



WEEK OF JULY 15, 2019

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Of Note...

One of the things that HCDE does so well is to offer traditional programs in alternative environments.

Through our special schools, adult education classes, school-based therapy services and after-school programs, we are known around the county as educators who do the ordinary in an extraordinary way.

Last week we enhanced supplemental services for students with severe and profound special needs by partnering with SIRE, an equine therapy facility in Spring. Students at AB West participated in a field trip to SIRE that serves as an example of the dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking opportunities we provide our students. These supplemental services are designed to benefit students through life skills and activities based on their individual situation and/or special needs. Later this year, students at all our schools will participate in the SIRE partnership, working with horses, learning how to groom, feed and care for the large animals and becoming comfortable in the agricultural environment.

Students in CASE's afterschool programs turned ordinary software into extraordinary projects by participating in a Microsoft summer camp learning how to make movies, edit photos and create video games. This is yet another way HCDE is helping our students to gain skills necessary to be successful in the changing global world through engaging, fun, relevant and applicable programs.

I started the week with the Executive Leadership Team and internal meetings in preparation for Wednesday's board meeting. Thank you for your active participation and approval of the 2019-2020 budget. Your support for our staff through raises and additional dollars to offset increased costs for health care is appreciated and will make a huge impact on our ability to recruit and retain the best possible employees. I am proud of the salaries and benefits we are offer our employees and thank you for your continued support of our efforts to boast the best workforce in the greater Houston area.

I concluded my work week with a "Respectful Workplace" mandatory training for all leadership members, which was very engaging and a great perspective on being intentional, paying attention to details and being aware of how small actions impact others. I capped off Thursday with more internal meetings and planning for our annual convocation and executive leadership retreat.

Have a wonderful weekend.

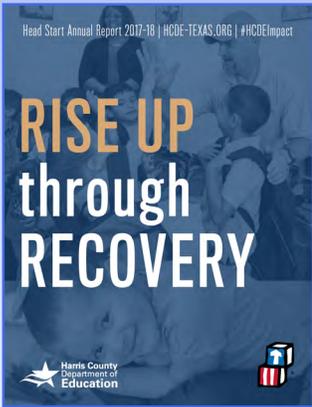
UPCOMING EVENTS:

HCDE Board Meeting—Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Head Start Releases 2017-18 Annual Report



Rise Up Through Recovery is the theme used throughout the 2017-2018 Harris County Department of Education Head Start Annual Report: <https://bit.ly/2xO9C8n>.

Hurricane Harvey devastated the Houston-area with flooding as the annual report looks back on news that shaped the Head Start

service landscape. Many Head Start families such as Dogan Head Start parent Ana Romero were forced out of their houses for several weeks as repairs were made. Employees like Baytown Early Head Start Administrative Assistant Ana Zuniga were also affected after her home flooded.

Head Start employees and Family Service Providers came together to help their families and fellow employees with services they needed to get life back to normal.

The Responsible Parenting Award from longtime HCDE supporter Bates Collision Centers meant so much more in 2017 as parents Bahiyah Rashed and Vanessa Zuniga received rehabbed cars after losing theirs during Hurricane Harvey. However, the Bates Channelview location was burglarized the night before the giveaway. Bates, along with their employees and community partners, acted quickly to replace the gifts in time for the ceremony.

How students learn, community support, demographics and report statistics are also noted in the annual report. Look for your printed copy to be delivered soon!

Communicators Attend National School Public Relations Conference to Share, Gain Best Practices



Several members from Communications and Creative Services and Client Engagement attended the National School Communications

and Public Relations Association (NSPRA) meeting held in Washington, D.C. this week. The national conference gathers school communications professionals across the nation and Canada. Approximately 1,200 attendees and organizers participated.

The conference allows public relations professionals to collaborate and train. Topics this year included crisis communications, strategic planning, storytelling, media relations, branding and more.

“The conference allows us to explore and share our stories of successes, challenges and lessons learned

on issues and opportunities facing public education today,” said HCDE Chief Communications Officer Danielle Clark.

In addition to acquiring professional development, the conference gives communicators the opportunity to share their leadership initiatives. Clark holds an accreditation in public relations (APR) and served on a panel to mentor colleagues who are furthering their career paths to gain their APRs.

Through the conference publications awards, the Connector gained an “honorable mention” as several thousand communications entries were judged.

Communicators attending will be sharing and implementing ideas gained through the conference in the 2019-2020 school year as the HCDE public awareness campaign continues.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Equine Therapy Introduced Via AB School West Summer Program



Horse therapist Stephanie Twellman spent three years working with her 9-year-old client, training him to care for and ride a horse. The client

with emotional and physical disabilities now rides independently and competes in horse shows, and his maturity level has skyrocketed, she said.

Students at all four Harris County Department of Education special schools will be participating in the equine therapy programs called Self-Improvement through Riding Education (SIRE) during the 2018-2019 school year. The 35-year-old program, which began on the east coast, builds self-esteem, confidence and relationship skills for all students through feeding, grooming and caring for horses.

Academic and Behavior School West Principal Victor Keys and several students visited SIRE this summer for an introduction to the program. Students learned how to approach a horse and were introduced to the SIRE program.

“There is a special bond between humans and horses,” said Joe Wappelhorst of SIRE.



“Bottom line is horses have been bred for thousands of years to work in partnership with humans. Horses can sense our needs, emotional state and are excellent at reading nonverbal communications. To have a personal relationship, humans learn to modify actions and emotions to meet the needs of the horse.”

