

THE CONNECTOR

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

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 22, 2021

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 21

WEATHERING THE STORM

TOP STORIES

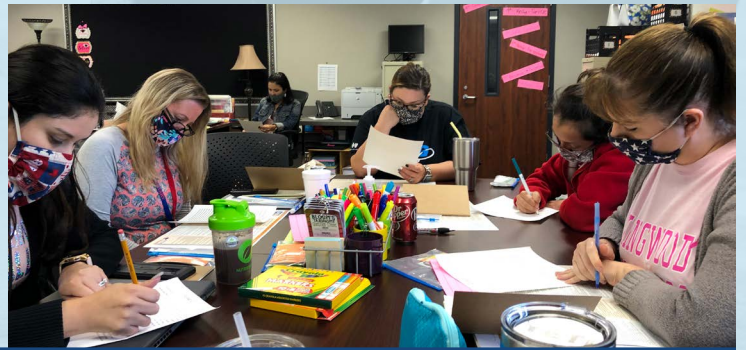
**Winter Storm Causes
Damage at HCDE p.2**



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Porter Elementary p.4**



Of Note...



Just when we thought that our community was coming out of “unprecedented times” with the pandemic, Texas gets hit with weather that hasn’t appeared in our region for more than 30 years. Winter Storm Uri, which blanketed much of Texas and the central US, certainly wreaked havoc on Harris County with power outages, pipe breaks and single digit temperatures.

I hope you and your families were able to stay warm and safe during the worst of the storm and are not dealing with too many headaches in terms of damage to your homes or those of love ones.

HCDE came through the storm in good condition. We had a few burst pipes at two Head Start centers and one external pipe at Highpoint. But at the Sheffield Head Start center we did sustain major water damage from burst pipes and that facility will be closed while we make the necessary repairs. Other than that, our buildings had no damage and were ready for us to return to work this week.

Prior to the storm, looking at the forecast and watching the actions of local districts, I decided it was best to close HCDE last week to keep our employees and staff safe. I extended the closure through Monday to ensure our staff had time to recover from any impacts to their homes/property as a result of the storm.

I started the week with our Equine Center workshop on Monday. Thank you for your participation and candor during our discussion. I appreciate your perspective and look forward to continuing our dialogue.

On Tuesday and Thursday I met with two Harris County Superintendents to discuss how HCDE supports their students and staff. I make the rounds of local superintendents each year and these relationships support HCDE not only locally but at the legislature as well.

I had several internal meetings during the week and today we began our FY 22 budget process by meeting with division budget managers. We are maintaining a prudent outlook on finances as we continue to experience lingering impacts of the pandemic. I look forward to seeing you next week for our workshop on Wednesday to review renovation plans for the Irvington building, immediately followed by our rescheduled board meeting at 1 p.m.

In legislative news, on Thursday, HB 23 and HB 31 were referred to the House Public Education Committee. If you will recall, Valoree Swanson of Spring filed these bills in November and they specifically impact the future of HCDE. This is a normal part of the legislative process and I will notify you if these bills get scheduled for a hearing.

We are working with Cathy Minberg to determine her availability for the board retreat, so be on the lookout for communication from Ms. Godbout about potential dates.

Have a relaxing weekend.

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

FACILITIES UPDATE

Winter Storm Causes Damage at HCDE

Last week all of Harris County experienced a truly once-in-a-lifetime event with Winter Storm Uri. HCDE closed for the week for the safety of students and staff, but many employees experienced power outages, lack of water and freezing temperatures in their homes.

HCDE buildings were not immune to the impact of the weather with several facilities losing power and a few experiencing minor plumbing issues. But overall, HCDE facilities emerged from the storm in good condition.

Once the worst of the storm had passed, facilities crews began to assess the damage and make repairs as needed. These repairs included fixing burst pipes at Baytown and La Porte Head Start centers and repairing an exterior pipe at Highpoint School. For HCDE to have only minor damage at three sites is a great testament to the quality of our buildings!

Students at our special schools and all HCDE staff returned on Tuesday, as the weather reverted to typical Houston warmth and sunshine. However, Head Start conducted remote learning this week to allow for all the centers to regroup and handle any minor issues from the storm.



Unfortunately, the Sheffield Head Start center sustained significant damage from burst pipes and will be closed for several months while facilities staff coordinates repairs.

SEE THE IMPACT

HCDE's Awareness Campaign Continues to Make an Impression

HCDE's awareness campaign, See the Impact, continues to make an impression upon our location community. In January, the campaign garnered more than 7.8 million impressions, primarily through rotating billboards, the Community Impact insert and a 5-second TV billboard running on KTRK, ABC Channel 13.

