

# THE CONNECTOR

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

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## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

### TOP STORIES

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Campuses p.2



Four HCDE Teachers  
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Award p.3



Dan St. Romain to  
Present Series  
on Classroom Behavior p.4





## Of Note...



In many Harris County school districts, a \$50 million capital campaign is not a big deal. But for HCDE? It is truly historic. That is why I am so excited to see our vision for world-class facilities take shape.

Wednesday's workshop detailing the architectural schematics for three new buildings was a great opportunity for administration to discuss not only the design and function of these facilities, but how our program needs and those of our staff and students drive that design. The new AB East will mirror AB West's new campus with a few modifications suggested by staff. This is a very exciting project and will make a huge impression upon our client districts. The new Highpoint Middle School design fits in perfectly with the existing high school, giving the campus a cohesive, connected feel. But it is the new Adult Education building that has emerged as the gem of the entire capital plan. This building will stand as a symbol of HCDE's commitment to being a part of our local community, allowing for a central gathering place for not only our meetings but those of community organizations and groups as needed. I really like how the building is incorporated into the surrounding landscape giving it not only an impressive entrance but a functional parking garage and multi-story building as well.

We will view the planned renovations for the Irvington building in early March. Once completed, these four buildings will surely set HCDE apart from other governmental agencies and provide a world-class environment for our programs and services.

I started the week with ELT on Monday and meetings in preparation for the facility plan workshop. I had several other standing meetings with staff throughout the week. On Thursday, I read virtually to a Humble Head Start class as a SuperMENTor. Ms. Peacock is finalizing plans for board members to read to students. More information will be forthcoming. Seeing the students with huge smiles enjoying the story and full of questions is one my favorite activities every month. I know you will thoroughly enjoy it too!

I wrapped up the week at my NPO office. I will be monitoring the weather this weekend in anticipation of the cold front. Luckily, Monday is a non-student day for Head Start and our schools with staff engaged in planned professional development. So should we need to close or move to remote work for the day due to weather, the impact to our client districts will be minimal.

I look forward to seeing you next week at the Board Retreat at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Don't forget that we are taking a group photo and individual photos before we start at 9 a.m. So please plan to arrive by 8:30 a.m.

Stay warm this weekend!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Collier". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J".



# FACILITIES UPDATE

## Designs for new HCDE campuses become ‘more exciting and a little more real’

As we discussed in the board workshop this week, cre8 Architects presented schematic architectural designs for the construction of Highpoint Middle School, ABS East, and the Adult Education Center.

The schematic drawings, aerial images, and virtual walk-throughs provided a more detailed site plan of the three facilities.

“Every month, this gets more exciting and a little more real,” said Executive Director of Facilities Richard Vela. “We’re in the initial phases of the schematic drawings. This is where you make corrections and recommendations before the final drawings are presented and you move on to the design development phase.”

The ABS East campus will serve students on the southeast side of Harris County and will be nearly identical to the ABS West campus, which was also designed by cre8 Architects and completed last year. Construction is expected to begin during the third quarter of 2021.

Highpoint Middle School will be a one-story building adjacent to Highpoint High School and will feature a new gym, which will be shared by students from both schools.

The existing Adult Education Center, located at 6515 Irvington Blvd., will be razed and rebuilt and will feature an outdoor community area and a four-floor parking garage.

Construction on Highpoint MS and the new Adult Education Center is expected to begin during the last quarter of 2021.



Highpoint Middle School



ABS East Campus



Adult Education Center

# PROGRAM

SCHOOL BUS

## CONNECTIONS

Four HCDE teachers nominated as HAABSE Secondary Teacher of the Year



Four Harris County Department of Education teachers were honored as nominees for the 2021 Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators (HAABSE) Secondary Teacher of the Year at the Teacher Awards & Recognition Ceremony, which was held virtually for the first time in its 33-year history.

James Hilton, Fortis Academy; Kimberly Douglas, ABS West; Remika Bowie, Highpoint School; and Robin Dike, ABS West were among the 244 teachers from the Houston area being honored.

“We are incredibly proud of our nominated educators,” said Julia Andrews, HAABSE president-elect and HCDE’s

director of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. “This is the third year in a row that we’ve been able to acknowledge HCDE’s talented teachers.”

