

The CONNECTOR

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

HITTING OUR STRIDE

TOP STORIES INSIDE



HCDE Provides Technology Safety Tips as Students Head Back to School



CASE for Kids Program at Local High School Rocks with Activities Before, After School



Daughter, Mom Receive Benefits from HCDE La Porte Head Start Program

The CONNECTOR



Of Note...

The work of an educational agency ebbs and flows throughout the year. In August, we are typically moving at warp speed, gearing up for the start of the school year, welcoming students to our campuses and getting staff settled in their assignments. In September, that speed begins to slow down to a more normal pace, as we wrap up Back to School activities and work to support our students and clients every day.

This philosophy was evident at HCDE this week, as our CASE afterschool programs started to kick into gear. It is also apparent as we unveil our new format to The Connector today. Each school year, we pick a new theme for this newsletter. This year, we are moving to a more visual format with an emphasis on pictures. The newsletter is also interactive this year, giving you the ability to click on items on the front page and go directly to that story in the newsletter.

As we transition from back to school to the regular semester, I also was able to welcome our new teachers at a reception on Wednesday. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to our front-line staff and thank them for the commitment to our students and acknowledge the challenging environment of our special schools. I know that in some cases, working with our students is ten-times as hard as being a special education teacher at a school district. I want all of our school staff to know how much I appreciate their dedication and hard work.

I also continued my quarterly meetings with board members this week and had several internal meetings focused on professional development offerings. Each year, our Research and Evaluation division collects the STARR test data from all school districts in the county. Our Teaching and Learning Center staff then analyze the data and we discuss what services HCDE can provide in the coming year to meet the needs of school districts, as evidenced by this data.

On Thursday my spirit was rewarded with my monthly trip to the Humble Head Start as a SuperMENtor. I love to read to these preschoolers and see their joy at the stories they hear. It always reminds me why I got into this profession in the first place: because I truly believe that our students need champions and education provides a proven path to success.

I ended the week with the Education Foundation of Harris County Annual Board meeting on Friday. This meeting was a great opportunity to meet with the business and education experts who are volunteering their time and knowledge to help the foundation support HCDE's programs. Have a great weekend.



 Harris County
Department of
Education

BOARD BRIEFS



Fifteen principal candidates meet for the first class of the 2019–2020 principal cohort, a principal preparation program offered through Educator Certification and Advancement, or ECA. Four former students (seated) join the cohort as mentors for the first meeting for FAQ and advice.



New teachers are celebrated by Schools at a new teacher reception on Sept. 11 at Irvington.



Members of the Houston Area School Public Relations Association join media professionals from local TV and newspapers at the Media Roundtable. The meeting provided meet-and-greet opportunities as well.

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Provides Technology Safety Tips as Students Head Back to School

Technology continues to factor heavily in children's school lives. As students go back to school, computers and cell phones are being used for research assignments and communicating with teachers and classmates. However, families should set technology boundaries for the school year.

Studies have found that one in five students is bullied each year.

Harris County Department of Education Teaching and Learning Center Curriculum Director for Digital Education and Innovation Colina Poullard reminds parents to keep an eye on their children's use of technology.

One thing Poullard says parents can do to keep children safe is to install a form of spyware on phones.

"You can do this with your child's knowledge or not to keep them safe from cyberbullying," she said. "You can also use the spyware for setting timers for how long they can be on social media and as a locator to know where they are at all times."

Other tips include keeping tabs on your child's emotions if there is a change, learn why they want to be on social media apps and follow the account to see what is going on. Also, let the teen know what is appropriate or not to post online.

People who cyberbully will hide behind different online accounts to either get attention or to be hurtful towards others. Either way, it's harassment and includes serious ramifications.

"Cyberbullying is defined in the law, but not in people's mind," Poullard said.

Parents should talk to a child up front about bullying, discuss what the student can do to stop it and set consequences if their child is the bully.

"Most kids will hide and not come forward about being cyberbullied because they don't want to make a big deal about it," she said. "However, it can cause long-lasting damage to the child."

If cyberbullying is taking place, make sure to keep all the evidence to get both sides of story when reporting to campus leaders to solve the issue.

"The key is safety-first while children are using technology and taking these steps," Poullard said.



The Center for Grants Development unveiled its new logo this month. The logo was created through Client Engagement and Communications.



PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Program at Local High School Rocks with Activities Before, After School

Sophomore Lluvia Lopez gets dropped off by her working mom on school mornings at 6:45 a.m. at Chavez High School in southeast Houston.

The petite, high-spirited sophomore is a newbie from Corpus Christi, and she comes inside the gym to finish her homework and watch her friend Jastin Sambula play basketball.

Chavez has a mixing bowl of offerings, including the running club, the Asian-American club, chess club, the business-entrepreneurial club, and tutorials and sports.

The gym is hopping by 7 a.m., and head basketball coach Julius Jackson is there to supervise. The program is called out-of-school time because services are offered before-and-after the school day, on weekends and in the summer.

Chavez's program serves approximately 175 students and is a 21st Century Community Learning Center federally funded through the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, a division of HCDE. It's also infused with funding through City Connections, a program provided through the city of Houston through each council district and operated through CASE for Kids.

