable improvement on this campus because of the implementation of this program. The article stated that Principal La'Quesha Grigsby attributes the improvement to a simple schedule change at the beginning of this academic year: a carve-out of 35 minutes twice a week for teachers and students to circle up and talk about their feelings. Bammel Middle School is one of a growing number of

Texas schools that have adopted "restorative justice," which encourages students and teachers to talk through their problems and build stronger relationships to prevent conflict and violence before it happens. This highly visible story certainly emphasizes the relevance of HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools and this timely initiative within the Education and Enrichment division. This comes in sync with the Governor's plans to decrease school violence within the state of Texas. To read the story, please visit the following URL: <https://www.texastribune.org/2018/05/29/texas-schools-restorative-justice-violence-suspensions/>.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team, as well as the regularly-scheduled IMPACT training for Harris County area school board leaders and members.

Please be reminded that the Board's Budget Workshop session will take place Tuesday, June 5 at 12:00 noon. This is an essential piece of the budget process as you prepare to vote on the 2018-2019 fiscal year budget. I look forward to seeing you there. Next Thursday, I will conduct Agenda Review in preparation for the June Board Meeting.

Also, please note that the Department will resume its summer flex schedule next week. The Department will adjust its hours to 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and will be closed on Fridays. The Administration Building will be closed each Friday during the flex period; however, the North Post Oak location will be open for those employees working on Fridays during the summer.

Again, thank you for your ongoing service to HCDE. I appreciate your support to HCDE's mission. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**, and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

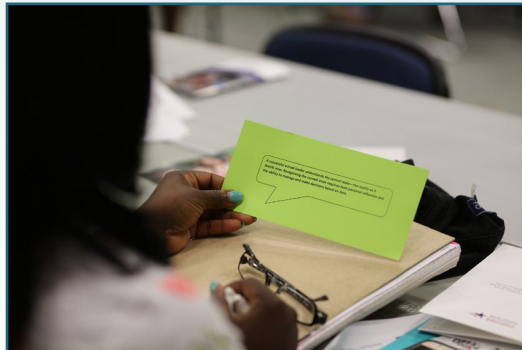
Visioning Schools of Promise Summit Gathers School Leaders



The Leadership Summit: Visioning Schools of Promise held on May 24 at HCDE gathered school leaders to discuss strategies for effective school leadership. Principal Kafele opened the discussion. Kafele is an international, leading authority for providing effective classroom and school leadership

strategies toward closing what he coins the “attitude gap.” The prolific writer and speaker has authored eight books, including his new book release in November: “Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It?”

Heather Smalley, director of the TEA’s policy and communications performance reporting department, gave the 2018 accountability overview. Educator Certification and Professional Advancement plans more leadership workshops during the 2018-2019 school year.



ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

JUNE 1, 2018

Science Fiction: Teaching Chemistry with Children’s Literature - (6 hours G/T credit)

Science Fiction: Teaching Physics with Children’s Literature - (6 hours G/T credit)



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Father, Volunteer Encourages Parental Involvement



As a father of five children ranging from elementary to high school and a dedicated school volunteer, Lawrence Simmons has seen the power of parental involvement firsthand.

His youngest daughter, 6-year-old Miosotis, most recently attended Sheffield Head Start Center, where he

volunteered often. Even though his children have now left the Head Start program, Simmons continues to volunteer at their schools and take an active role in the Head Start program to impact other students.

“I volunteer because it benefits not only my children, but all of the children who attend Head Start,” said Simmons. “They know there is another adult on their side and it gives them a feeling of community.”

When he volunteers at the Sheffield center, Simmons helps with everything from office and clerical work, to monitoring

the front doors and helping teachers with classroom activities. Additionally, he has served as Head Start Policy Council Chairperson for two years and is currently a community representative on the Policy Council. He attends meetings regularly and is part of a group of parents and guardians that act as the parents’ voice in making decisions for the program.

There are many studies that highlight the positive impact parents play in their child’s education and HCDE Head Start emphasizes the parents’ role in education from pre-k forward.

“It’s important to stay involved in your children’s education, even after they leave elementary school,” said Simmons. “As parents, we are our children’s first teachers, therefore, we have the most impact on their learning.”

Simmons understands the importance of parent volunteers and creating a partnership between Head Start centers and families. Together with parents, staff and community volunteers, HCDE Head Start centers can continue to create healthy, effective school environments for all children.



Is Your Summer Booked?

