

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. I began the week, as usual, with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). We continue to spend the summer months in preparation for the upcoming year. Our employees are engaged in professional development activities and other projects to advance the teaching and learning process.

Also, on Monday, I met with David Wright with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services program. I consistently explore ways that HCDE can partner with other education entities to forward our mission. The meeting was productive and informative, and I look forward to learning more about this impressive program within the Texas A&M system.

This past Tuesday, I conducted Leadership Team Meeting. That meeting was also informative and provided all in attendance a snapshot of where the various divisions are as it relates to preparation for the 2018-19 academic year. All divisions are ensuring system improvements and even more program efficacies.

Later Tuesday, I joined members of administration and representatives from Lowe's Home Improvement Corporate offices regarding the Tiny House endeavor and the Lowe's Hero Project. This was a great visibility

opportunity for the Department through our Adult Education program.

The July Board Meeting was held yesterday, and thanks to all of you who attended or participated in some way. On behalf of the Department, thank you for the passage of the 2018-2019 fiscal year budget. This will allow for continued flourishing of HCDE programs and services at an even higher level. I know yesterday was a long day given the meetings surrounding the Board Meeting. As always, thanks for your continued support of HCDE.

Today, I conducted regularly-scheduled meetings with members of the HCDE staff.

Looking ahead into next week, I will conduct my weekly ELT meeting and I will fulfill my obligations to the Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) Board through my attendance at the Board Meeting.

I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Rich Vela Named Executive Director of Facilities at Harris County Department of Education



Rich Vela has been named the new executive director of Facilities Support Services at Harris County Department of Education.

Vela most recently served as assistant superintendent of ancillary services in Tomball Independent School District, where he supervised facilities,

maintenance and operations and more, and developed training options and improvement plans for department operations.

Throughout his career, Vela has served as director of risk management, controller, district accountant and

purchasing agent and is a certified school risk manager. He holds a master's degree in management from Texas A&M Commerce and a bachelor's degree in business from Sam Houston State University.

Vela is an active member of the Texas Association of Latin Administrators and Superintendents, the Texas Association of School Officials and is an advisory committee member for Crime Stoppers.

Facilities Support Services supports HCDE by maintaining and improving campuses, offices and other learning and working environments. To learn more, visit www.hcde-texas.org.

Danielle Bartz Appointed Chief of Staff for Harris County Department of Education



Policy strategist Danielle Bartz has been appointed as chief of staff for Harris County Department of Education. The leadership position supports and advises the HCDE superintendent and the Department's services.

The East Texas native and Eastwood-area resident most recently served as director of the City

of Houston Boards and Commissions. Her experience with state, county and local government affairs is bolstered by expertise in both project management and development.

Bartz earned a master's degree in public affairs and a bachelor's degree in government and Spanish from the University of Texas. She is a former Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, a TEDx speaker and she volunteers with the Texas Bluebonnet Girls State program, a government and citizenship camp for teenage girls.

GET READY! FLOODS

Floods can happen everywhere, making them one of the country's most common natural disasters. Flooding poses a greater threat to low-lying areas, but water overruns from dams, shifts the middle stream, cracks levees or dikes can overflow and create flooding. During periods of heavy rain or extended periods of steady rain, be aware of the possibility of a flood. Flash floods develop quickly—anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. Access local weather reports for flooding information.

Before

- Check to see if you have flood insurance coverage.
- Make your kitchen, water heater, or electrical panel if they are in areas of your home that may be flooded.
- Install check valves in sewer pipes.
- Construct barriers, such as levees, berms, or flood walls, to help floodwater from entering the building.
- Seal up all in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- During a flood or flash flood watch, be prepared to evacuate, including all your pet and toys, using an outside furniture. Move valuable to high points in your home, and getting electronic appliances and devices them to high points.
- During a flood warning, evacuate if you are so advised.
- During a flash flood warning, immediately seek higher ground.
- Keep your emergency supplies kit, including water, stored in an easily accessible, waterproof place.

During

- If time allows, call someone to let them know where you are going, and check with neighbors who may need water.
- Stay out of flood water, if possible. Even water that is not too deep can be dangerous. If you have to walk through water, use a stick to check the bottom of the ground ahead of you. Avoid moving water.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If your car becomes surrounded by rising water, get out quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

After

- Do not return home until local authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Do not or drive on roads until you are told that it is safe.
- Avoid floodwaters, which may be contaminated or electrically charged.
- Check out for areas in which the floodwaters may have reached, leaving weakened roofing.
- Be extra careful about anything that got wet.
- Check and disinfect anything that got wet.
- Service damaged septic tanks, sump pumps, pits, and heating systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewer systems are a serious health hazard.

