

# The CONNECTOR

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



## GROWING TOGETHER

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# The CONNECTOR



## Of Note...

HCDE continues to make a name for itself in Harris County, Texas and around the country. This week, we hosted a Human Trafficking event for superintendents and board members around the region and visited with representatives from the Hanley Foundation. We kick off our new Superintendent Certification program tomorrow.

Tuesday night, HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools, in partnership with Crime Stoppers, hosted the first of two Human Trafficking training programs in compliance with HB 403. This one-hour training is now required for superintendents and board members from traditional ISDs in efforts to help schools prevent, identify and protect children who are at risk of being subjected to human trafficking efforts. As a major metropolitan city with an active port and close proximity to interstates and the Mexican border, Houston is a hot bed for human trafficking. I am proud the Center is taking an active role in helping to make our communities safer and protect our children. The next training is scheduled for Thursday, October 17 at 5 p.m. here at HCDE. While you are not required to attend this training, you are welcome to come if you are interested in learning more about this growing issue without our society.

The Hanley Foundation is a non-profit organization in Florida, dedicated to providing substance abuse prevention and education programs for parents, caregivers and children. They seek to break the cycle of addiction and support families who have been impacted by drugs or alcohol. On Wednesday, two officers from the foundation joined myself, Mr. Parker, Dr. Mays and Dr. Moten to discuss Fortis Academy, the programs we offer and our philosophy of shifting the paradigm from punishment to support for students struggling with addiction. We toured Fortis Academy and ate a great pasta lunch made by the Fortis culinary students. The foundation representatives were very impressed with our program and consider us pioneers in our efforts to support youth in recovery. CEO Jan Cairnes told me, "You are the premiere recovery high school in the United States. Fortis sets the standard to which other recovery high schools should aspire." They also mentioned their desire to replicate the Fortis model across the country.

I took yesterday and today off for some needed personal time, but will return tomorrow to present to the inaugural class of our new Superintendent Certification program. I have been preparing for this presentation all week, as I take great pride in helping the next generation of school leaders. I am looking forward to imparting wisdom to our participants so they can learn from my experiences and know a little more about what this job is about, how it has changed and what I see as its evolution in the years to come.

I plan to enjoy the beautiful weather this weekend as we transition to fall in Houston. I hope you have a relaxing weekend as well.



# BOARD BRIEFS



Team CASE for Kids Teams Up for Breast Cancer Awareness. In October, HCDE employees dress to support breast cancer awareness.



Hadley Foundation leaders visited Fortis Academy this week in anticipation of developing several recovery high schools in West Palm Beach, Florida. The nonprofit is dedicated to prevention, advocacy, education and treatment of substance abuse.



Students and staff alike from ABS West team together to support awareness in October.



Teaching and Learning Center welcomed the Corwin Institute Oct. 6-8 at the Crowne Plaza Houston with 500 attendees. Closing keynote was John Hattie, known for his action-packed workshops and ready-to-use teaching strategies. (Andrea Segraves with Hattie)



View KPRC story: [https://youtu.be/h\\_j3LCRP70Q](https://youtu.be/h_j3LCRP70Q)  
Communications staff delivered another Media Honor Roll 2019 to Rose-Ann Aragon, education reporter at KPRC Channel 2 October 9. Aragon was honored for a story she produced about the Bates Head Start car giveaway.



Students from Fortis Academy practice their culinary skills with deviled eggs for an upcoming event.

# PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## ABS West Construction Update: Imelda Delays but Contractors Conquer

Construction at ABS West could be best described as a roller coaster ride last month as Tropical Storm Imelda arrived, but contractors prevailed and were back on schedule soon after.

Within days of drying out, the school met the milestone of the beginning of “drying in.” Webber Commercial celebrated the milestone by providing lunch for over 40 guests.

A second milestone was the installation of the CenterPoint terminal pole to begin the permanent, powering-up process.

### Progress on the school includes the following:

- Gym roof installation
- Roof decking installation is 80 percent complete
- Exterior/interior stud installation is at 30 percent
- HVAC rough-in is 80 percent complete
- Plumbing rough-in is 50 percent accomplished
- Electric rough-in is 80 percent complete



**WEST**  
Academic & Behavior Center West

**webber**  
commercial  
09-24-2019



**NORTH**  
Academic & Behavior Center West

**webber**  
commercial  
09-24-2019

As the drying in process begins, ideas are forming for the sensory room design. Several administrators visited sensory room installations at Robert Driscoll Elementary in Robstown ISD and Olson Elementary in Port Aransas ISD and brought back ideas and inspiration for design.



# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Head Start Hosting Job Fair Oct. 18

Harris County Department of Education is hosting a job interview fair to recruit teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks to join any of its 15 locations throughout northeast Harris County. The recruitment event will be held Friday, Oct. 18, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd.

“We are looking for highly energetic, passionate individuals who enjoy working with young children to join our team,” said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. “Our employees help transform lives of children and their families, along with making a difference each day.”

Qualifications for Head Start teaching assistant, Early Head Start teacher and Head Start teacher include experience working with young children and an interest in early childhood education. Those who hold child development associate (CDA) degrees are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates can apply online at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) or call 713-696-8287 for information.

HCDE Head Start provides services to facilities in Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Fifth Ward, Fonwood, Humble, J.D. Walker, La Porte, Pugh, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell. Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to families.

Find more information on positions available and qualifications, visit: <https://bit.ly/2Oqnmj5>.

Visit [www.hcde-texas.org/head-start](http://www.hcde-texas.org/head-start) for general information about HCDE Head Start and locations.



# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### Lights On Afterschool! Brings Awareness to Need of Afterschool Daytime Oct. 24

Lights On Afterschool, the national awareness-raising campaign held annually, is celebrated via the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, through several events on Oct. 24.

Magician and motivational speaker Chad Chesmark presents “Lights On! Brains On!” From 8 a.m.–noon at the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington Blvd. The free, inspirational event encourages the use of the subconscious mind. Audience participation is encouraged.

“Achieving life’s full potential and turning dreams into reality is made much easier when you understand how to tap into the unlimited power of your subconscious mind,” the magician said. “Discover how to predict and then create the future of your dreams.”

**Register for the free workshop:** <https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=12658#>

Celebrate Family Literacy with a Folk Music Concert at the Hobby Center Evening of Oct. 24. Families from CASE for Kids Partnership Project campuses are invited to a concert from 7–8 p.m. at Zilkha Hall in the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts featuring folk music performed by local arts organization Musiqa. The interactive musical event features songs from many cultures. Each family receives a collection of books featuring folk tales to promote literacy skills. (The evening event is a Lights On Afterschool activity promoted by CASE for Kids.)



# SYSTEMIC

ACHIEVEMENT...WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT

## Organizational Improvement

In an effort to:

- Ensure that key planning activities within the Department are coordinated and consistent with Board policy and applicable law and that goals and results are communicated as appropriate.
- Organize the central administration in a manner consistent with Department priorities and resources and monitor administrative organization at all levels for effectiveness and efficiency; and
- Oversee procedures to ensure effective and timely compliance with all legal obligations reporting requirements and policies.

As construction at ABS West reaches a midway point and the roofing is nearing completion, we begin the drying-in process and the building takes shape. Time-lapse cameras give us a clear picture of the progress, and we look forward to reaching the goal of our February deadline.



Within our Department, we continue to recruit the best candidates to educate our youngest population as we host the Head Start job fair Oct. 18. We look forward to interviewing several hundred candidates for jobs including teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks to join any of its 15 locations.

Another event that brings us together is the Lights On Afterschool! Event which gathers

families to celebrate music and literature. Afterschool is about keeping families strong as we help keep communities safe. This annual event hosted for our Partnership Project schools on Oct. 24 providers camaraderie between afterschool providers and the families we serve.



Finally, this week we recommended several middle schools who brought pre-teens to go through hurricane-related emergency scenarios with Florida International University staff who are bringing this curriculum to county and city emergency management centers. It helps future generations understand the challenges they will face as future leaders.

These activities correlate with the Board's expectations for me to:

**Develop and implement a clear vision for the Department. Develop and foster an entrepreneurial spirit and understand HCDE's role in the changing educational environment. We assess risks and determine appropriate actions using sound business judgement to provide programs and resources that support educational opportunities. In the event of an emergency, we work in conjunction with county and city authorities to provide resources and services ensuring the safety of Harris County students and HCDE staff.**

## HCDE BOARD

### Board President

Josh Flynn

### Vice President

George Moore

### Board Members

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Digital Citizenship

October 14, 2019

### Learning to Lead

October 16, 2019

### Board Meeting

October 16, 2019

### School Finance Council

October 18, 2019

