



Of Note...

First off, hats off to the Teaching and Learning Center's successful R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference. As always, it was a major success, with approximately 1,000 educators in attendance. Congratulations to this group on hosting HCDE's 33rd annual event of its kind as they offered cutting-edge training techniques to early childhood educators by nationally-renowned presenters.

I attended the TASA Mid-Winter Conference this week in Austin where I was able to participate and fulfill my duties with the Texas Academic Decathlon, as a member of its board. Additionally, I participated in the Superintendent's Think Tank session, and I facilitated a comprehensive presentation on Fortis Academy, and the inspiration behind this innovative campus, in an independent breakout session. This presentation was well-received and there was great interest in the program and its concept.

There were many other enlightening and educational sessions throughout the week. It is always a productive and informative experience, allowing for networking with my fellow education executives. I returned to the office Thursday after a week chock-full of exposure to innovative training strategies related to education administration. I consider TASA an essential professional development opportunity that I consistently take advantage of as it allows for growth in the executive realm of education.

Upon my return to the office Thursday, I conducted internal meetings with staff, catching up after having been out of the office. Today, I spent the day at the North Post Oak location, as I do each Friday, and I conducted a series of meetings with internal staff while there.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Differentiating Instruction for SPED, ELL and GT in Social Studies; STAAR Academy-Grade 4 Writing Strategies and Mentor Texts; Revving Review for STAAR Success in 8th Grade Science; Bea Luchin: Data Analysis for Grades 6-8; Quests for Grants Training Series: Find Funding to Support Your Programs; Number Talks: Whole Number Computation for Grades K-5; Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Animal Defenses, Tree Homes PreK-1 (6 hours G/T update); Number Talks: Fractions for Grades 5-7; and Making Literacy Visible. HCDE is an invaluable resource to the educators and learners of Harris County and abroad as we advance teaching and learning.

Looking ahead into next week, I will conduct the Executive Leadership Team on Monday morning. Janice Owolabi (Center for Safe and Secure Schools) is on that agenda to facilitate a training session: An Overview of the Incident Command System. Following that, I will attend standing meetings for the remainder of the day.

In addition to community meetings scheduled for next week and I will also welcome the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators. I will end the week with internal standing meetings.

Please be reminded that the regularly scheduled February Board Meeting will be held Wednesday, February 27, 2019.

As always, thanks for your service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a relaxing weekend.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

HCDE Board Meeting—Wednesday, February 27, 2019

WEEK OF JANUARY 28, 2019

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Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

1,000 Educators Receive Valuable Information at Annual Early Childhood Conference

View photo gallery: <https://bit.ly/2sZYQtv>(password hcde1889)



Many wow moments and new ideas were taken away from the 33rd Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference, sponsored by Harris

County Department of Education and the Teaching and Learning Center.

HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker welcomed the nearly 1,000 early childhood educators from around the state.

“By being here today, you are demonstrating your commitment to your students and the pursuit of excellence,” Parker said.

Former HCDE Board Trustee and conference namesake R.T. Garcia was also in attendance and praised the teachers for being first responders to children.

“There is no finer group than teachers,” Garcia said. “You are my heroes because you take our kids and develop them; you are first responders for kids.”

This year’s keynote speaker was YouTube celebrity and best-selling author Steve Spangler. He showcased a few of his magic tricks that gave teachers ideas to take back to their students.

Deer Park Independent School District Early Childhood Center teacher Vigyatha Gopeechan enjoyed Spangler’s presentation and even took in his second presentation of the morning. This was her fifth year attending the conference.

“I enjoyed his session because I can always take back something and show the kids how wow it is because that’s how I feel and it’s awesome,” Gopeechan said.

Throughout the day, more than 60 breakout sessions were offered with science activities and how to keep your classroom safe and secure.



For many attendees, this was the first time attending and they found out about the conference from friends. Kaci Moore is a student at East Texas Baptist University and student teaching at Jefferson ISD. She wanted to attend to learn ideas for her classroom for when she becomes a full-time teacher.

“I wanted to learn more about early childhood development and how I can bring that into my classroom and use it, especially while I am student teaching,” Moore said.

