

The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education
for the HCDE Board of Trustees



Harris County
Department of
Education

WEEK OF JULY 9, 2018

VOLUME 3/ISSUE 88



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

I trust everyone had a restful July 4th holiday as we move from reflective days to planning and implementation mode. As summer wanes, our teams are busy preparing for the new school year. Calendars become full as workshops, conferences and meetings are scheduled. Back-to-school is a short stretch.

This week, I focus on staying positive and moving forward with purpose. I started the week with agenda review, then met to discuss our services with the Tomball ISD superintendent.

As the Board moves forward with interviews for its administrative secretary, I joined Jonathan Parker, Anthony Mays and Dr. Anthony Moten at the Association of Recovery Schools National Conference at the University of Houston Central Campus. We presented about plans for the recovery school with our presentation Fortis Academy: A Journey in Public School Recovery "Birth of a Vision." We were reminded there of the convictions of those who fight addiction and go on to live productive lives.

Looking ahead, the Executive Leadership Team meets Monday. I also network with the Texas A&M

AgriLife Research & Extension Center program director, looking for opportunities for collaboration. On Tuesday, our Leadership Team meets. The same day Education and Enrichment/Adult Education hosts a preliminary meeting with Lowes regarding the Tiny House and the Heroes Project. The collaborative would provide a rewarding, community-based project for adult learners in our construction program which results in a tiny house donation to a deserving family. More details on those endeavors as they develop.

Trustees meet to conduct interviews with two final candidates for secretary next Wednesday. That same day I attend both the Public Facilities Corporation and the Budget Committee meetings. Later we continue our busy day as we also hold our regular HCDE Board Meeting and a special meeting afterwards.

Best wishes to all. Looking forward to productive meetings with you next week.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

- **Board Meeting (Special Board Meeting immediately follows regular meeting.)**

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Awarded \$1.5 Million in Federal Funding for 2018-2019 to Serve 10 Schools with Comprehensive Afterschool Funding



CASE for Kids has been awarded \$1.5 million in federal grants during the 2018-2019 school year for afterschool programs at 10 schools located within two area school districts and four charter school organizations. The grant also makes CASE for Kids eligible for two additional years of afterschool funding contingent upon available funds and performance.

Schools include Galena Park ISD's North Shore, Tice and Williamson elementary schools and Sheldon ISD's C.E. King High School, C.E. King Middle School and Royalwood Elementary School. Charter schools include Baker Ripley Promise Community School, Association for

the Advancement of Mexican-Americans (AAMA) George I. Sanchez High School, Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success Houston STEM & Early College High School and Southwest Schools Southwest Bissonnet Elementary.



The award will officially be announced in August, with the grant period extending from Aug. 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019.

Grants come from 21st Century Community Learning Center Cycle 10 federal funding which flows through the Texas Education Agency. A formal news announcement will be made in August.

Former Head Start Center Manager Honored through Family's Book Donation



Enoud Bennett, beloved former center manager at Harris County Department of Education's Channelview Head Start Center, is remembered as a leader with a heart for children and literacy.

Bennett died in June 2017, leaving behind a legacy of service and promoting early literacy. As the year anniversary of Bennett's passing approached, Bennett's mother, Ruby, and two sisters, Beverly and Rose, began brainstorming ways to carry on her legacy. They reached out to friends, family and Bennett's church to collect books, resulting in more than 500 books to gift to Head Start students.

"We're donating these books in honor of Enoud," said Beverly Bennett at the Channelview center, where friends and family gathered to remember Bennett. "She loved to give back and she loved kids."

Bennett dedicated more than 30 years to the Head Start



organization, working at the Compton, Humble, Barrett Station, Fifth Ward and Channelview locations. Bennett's passion for education

and desire to make a difference in her community touched the lives of students and staff alike.

Hattie Weston, family services provider at the Channelview center, fondly remembers Bennett's lively interactions with the children at the center.

"She loved teaching children and she wouldn't just read to them, she would make the books come alive," said Weston. "She told students books would take them everywhere."

Through this donation, each student at the Compton, Humble, Barrett Station, Fifth Ward and Channelview locations will receive books to take home and build their home libraries.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Stephanie Ross Named Director for HCDE Adult Education Division



Student services advocate Stephanie Ross has been named the new director for the Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education.