The award was created to recognize the incredible work of educators that impact the lives of minority students in the greater Houston area. Teachers were nominated by their campus principal.

Mayor Sylvester Turner gave opening remarks and thanked the nominated educators for “being a guiding light during these trying times.”

To watch the full event, visit [haabse.org](http://haabse.org).



# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### Popular Educational Consultant Dan St. Romain to Present Three-part Series on Classroom Behavior

Stemming from his popular breakout sessions at this year's Early Childhood Winter Conference, educational consultant Dan St. Romain will be presenting a virtual three-part professional development series for educators on behavioral strategies. The series is named after his book, "Teach Skills and Break Habits: Growth Mindsets for Better Behavior in the Classroom."

"What we have done is respond to the needs of our clients," said Director of Special Projects for the Teaching and Learning Center Andrea Segraves. "Not only are we providing a professional development series on a topic that has been requested by many of our educators, but we are also offering it at a time that is convenient for them."

St. Romain is one of the most popular speakers at ECWC year after year, standing room only.

As a national, independent educational consultant with 30 years of work experience in education, he provides staff development and consultative services to educators and parents working with children at all developmental levels.

During this series, St. Romain will help teachers shift their perspective and look at student behaviors differently by

using behavioral challenges as teachable moments. The series is most applicable to grades pre-K through fifth grade.

"Teachers typically struggle more with behavior issues during the spring semester, said Segraves. "When you think of these challenges in the scope of a pandemic, you start to understand that bad behavior in the classroom – whether virtually or in-person – is exacerbated. We see teachers struggling and know that they need just as much encouragement and support."

In addition to classroom teachers, counselors, assistant principals, behavior consultants, and other individuals who support discipline issues in the school system will find this series beneficial.

The three sessions will take place on February 16, 23, and March 2 and will start at 5 p.m. so staff can attend after the school day has ended.

To register, visit <https://t.co/EJgIDFxnXz?amp=1>. Registration is \$75. Receive a "bring a friend" \$5 discount per person when three or more individuals from the same school register.



## TEACH SKILLS AND BREAK HABITS GROWTH MINDSETS FOR BETTER BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

**DAN St.ROMAIN**  
presented by EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING



# BOARD BRIEFS



**ERICA DAVIS**  
HCDE BOARD TRUSTEE



HCDE Trustee Erica Davis is thankful for the people that have helped her get to where she is today and is driven to do the same for others in the community.

**MICKEY LELAND,**  
a former Congressman and humanitarian, has an HISD campus named after him.





# SYSTEMIC

## ACHIEVEMENT... WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT

**This week, the following Board expectations were met:**

**Superintendent Objective B: Organization Morale**

- Celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges excellence.

**Superintendent Objective H: Board Relation**

- Keeps the board informed of significant issues as they arise, using agreed-upon criteria and procedures for information dissemination.

This week we had an engaging workshop to review and discuss elements of our facilities upgrade plans with cre8 Architects. It is exciting to see the vision for the new buildings. The Adult Education Center will rival any junior college facility. Highpoint Middle School will give a much needed lift to the younger students on the campus and ABS East will be the perfect bookend to our already successful West campus. These new facilities will ensure we can give the finest experience to students for years to come.



Adult Education Center



Highpoint Middle School

Last Friday, the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators honored four of our teachers during their annual Teacher of the Year ceremonies. I continue to be proud of the work done by our staff and am pleased to see other organizations recognize their efforts to make a difference in children's lives.



Finally, our Teaching and Learning Center continues to bring compelling opportunities to teachers and administrators in Harris County. Next week, Dan St. Romain will launch a three-part series of workshops exploring classroom behavior in younger students. Also, the TLC Leadership Cohort Series will continue with Danny Steale, an Alabama Secondary Principal of the Year, discussing winning in the trenches of the daily grind of school administration.



### HCDE BOARD

#### Board President

Eric Dick

#### Vice President

Danny Norris

#### Board Members

David W. Brown

Richard Cantu

Erica Davis

Andrea Duhon

Amy Hinojosa

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### Feb. 19

Board Retreat  
Houston Museum of Natural Science  
8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

#### Feb 22

Equine Therapy Center  
Development Workshop  
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

#### Feb 24

Regular Board Meeting  
1 p.m.