Next year’s early childhood winter conference is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020. For more information about the Teaching and Learning Center, visit www.hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center/ or call 713-696-1315.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Scenes from Annual Early Childhood Conference



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Fortis Academy Recovery School Presentation at TASA Mid-Winter Conference Draws Interest from School Leaders



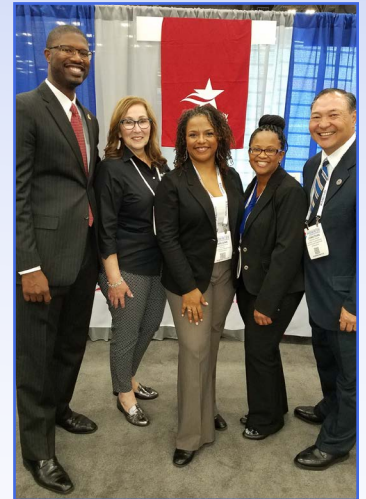
“Educating Students in a Sober Environment” was the presentation provided by HCDE leaders at the Texas Association of School Administrators’ Mid-Winter Conference in Austin as the story of Fortis Academy was presented to conference attendees.

James Colbert, Jonathan Parker, Dr. Anthony Mays and Dr. Antony Moten provided perspectives about the paradigm shift from punishment, recovery and lapse versus therapy, rehabilitation and relapse.

Colbert shared the cost benefit of recovery high schools to taxpayers: “Whereas the cost of educating a student in a recovery high school is nearly twice as much as educating a student in a traditional public school, it is less than a quarter of the cost of incarcerating a juvenile.”

Emphasis was placed on outcomes resulting from recovery school models. Benefits discussed included moving from dropout to graduation mode and improving attendance, which affects the average daily attendance (ADA) for schools.

Some 30-plus attendees at the presentation asked pointed questions about components of Fortis: the culinary arts program, credit recovery and acceleration; attendance and grades; curriculum; and future potential community partnerships.



HCDE staffers gather at the HCDE booth space

The presentation was an overall success and well-received.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

3 Young Afterschool CASE for Kids Leaders Featured in National Publication

NATIONAL AfterSchool ASSOCIATION WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
BE INSPIRED • GET CONNECTED • LEARN AND SHARE

WRITE BRAIN AFTER SCHOOL & SUMMER
EVERY STUDENT IS PUBLISHED!
PBL, SEL & S.T.E.A.M. [CLICK TO LEARN MORE!](#) 855.WB.BOOKS

#Making afterschool cool

Sharing a Passion for Afterschool
Adrian Izaguirre, Chasidy Celestine and Jacqueline Chavez are all #NAA19 presenters and past NAA Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders honorees! We sat down with these colleagues from CASE for Kids - Harris County Department of Education to learn about their presentation for NAA19, what it means to be acknowledged as Next Gen honorees and more.

TRAILBLAZING TRIO

ez care Child Care Software
How Much Does Afterschool Management Software Cost?
Find out today.
Free E-Book

RUBIK'S CUBE CONTEST ENTER

Congratulations to three young, afterschool heroes from CASE for Kids who are all presenting at the National AfterSchool Association Conference this spring. They are featured in a NAA Newsletter which is a national afterschool publication.

View the article: <https://naaweb.org/professional-development/item/1025-sharing-a-passion-for-afterschool>

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

JANUARY 28, 2019

Differentiating Instruction for SPED, ELL and GT in Social Studies

JANUARY 29, 2019

STAAR Academy-Grades 4 Writing Strategies & Mentor Texts

Revving Review for STAAR Success in 8th Grade Science

JANUARY 30, 2019

Bea Luchin: Data Analysis for Grades 6-8

Quest for Grants Training Series: Find Funding to Support Your Programs

JANUARY 31, 2019

Number Talks: Whole Number Computation for Grades K-5

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Animal Defenses, Tree Homes PreK-1 (6 hours G/T update)

Number Talks: Fractions for Grades 5-7

FEBRUARY 1, 2019

Making Literacy Visible

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Space: The Next Giant Step Kicks Off Ecobot Challenge 2019 Robotics Competition



All-Earth Ecobot Challenge 2019 takes elementary students in grades fourth through sixth to the colonization of Mars and beyond

through a robotics journey. The challenge reveal is held each year and kicks off the Ecobot Challenge. This year's unveiling was delivered at Galena Park Independent School District on Jan. 26.

View the promo video about the 2019 challenge:
<https://youtu.be/N8NITtBJp94>

The competition for the elementary-level challenge will be held on April 27 at Berry Center, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, 8877 Barker Cypress Road. An estimated 400 students will participate this year in 80 teams of 4 students. Students come from both public, private and home school environments.

The competition is funded through Harris County Department of Education and organized by HCDE's Center for Afterschool, Summer



and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

Using Lego Mindstorms robotic kits, students conquer the challenge table which is organized in quadrants. One quadrant has the robot orbiting Earth. The next requires a module landing, moon samples and planting the U.S. flag. On the third mission samples of Mars are collected, and the rover is repaired. Finally, Mars is colonized as kilopower panels, batteries, oxygen, water and food are provided. Asteroids are redirected. Bonus rounds include rocket launches.