Ross most recently served as campus director for Vista College in Beaumont, Texas, where she led the college as executive

administrator and successfully launched three new workforce programs. She has a track record of career successes as business strategist, academic and workforce program developer, and recruitment and enrollment leader.

The Cypress, Texas resident holds a Master of Business Administration from University of Phoenix, a graduate

certificate in project management from DeVry University and a Bachelor of Arts in journalism from Texas Southern University.

Ross is an active member of the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators, the National Society of Hispanic MBAs and the National Black MBA Association.

HCDE's Adult Education division serves approximately 9,000 adults each year, with free classes in English as a second language, GED and workforce development at 50 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Classes are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Communities include Alief, Baytown, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. More info at www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation.

HCDE Communications Staff Earns 4 National School Public Relations Awards in 2018 Competition



Harris County Department of Education's Communications and Creative Services division has received four National

School Public Relations Association 2018 (NSPRA) Publications and Digital Media Awards.

NSPRA judged 1,061 public relations entries this year and provided 648 awards. A selection of those awards will be on display at the national conference in Anaheim, California in July.

HCDE awards are as follows:

- Award of Merit for Excellence in Writing: Hurricane Harvey Photos Earn Scholastic Art & Writing Award (story by Lindsey Sanders, Communications and Creative Services coordinator)

- Award of Merit for Harris County Department of Education News Blog (Communications and Creative Services staff members Carol Vaughn, Lindsey Sanders, Daniel Villarreal and Dave Einsel)
- Honorable Mention for video Houston Mayor Turner GoPublic Message (Communications and Creative Services videographer Daniel Villarreal)
- Honorable Mention for video HCDE/Bates Collision Centers Car Giveaway (Communications and Creative Services videographer Daniel Villarreal)

Publications and Electronic Digital Awards provide recognition for district and school communication efforts in print, digital, video, audio, websites and more. NSPRA is recognized as the leader in school communication and has provided the awards for more than 50 years.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Annual Staff set for Thursday, Aug. 23 at Kingdom Builder's Center



This year's Annual Staff is set for Thursday, Aug. 23 as over 1,000 employees from Harris County Department of Education's 21 divisions gather beginning at 9 a.m. at the Kingdom Builder's Center, 6011 W Orem Dr.

Employees check-in for registration at 9 a.m. The program begins at 10 a.m. with service awards followed by a presentation with HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. The event ends around noon.

TWO HOUSTON CHRONICLE GOOD NEWS FEATURES

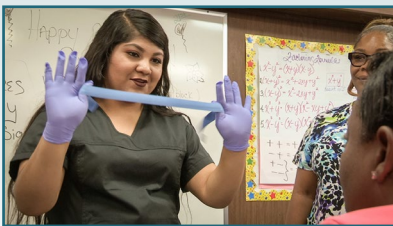
Collaborative Between Girl Scout, Therapist Published in Houston Chronicle



The Houston Chronicle featured a story written by Communications and Creative Services staff about Katie Crabb, daughter to Carie Crabb, senior director of School-Based Therapy Services, along with retiring HCDE occupational therapist Mary Canada. The pair worked together on a project to create book bags for students with severe auditory, visual and cognitive disabilities. The story also appeared in the American Occupational Therapy Association nationwide Twitter account: <http://bit.ly/2L8SijB>.

Read the story: <https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/bellaire/news/article/Storybooks-come-to-life-through-special-bond-13018424.php>

HCDE Adult Education Offers Free Skilled Medical Classes: Chronicle Feature



A feature story about new medical workforce initiatives was recently published in the Houston Chronicle. The story highlights several medical "building block" programs that are free for students. A young woman who earns her GED goes on to gain medical skills that allow her to quickly increase her earning ability. View the story:

<https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/memorial/schools/article/Harris-County-Department-of-Education-offers-free-13044369.php>



Adult Education Grad Featured in Texas Lone Star Magazine July Issue

Texas Lone Star features a "good news" article about Adult Education division student grad Sylvia Cruz. The article chronicles her support as she gained her GED last year: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5351/texas-lone-star_july-2018.pdf

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Kids' Day at Hobby Performances 2018 Provide Opportunity for Student Voice

Event photos: <https://bit.ly/2KtLJet> (password hcde1889)



In the aftermath of devastation from Hurricane Harvey and grief from the Santa Fe shootings, the June 21, 2018 Kids' Day at Hobby Center performances reflected part of a healing process. Mixed with cultural

celebrations of traditional Mexican and Brazilian dance and African drumming, the voice of youth opinion, fear and hope was evident in the performing arts productions.