To read more of this story, go to our news blog: <https://wp.me/p4QJFl-12r>



Huy Tran, principal Dr. Luis Landa and Mary Castillo



Lluvia Lopez and Jastin Sambula



The Chavez Business Club creates entrepreneurial product: decorated bottle opener with cap catcher.



Two friends study before school starts

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Daughter, Mom Receive Benefits from HCDE La Porte Head Start Program

Three-year-old Raelyn Crawford came home from pre-k saying she ate salad. This was a shock to her mother, Kierra, as she knows her daughter is a picky eater.

"She's the pickiest eater and when she started eating salad, I thought they must be doing something right there," she said.

This is how Kierra became interested in wanting to work at the center.

She is currently majoring in health and wellness and started last month as the center's new cook.

"I love nutrition and working with children, so it was perfect," she said. "Plus, it's convenient with the hours and I get to spend more time with my daughter."

Raelyn started attending the La Porte Head Start center last year when she was three years old. Kierra wanted her daughter to be prepared for school and have the chance to socialize with other children.

"I have seen so many benefits since she started last year such as being more social, talkative, independent, responsible and eating healthier," she said.

Students at Harris County Department of Education Head Start centers learn structure for everyday tasks and they take it home to practice with their families.

"She'll tell me we need to sit down together to eat like they do at school and we just never did before, so I've learned to do it with her," Kierra said.

She wants other parents to know that their young children will also benefit from being in the HCDE Head Start with the structure, curriculum and friendly staff.

To enroll your child at one of the 15 HCDE Head Start centers or for more information, call 713-679-2510 or visit <https://hcde-texas.org/head-start/>.



PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

In The News

Head Start Recruits Students for New School Year

Head Start programs are featured in the back-to-school edition of the Defender News. The news item assists with recruitment at all the 15 centers. The article features the story of mom Tasha Crockett and son Christian, who both benefitted from Head Start and its wraparound support system for families.

http://hcde-texas.org/media/uploads/2019/09/Defender-News_090619.pdf

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Tasha Crockett and her son Christian (left) became two Head Start program graduates.

Head Start helps shape futures of mom, son

Defender News Services

When Tasha Crockett was growing up in Livingston, Texas, her parents enrolled her in the Head Start program to help her develop the reading and academic skills she needed for school.

She returned to April 2000 when her son, Christian, turned 3 years old and was enrolled in the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) Head Start Program in Houston.

"I know I wanted him in the program because it's family-oriented, it helped me grow when I was his age and I knew it would help him, too, especially with his speech development and all," Crockett said.

The program continued to shape her as a parent as well as with the policy council.

"I was going through a divorce at the time and participating with the Head Start Policy Council was comforting by helping with the changes I was going through," Crockett said.

Her involvement with the policy council motivated her to go back to school to obtain a degree in social work. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Houston-Downtown in December 2018 and will receive her master's degree in May 2020 from Stephen F. Austin State University.

As the year concluded for Christian because of the program Head Start offered, he started to receive therapy at age 2, and his therapist continued working with him during the two years he was at the Head Start center. He is now a well-rounded middle schooler and his teachers have said they would have never guessed he had a speech impairment.

HCDE Head Start is now enrolling children at its 17 centers. For more information call 713-579-2320.

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Adult Education Hosts Years of Service Celebration

Adult Education teachers attended a years of service celebration held at Irvington last week to celebrate their years of teaching and employment at HCDE. Those attending included the following:

5 years

Margaret Zadouri
Eloisa Fuentes
Robert Wyand

10 years

Patricia Rojas
Antonio Fuentes
Natalia Guzman
Diana Lerma
Jean McDade

15 years

Carole Martin



SYSTEMIC

ACHIEVEMENT...WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT

Personnel Management

In an effort to:
Ensure that the system for recruiting and selection results in personnel recommendations based on defined needs, goals, priorities and candidate credentials/qualifications; and Encourage, oversee and participate in staff recognition activities.

This week you'll read the story about a cook who works at the La Porte Head Start Center. This cook is also a parent, and we recruited her because she couldn't believe that her daughter was eating salad!



The story goes that Kierra Crawford was so impressed by the quality of learning and the healthy habits her daughter was acquiring that she decided to apply for the cook's job at the center.

Our centers routinely recruit parents for positions because it's an investment in the family. In the process, we gain quality, caring staff who are family focused.

This week you'll also read about our years of service awards

for some of our Adult Education staff who came to Irvington to be honored. Our teachers who are celebrated this year are with us upwards to 30 years. We are proud of them and seek every opportunity to let them know how much they are appreciated!



By recognizing our employees in this manner and by making an effort to hire talented, compassionate employees within our service divisions such as Head Start and Adult Education, I am ensuring that the system for recruiting and selecting results in personnel recommendations based on defined needs, goals, priorities and candidate credentials/qualifications. I am also encouraging, overseeing and participating in staff recognition activities.

HCDE BOARD

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Eric Dick

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Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS: Visible Learning In the Math Classroom September 16, 2019

Board Meeting September 18, 2019

School Finance Council September 20, 2019

ABS WEST Students Award Ceremony October 16, 2019