The next practice day is set for Feb. 23 from 9:30 a.m.- 3 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington.

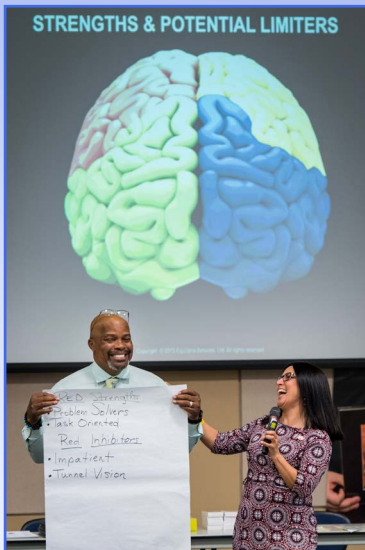
Registration for the elementary challenge is open until April 5. Go to www.ecobotchallenge.com for more information and to register as a participant or volunteer.

A middle school challenge for seventh and eighth graders provides a drone competition on May 17 at Space Center Houston, 1601 E. Nasa Parkway, Houston. Practice day for that event is set for March 23 at HCDE. Registration for that event has closed.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Show Your Colors to Build Teamwork, Leadership through HCDE, E-Colors in Education



Understanding your peers' personalities is providing a new frontier in education leadership and team communications. Classes offered through E-Colors in Education are available through a collaboration with Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center.

The workshops begin in February and continue through June with various teamwork themes which focus on a personality

profile and personal intervention. Customized campus workshops are also available.

Discovering your E-Colors is as simple as going to the Equilibria website and completing the free inventory at www.equilibria.com/PDI-home. Once discovered, the collaboration begins.

E-Colors in Education CEO Rosalinda Mercado created the educational arm of the company after experiencing the power of human performance coaching through professional development in education six years ago.

Her ah-ha moment came as the 17-year veteran in education applied E-colors as a principal at a charter school in a gang-riddled area of Houston. Knowing how to have conversations with students and staff based on differing character traits helped her to create a safe zone in the school populated with rival gangs: the MS-13 and Cholos.

"As a result, we were able to decrease gang violence," she said.

HCDE Curriculum Director for Special Populations Brenda Arteaga was an administrative colleague and friend to Mercado at the time. She too saw the impact.



"It enhanced relationships across the board, from student-to-student, teacher-to-student, teacher-to-teacher and between schools and the central office," she said. "It worked all the way around, and we saw a drastic reduction in bullying among students."

E-colors in Education works with eight characteristics of high-performing teams through the series of workshops at HCDE. They are self-and-team awareness; shared visions and values; clarity of roles and processes; trust; diversity and inclusion; commitment; accountability and learning; and continuous improvement.

Personalities are expressed as a combination of two of the total four colors: blue, yellow, red and green. Red is a doer. Green is a thinker. Yellow is a socializer, and blue is a relator or people-oriented personality.

E-Colors has been used in the corporate world through the work environment arm for years. In addition to E-Colors in Education, Equilibria also has a sports component arm to promote teamwork.

"We are finding tremendous demand for E-colors in Education because people see that it works to help build teamwork and leadership skills," said Arteaga.

For information about workshops offered at HCDE, email Arteaga at barteaga@hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-1304.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Takes Part in Expanded Learning Opportunities Day in Austin



CASE for Kids selected 25 students from Clear Creek Intermediate in Clear Creek ISD to supply youth voice at the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Day at the capitol in Austin on Jan. 15. ELO Day was organized by Texas Partnership for Out of School Time to provide elected officials with information about afterschool. They had the opportunity to meet with senators and representatives, including Senator Larry Taylor, about their experience in the afterschool world.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development and Community Relations

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to:

- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness;
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration;
- Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, ensuring a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and the community; and to
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.



the state of Texas, as well as different parts of the



country. Throughout the day, more than 60 breakout sessions were offered with science activities, among other attractive topics for teachers in all areas of early childhood education.

By HCDE continuing to host this event, I am striving to meet the Board's goal of ensuring that, not only are HCDE employees exposed to quality professional development, but I am also helping to ensure that our youngest learners from all parts of Harris County, and beyond, are exposed to cutting-edge and innovative education strategies.

Further, I am meeting your goal of me to communicate the needs and accomplishments of HCDE and provide innovative teaching strategies that will improve teaching and learning.



Last Saturday, the Teaching and Learning Center hosted HCDE's 33rd R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference with nearly 1,000 educators in attendance from across

HCDE BOARD

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Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

February Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