“In January, the campaign garnered more than 7.8 million impressions”



The TV spot and billboards continue this month, providing great exposure for the HCDE brand. The schedule below is for the TV spot this week, with the highlighted times boasting high viewership.

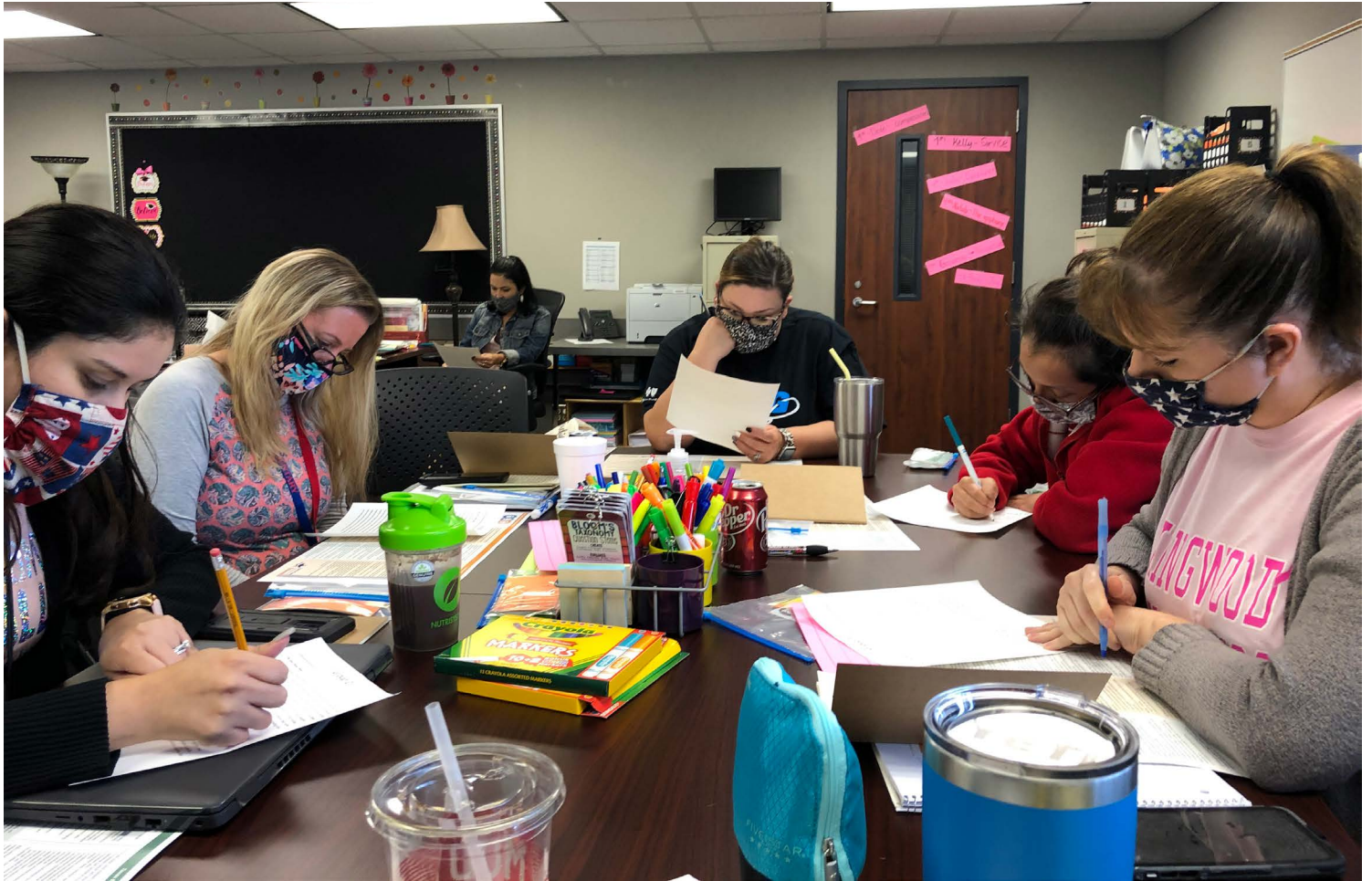
Weekday	Date	Program (Placed*)	Air Time
Tuesday	02/23/21	Eyewitness News 3p	3:22 PM
Tuesday	02/23/21	Eyewitness News 6p	6:17 PM
Wednesday	02/24/21	Eyewitness News 3p	3:12 PM
Wednesday	02/24/21	Eyewitness News 5:30a	5:27 AM
Thursday	02/25/21	Eyewitness News 5:30a	5:32 AM
Thursday	02/25/21	Eyewitness News 6:30pm M-F	6:47 PM
Friday	02/26/21	Eyewitness News 5:30a	5:27 AM
Friday	02/26/21	Eyewitness News 5:30a	5:41 AM
Friday	02/26/21	Eyewitness News 10p	10:15 PM
Saturday	02/27/21	Eyewitness News 9a Sat	10:16 AM
Saturday	02/27/21	Eyewitness News 10p Sa-Su	10:09 PM
Sunday	02/28/21	Eyewitness News 6a Su	6:55 AM
Sunday	02/28/21	Eyewitness News 8a Sun	8:10 AM