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Center for Safe and Secure Schools Shares Flood Tips During Peak Hurricane Months

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools recently provided a public service announcement through social media and the Hub (internal HCDE news) regarding flood tips during the peak of hurricane season. See the post:

Flooding is a major concern during hurricane season, so be prepared during the peak months (August-September). The Center for Safe and Secure Schools shares these flood tips developed by the National Fire Protection Association. View tips:

<https://bit.ly/2LhLwW>

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Fight Summer Slide: Summer Learning Day with CASE for Kids, Precinct 1 Reinforces Purposeful Learning



Aniyah Johnson, 8, thinks summer learning is cool because it beats staying at home. During Summer Learning Day, a national advocacy day to support keeping kids learning, safe and healthy, she measured the buoyancy in beach sands,

tracked her heart rate and had fun splashing in the water. Fun stuff, she says.

The Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, provides resources, training and afterschool services for over 9,000 students in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids hosted “Let’s Have a Beach Blast with Summer Learning Day” with the Harris County Precinct 1 summer enrichment program. Approximately 125 children participated.

“Today we talk about kids learning through the summer because we don’t want kids losing any of their academic knowledge during summer,” said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. “We’re engaging kids in purposeful learning while they are doing fun and exciting activities using their academic skill sets.”

Nutty Scientist of Houston, a CASE for Kids Select Provider who supplies fun, science education to afterschool sites, was on hand helping kids to explore properties of sand. Another activity was tracking heart rates while Zumba dancing. Kids also tried yoga to



relax and tested their creativity through some art projects.

“I believe summer programs are important because

you get to connect to new people and have new bonds while also enjoying a safe environment,” said Christopher Mosley, 13, who attends Yes Prep Fifth Ward during the school year.

“I’m learning new things this summer like teamwork and communication—things I can use later in life,” he said.

Education research shows that students can lose two to three months of academic skills in the summer. Caruthers says teachers spend a lot of time reteaching and getting kids back on track because of the lapse in skills use.

The National Summer Learning Association, which promotes the nationwide awareness day, says kids can gain weight twice as fast due to inactivity during the summer when they’re out of school.

“You can find great resources at libraries to help with academic support,” said Caruthers. “Zoos and museums are other good options that offer free or discounted activities.”



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

5th Annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference Set for August 21



Harris County Department of Education Head Start, in partnership with the Hogg Foundation, hosts the 5th annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference on Aug.

21 at the HCDE Conference Center. The conference provides participants with tools and resources for working

with children with challenging behaviors and increases awareness of mental health issues among children and adults.

The conference is open to early childhood educators, families and members of the Head Start community. The cost is only \$10 and includes lunch and free parking through a grant-funded initiative from the Hogg Foundation.



Tiny Houses Project to be Implemented by Adult Education through Lowe's

HCDE officials meet with Lowe's about the Tiny House Project, a proposal which allows Adult Education students in construction to assist with building tiny houses to be donated to nonprofits who gift the houses to homeless veterans. More information about the project is forthcoming.

Ecomet Burley Interviewed for Houston Matters Radio Show



Ecomet Burley of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools was interviewed by Houston Public Radio host Maggie Martin for Houston Matters for a story regarding safety strategies at Santa Fe High School. View the story: (At marker 6:15 in recording) <https://soundcloud.com/houstonmatters/full-show-affirmative-action-rescinded-and-millennials-july-17-2018>

Adult Education Hosting Information Sessions for GED, ESL Teachers



HCDE Adult Education is looking for dynamic individuals to help adult learners fulfill their dreams. The division is hosting information sessions on July 24, 2018 at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the HCDE Conference Center. Interested individuals will learn more about teaching opportunities for GED and ESL and can register for the sessions at www.hcde-texas.org/register.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

AB West Students Combine Social Skills, Math During Annual Robotics Challenge



Students at Academic and Behavior School West closed out their summer school session with the annual Robotics Challenge. While past challenges have involved flying helicopters or using hydraulic arms, this year's challenge was to build smart robots and navigate the robots through three challenges that tested various skills. The Robotics Challenge combines social skills with reading and math skills for a fun learning experience.

To view a video of the challenge, visit <https://bit.ly/2uE5C8w>.

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 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**



Yesterday, the Board passed the 2018-2019 budget that will reduce the tax rate to \$.005167, down from last year's \$.005195, based on projected property tax revenues.

The budget supports HCDE's core services such as school-based therapy, special schools, after-school programming, Head Start, and adult education. This year's budget proposes to hold the tax rate below the effective tax rate for the fourth consecutive year.

HCDE exhibits exemplary procedures and systemic best practices throughout its budgeting process. Thus, by leading such a thoroughly-vetted budgeting process and through conservative management, I am working to achieve the elements of performance associated with the board's goals for me related to proper financial planning and budget implementation for both effective and efficient operations.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

August Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 15, 2018