Students with emotional, mental and physical disabilities and troubled youth will all benefit from the equine program. Services include therapeutic riding which is individualized for each rider to meet specific life goals.



A student with cerebral palsy will be tasked with building core strength, stretching leg muscles and communication skills. Autistic students gain social skills.

“SIRE also provides nonriding sessions, usually in 4-10 weeks’ time periods to engage participants with horses for a specific purpose such as leadership skills, team building, and addiction work,” Wappelhorst said. “For many students just the work of feeding, grooming and caring for horses builds esteem, confidence and relationship skills.”



Keys looks forward to building the program into the AB School West curriculum next year and cites the benefits of social emotional learning with all populations at the school.

“The students were really excited about the program, and we look forward to learning more about horses next semester as both the students and horses get to know each other,” Keys said.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Earns Financial Transparency Award from Association of School Business Officials International



Harris County Department of Education has earned the "Certificate of Excellence in

Financial Reporting" for its fiscal year 2018 comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The award was issued by the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International. The award helps to promote and recognize excellence in financial reporting, specifically through a district's CAFR, according to ASBO.

"This is the 15th year that HCDE has received this award," said Jesus Amezcua, HCDE's assistant superintendent of

finance. "We are proud that the HCDE Business Services Division achieved this important milestone to meet ASBO's high standards for financial reporting and accountability."

By participating in the COE program, school districts demonstrate their commitment to financial transparency. Applicants submit their CAFR for review by a team of professional auditors who provide feedback to improve future documents. If the CAFR meets the requirements of the program, the document may receive the Certificate of Excellence.

Founded in 1910, ASBO is a nonprofit organization which represents approximately 30,000 school business professionals worldwide through its members and affiliates.

CASE for Kids Partners with Microsoft for Summer Enrichment Software Programs



Through a community partnership with Microsoft Stores, students enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs are learning to use Surface Book Pro computer software to make movies, edit

photos and create video games.

Through August, students enrolled in federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) programs managed through CASE for Kids travel to Microsoft stores in the Galleria, the Woodlands and



Baybrook malls to get the hands-on project experience with Microsoft software experts. Students work on storyboarding and character development for videos and presented their videos and projects through a movie premiere.



CASE for Kids summer enrichment schools participating are in Sheldon, Spring, Clear Creek, Humble and Galena Park ISDs and charter schools Southwest Bissonnet and Academy of Accelerated Learning. Twenty-five students attend four classes in each Microsoft specialty area.

Schools participating operate through 21st CCLCs federal funds which are dedicated exclusively to support local afterschool programs.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start SuperMENtors Receives Grant From TEGNA



The TEGNA Foundation awarded the Education Foundation of Harris County \$11,000 to support the Harris County Department of Education Head Start REAL SuperMENtors Read program. This program promotes literacy and a love of reading for young

children. A key feature of the program is recruiting

male volunteers to read aloud to children participating in the Early Head Start/Head Start program. Awarded funds will go toward the purchase of age-appropriate book sets from Scholastic, Inc. TRGNA is the parent organization for KHOU-TV, TEGNA is the philanthropic arm. Nonprofits which received the checks were surprised by anchorwoman Debra Duncan at Channel 11. View the story: https://youtu.be/IPM3or9n_xl. Pictured are Education Foundation of Harris County's Board Chair James Edgar (left) and HCDE Head Start Community Partnership Manager Armando Rodriguez accepting the grant check.

Nutrition and Product Expo Set for Oct. 2 with Choice Partners



Catch the Nutrition Wave as food nutrition directors come together throughout Harris County to meet food vendors bringing their commodity

processed food offerings for the upcoming school year. Save the date for Oct. 2 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Humble Civic Center for the Nutrition and Product Expo.

Choice Partners provides the event each year to allow members to have buy-in on food selections for the upcoming year. Students from member districts also attend and weigh in by taste-testing and offering feedback.

If you've never attended, you're in for quite a few treats, including fresh fruits and vegetables, pizza, breakfast sandwiches and more. The event is often covered by local media.

In Case You Missed It! Videos from Past HCDE Events



If you missed either the Adult Education graduation or the Head Start Baytown ribbon-cutting ceremony, you can now see the highlights through the following videos. See the impact HCDE makes!

Adult Education: https://youtu.be/_uUP0EzOMAA

Head Start: <https://youtu.be/w2wpY4bA6BA>

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Instructional Management

In an effort for me to meet Board expectations of me:

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

We were excited this week to get a bird's eye view of a new therapeutic



program called SIRE which we will embrace through all four special schools during the 2019-2020 school year. Students in our summer program at AB West were introduced to the program through a short orientation with the horses. The equine therapy curriculum through

SIRE is easily adapted to students who are emotionally disturbed, autistic, behaviorally challenged and recovering from addiction.

Students in our CASE for Kids summer enrichment programs benefited from



school curriculum intercede through a partnership with the Microsoft Stores in Houston. They are learning to edit video, photos and master other applications at Microsoft stores this summer through a free corporate program. This program is supplying students and a tool chest of technology-rich skills they can use in high school and beyond.

In addition, through a \$11,000 grant we received through the Education Foundation, Head Start students are getting access to reading mentors and books which will introduce them to a love for literacy.

By offering therapeutic programs like SIRE, summer enrichment opportunities for disadvantaged youth through CASE for Kids and supporting reading through SuperMENTors, I am working to meet the Board's expectations for HCDE to identify the learning needs of students and develop a process that ensures each student's learning goals are met or exceeded. We are also using best practices for student achievement and using effective practices to maximize achievement of student potential.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Josh Flynn

Vice President

George Moore

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