HCDE supported librarians in greater Harris County on May 30 with the Center Librarian Leadership Group through the topic: “Is Your Summer Booked?” The workshop lunch hour was sponsored by PermaBound’s Ty Burns. Presenters were University of Houston-Downtown Professor Dr. Amelia Hewitt and Sam Houston State University professors Dr. Teri Lesesne and Dr. Karin Perry. The daylong workshop was filled with summer reading ideas. Twenty-five librarians throughout Harris County attended.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

A Bicycle, Determination Propel ESL student Forward to Earn Her GED



At 58, Silvia Cruz rides her bike everywhere she goes and finds it liberating. She promised herself when she moved to America in 2015 that she would improve her health and learn everything she could about her new country.

On May 19, Cruz rode her bike 12 miles to her own GED graduation at Harris County

Department of Education in northeast Houston. She made it just in time to grab her gown, get her photo taken and walk across the stage.

The same bike delivered her to ESL and GED classes nine miles each way at the Memorial Assistance Ministries, one of 50-plus community locations where Harris County Department of Education holds adult education and workforce classes.

Before she moved to Houston to join her husband, she suffered a debilitating accident. While climbing onto a bus in her hometown in Mexico in 2013, someone pushed her. She spent the next month unconscious in the hospital. Upon release, she created her own rehab program and learned to use her limbs again. Finally, she learned to ride her bike.

Since the accident, Cruz never stopped propelling forward.

“I want to better my life,” she said. “I don’t want to be ignorant.”

Sometimes she feels frustrated that she can’t speak English quicker, that it takes her longer to translate the words. However, she remembers how far she has come since the fall that sent her tumbling into darkness.

“I want to learn more because I know I can help somebody else with their problems and encourage other people to continue with their lives.”

Rosie Coleman, Cruz’s HCDE GED teacher, said she admired her student’s diligence and her desire to help other classmates.

“She expressed her goal to become a psychologist in the United States,” Coleman said.

Even though that goal will lead to another long ride, Coleman is convinced her student can reach her destination.

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 <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation> or call 713-692-6216.

Health and Fitness Month: Fit at Work



Health and Fitness Month sponsored by Human Resources ended with a “Fit at Work” workshop featuring stretching exercises for the workplace. Each year HR sponsors a series of workshops and health-conscious events aimed at improving employee health habits and relieving stress levels.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Joy 101: Eleven Seniors Graduate from Academic and Behavior School West



Eleven students graduated from Academic and Behavior School West on May 31. Many also returned to their home schools to take part in commencement

ceremonies. Here are some highlights from the ceremony as family members and community partners cheered the students on.

“One of the biggest things we try to prepare our students for is graduation. Today we release our students into society to contribute and be productive citizens.



That wouldn't be possible without the support of our staff and our parents.” – James Colbert Jr.

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction that you choose. You are on your own. You know what you know, so you are the guy or girl who will determine where you go.” - Assistant

Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker quoting Dr. Seuss

“As a teacher it's always a great joy seeing all the work you put in, all the struggles, all the talks. It finally gets to that point where you see them walk across that stage and they turn that tassel. That's a great joy.” - Teacher Roland Hayes



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Center for Safe and Secure Schools Featured in Restorative Practices Article in Texas Tribune



The Center for Safe and Secure Schools collaborated with the Texas Tribune through Communications and Creative Services with a story about Restorative Discipline. The story was published May 29 in the Tribune with reporter Aliyya Swaby. View the story: <https://www.texastribune.org/2018/05/29/texas-schools-restorative-justice-violence-suspensions/>

Center for Safe and Secure Schools specialist Julia Andrews (sitting on desk) sits in on a Restorative Practices circle in Spring ISD's Bammel Middle School where the CSSS provided training for staff and students.

Carnival Provides End-of-Year Celebration at J.D. Walker Baytown

J.D. Walker Head Start Center provided a celebration carnival for students and their families as an end-of-year celebration last week. HCDE Technology Help Desk Manager Jaime Salinas provided magician talent for the morning.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

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**



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As a result of such successful programming in the community, I am ensuring that HCDE is presented in a positive, professional manner in the community and in all venues including the following arenas: media, political, educational, business, and board maintains visibility and involvement in the community with ISD superintendents, elected officials, community leaders, and the board; is open to ideas and needs; communicates the needs and accomplishments of the Department in a variety of ways; and meets some of the most unique needs of learners within Harris County.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

- Board Meeting