Social media ads on Facebook also gained attention in January, reaching 162,000 individuals, with nearly 27,000 of those actively engaging with the post (like, share, repost, etc.).

“This insert will target more than 600,000 households in Harris County”

We are also gearing up for the next insert into the Community Impact newspapers in April. This insert will target more than 600,000 households in Harris County with an 8-page publication featuring information about Adult Education, our AB Schools and Fortis Academy.

CONNECTIONS



A Year with Porter Elementary

TLC's Curriculum Director for English language arts and social studies has had an opportunity this year that not many people in professional development get: Kelly Tummy has been able to spend a year with one campus to effect systemic change.

Nicole Land, principal of Porter Elementary in New Caney ISD, reached out to Tummy in September asking for support and coaching for her language arts teachers in grades K-5. She was brought into the IR (Improvement Required) campus to help make instructional changes to improve the quality of instruction at Porter Elementary. Land asked if, "the trainer who did our district wide new ELAR TEKS training was available," and Tummy's schedule allowed her to be there 3 days per month.

This year-long contract has shown growth in teacher planning capabilities, deepening of understanding in the new standards, and stronger collaboration across the grade levels. The teachers are pairing their district curriculum with Tummy's Magnet TEKS Planning Structure to see more connections in the new standards and to use those standards to guide their planning. The training wraps up in April and Tummy is already talking with the principal about extending this support throughout next year to keep the campus momentum going. One of the hallmarks of the Teaching and Learning Center's training model is to offer this kind of focused support for campuses year to year to help sustain teacher and student success.

SYSTEMIC

ACHIEVEMENT...WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT

This week, the following Board expectations were met:

Superintendent Objective D: Community Relations

- Establishes and maintains a program of public relations to keep the public well informed of the activities of the Department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and the community.

This week we continue to recover from the historically devastating winter storm Uri. A number of staff from across the Department are still without water as they work to repair damage to their homes.

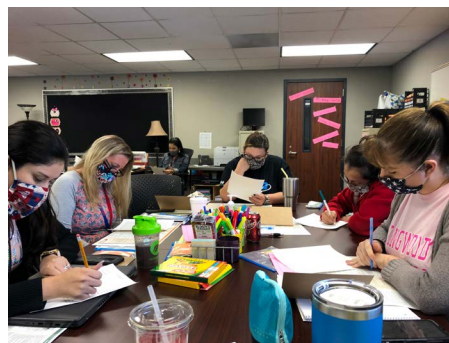


Most of our facilities held up well to the frigid temperatures. We suffered minor damage at two Head Start Centers and Highpoint, but we did have significant damage at the Sheffield Head Start Center, which will be closed for an extended period to allow Facilities staff to effect repairs.

HCDE continues to be noticed by the residents of Harris County. In January, we received nearly 8 million impressions on billboards, TV spots and the Community Impact insert for our Awareness Campaign. We are currently finalizing another 8-page insert to be distributed to more than 600,000 households in the Community Impact newspapers in April.



Finally, our Teaching and Learning Center is making long-term impacts with the districts we serve. Kelly Tummy, Curriculum Director for English Language Arts and Social Studies has been working closely throughout the year with teachers at Porter Elementary in New Caney ISD to improve instruction at the IR (Improvement Required) school.



The sustained personal interaction and reinforcement provided by this ongoing training model helps ensure teacher and student success.

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. 27

A Call for Reality Pedagogy with Dr. Christopher Emdin
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

March 3

Board Workshop
Administration Building
Renovation Plan
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Board Meeting
1 p.m.

March 5

Pulling Together -
Equity Symposium
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.