Led by local performing artists and influenced by the youth enrolled in summer programs, Kids' Day at Hobby Center gives students enrolled in summer enrichment



programs the opportunity to express themselves through dance, theatre, puppetry, song and visual arts. The Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, has provided the enrichment opportunity each summer for the past 10 years through various partnerships, including Hobby Center for the Performing Arts.

"I like theatre because it allows me to express myself," said Stafford High School student Jaylah Allen, who performed in a production written by the students with assistance from Ensemble Theatre performing artist Anthony Glover.

Glover says theatre is a healthy outlet for youth because they can talk about life through theatre. Teens talk and act out things they are going through and broach subjects like bullying, suicide and violence.

"It also allows me to prepare for speeches and presentations that will help me in the future," said Allen, a college-bound eleventh grader.

The event gives students the chance to learn from the local professional artists and perform on the iconic stage in downtown Houston. Students worked with the local performing artists like puppeteer Greg Ruhe, hip hop artist Chris Cortez, drummer Sam Dinkins and visual artist Monica Foote.



Students are enrolled in elementary, middle and high school summer programs through CASE for Kids. CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

The schools included Best and Smith elementary schools and Albright Middle School in Alief; Bammel Middle School in Spring; Garrett Elementary School in Sheldon, Stafford High School in Stafford, Clear Creek Intermediate in Clear Creek, and Francis Elementary in Aldine. Charter school Academy of Accelerated Learning also participates. Fine arts vendors working with CASE for Kids in the summer program include MECA, Ondi Love, Brazilian Arts, Dinky Drum, Savannah Blue, Artist Boat, Puppet Pizzazz, Houston Healthy Hip Hop and Ensemble Theatre.



Students participating in Kids' Day at Hobby Center are enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs through the Texas Education Agency's Afterschool Centers on Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center and the Partnership Project. Partnership Project is a collaboration between HCDE, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and awarded sites. HCDE commits local funds to supplement comprehensive afterschool programming.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

School Leaders Present at National Association of Recovery in Higher Education Conference at UH



Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker, Schools Senior Director Anthony Mays and Fortis Academy Principal Anthony Moten presented at the Association of Recovery in Higher Education 9th Annual Conference at

University of Houston Central Campus on July 11. The presentation entitled Fortis Academy: A Journey in Public School Recovery “Birth of a Vision” outlined the challenges of planning the first public recovery high school in Harris County. The national conference also included members of the Association of Recovery Schools.



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



AB School West Celebrates July 4th

AB West studied and celebrated the Fourth of July with a historical lesson from teacher Celeste Chizer. Afterwards, students feasted on hotdogs and patriotic popsicles.



AB West Students to Participate in Annual Robotics Challenge

Students at Academic and Behavior School West will end their summer school activities with their annual Robotics Challenge event on July 16 starting at 12 p.m. Each team of students built Smart Machine Robots and will have to perform three timed tasks during the challenge. Find out which team will be this year's winner!

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

- **Work with other community and governmental entities and educational organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way**



Sharing the services and visions of the Department is important as we continue to build positive community relationships. This week a Schools leadership team of four traveled to the University of Houston Central Campus to present at the Association of Recovery in Higher Education and the Association for Recovery Schools through their joint conference. We talked about Fortis Academy.

Our presentation started with an overview of HCDE and how we serve area districts and the education public. Attendees were outside organizations that spanned to Washington, D.C. Participants were all interested in building recovery schools themselves in their respective communities. We talked about the challenges,



partnerships, promising practices and the very idea of creating a public recovery school. I also talked about the support we have received from this Board for Fortis.

Participants were hungry for information, peppered us with follow-up questions and even wanted to drop by for a tour if time allowed. We shook hands, exchanged business cards and created new friendships in the recovery school arena. Later, we networked with other attendees at the conference. The conference really helped us appreciate and understand the power of the recovery community.

By ensuring that HCDE continues to offer such programs for the students, I am working to meet the expectations of the board to identify the learning needs of students and develop a process that ensures each student's potential. Further, I am ensuring that HCDE maintains visibility and involvement in the community by continuing to offer this exceptional medium for the students within Harris County.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

- **Board Meeting (*Special Board Meeting immediately follows regular meeting.*)**

