

# *The* **Connector**

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

*From the office of* **JAMES COLBERT, JR. | SUPERINTENDENT**



## *Of Note...*

In opening, I take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the Board Retreat and Training activities over the past two Saturdays. I appreciate you sacrificing your family and personal time to immerse yourselves into the inner-workings of the HCDE Board of Trustees during this calibration process. Fully recognizing your leadership from a governance perspective, I remain excited about our team of eight. Trainings like this exemplify our committed efforts in training and supporting our county school districts, and in building an even stronger organization.

Last weekend I attended the TABSE conference here in Houston, where I presented to aspiring superintendents. It was well attended by leaders in education from Texas. I also attended a legislative summit in Austin earlier this week where I represented HCDE at a workshop structured for superintendents and legislators, as well as at other platforms on public education. All of the sessions I attended were valuable and informative. I am hopeful that HCDE gained equity by being represented and having a voice in the legislative caucus affecting public education in our state.

On Wednesday, we hosted a forum for Special Education directors and related professionals from Harris County school districts. I addressed this group of unique and distinguished educators. Other presenters included attorneys from one of the premier education law firms in our area- Walsh Anderson Gallegos Green & Trevino, P.C. The event was well attended by experts from our area school districts.

Yesterday, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools hosted a meeting for school district attendance and truancy officers. The presenters, along with robust discussion, shed great light on the expectations and changes pertaining to student school attendance in Texas.

Also, this week, I had the pleasure of meeting with the superintendent of Spring Branch. It was a productive discussion and a valuable meeting. To that end, last week I encountered numerous superintendents from across the state but had a chance to spend quality time with several Harris County area superintendents which allowed me the opportunity to further explore our continued, and possibly expanded, roles within their respective districts.

Again, thank you for your interest in HCDE and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend.

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

**2-3** Program Connections

**4** Campus Connections

**5** Business Connections

**5** Community Connections

**6** Board Spotlight

# PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## HCDE divisions gain 33 awards at Texas School Public Relations Association Conference

Harris County Department of Education teams earned 33 awards at the Texas School Public Relations Association 53rd Annual Conference held February 23-26 in San Antonio, Texas. Altogether, Client Development Services, Communications and Public Information and Technology earned one “best of category,” 13 gold awards, 12 silver awards and seven bronze awards.



The association announced that 970 entries were received this year. TSPRA is comprised of 850 members who are primarily public information and communications professionals who serve public school districts and education organizations of Texas.

The top award earned by HCDE was for a video produced for the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning, or CASE for Kids. The Out-of-School Time Message was produced by videographer Daniel Villarreal. The video showcases various stakeholders who support afterschool and features several afterschool programs in greater Harris County: <http://youtu.be/4o3SgLzpvbw>.

Thirteen gold awards were presented. Three were delivered to Client Development Services for the Choice Partners Leader's Choice Newsletter; its invitation to the HCDE Healthy School Environments Symposium; and a marketing campaign for Choice Partners Cooperative Annual Vendor Exhibit.

Communications and Public Information (CPI) division earned five gold awards for the HCDE Website Marketing Campaign, the Early Childhood Winter Conference special event planning, the Head Start Annual Report, the Happy Holidays Card and the HCDE Employee Handbook. CPI earned three gold awards for CASE for Kids deliverables, including the Girls on the Run photo, the Find Yourself in Afterschool flier and the Pathways to Success brochure.

Two gold awards were also presented to the Technology division for the Jason Project/Pasadena ISD's Jackson Middle School and the CASE Out-of-School Time Message videos.

## It's Official

As of February 24, 2015, Cirrus Learn® is now a registered service mark of Harris County Department of Education. HCDE may now use the federal ® mark on all advertisements, documents, and materials.



## Therapy Services

Last week, HCDE was represented by Therapy Services at a 3-day conference in Austin for the Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education. The conference provides professional development on research, promising practices, and legal aspects of supporting students with special needs.

## ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

### Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 03.01** | Balanced Literacy: 4-Part Online Course (24 credits) March 1, 2015 - May 1, 2015
- 03.01** | Teaching Methods for Diverse Learners: March 1, 2015 - April 1, 2015
- 03.02** | STAAR: Relevant Review for Math Teachers - Intervention to Action (Grades 3-EOC)
- 03.02** | HCDE TExES Principal EC-12 Test Preparation Online
- 03.03** | STAAR: Relevant Review for Math Teachers - Intervention to Action (Grades 3-EOC) Repeat session
- 03.03** | Student Misconceptions in Grades K-4 Science
- 03.03** | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - ART/MUSIC/THEATRE/PE/HEALTH Sessions ONLY
- 03.04** | Math Leadership Group Meeting
- 03.04** | Gifted and Talented: Identifying and Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students (6 hours G/T credit)
- 03.05** | Student Misconceptions in Grade 4-8 Science
- 03.05** | Bilingual/ESL Leadership Group Meeting
- 03.06** | One Size Does Not Fit All Programming
- 03.07** | Test Prep Series for TExES BTLPT Exam



# PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## Identifying and Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

Huffman ISD's Amanda Pike is among educators who attended a training held at HCDE March 4, to gain skills needed to identify gifted traits in English language learners, minority students, and other students often overlooked for GT identification. The workshop was hosted by Dr. Patricia Morales, HCDE bilingual/ESL specialist, and presented by Mark Brady, GT specialist.



## Math Leadership Group Meets to Align Math Assessment Items to New Math TEKS

Math Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan hosted the Math Leadership Group on March 4 with 40 educators attending. Attendees formed elementary and secondary groups to align math assessment items to the new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).



## SCENES FROM TASBE CONFERENCE

Superintendent James Colbert Presents at the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators Conference



## CASE

**City Funds Additional \$150,000 for City Connections: CASE for Kids To Continue to Promote and Administer Program**

CASE for Kids received news from the City of Houston this week that it will provide an additional \$150,000 for summer and out-of-school time enrichment programs for youth in all 11 city council districts. Funding is contingent upon each district having spent the previously allotted \$45,000 it received in 2014. New funding is available for projects in each district while funds last. Funding must be spent by June 30.



## HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Stafford MSD Education Foundation is holding its 5th Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament on Monday, March 16, 2015. Sponsorships and donations are tax deductible, and benefit SMSD students. For more information click on the link, <https://staffordeducationfoundation.revtrak.net/tek9.asp?pg=products&grp=5>

# BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

## Business Office Leads with GFOA

HCDE has participated in the Budget Committee Practice on Resiliency for local governments. This is an initiative to provide best practices for local governments to deal with fiscal and budgetary challenges. The committee meets every six months at their conferences, and best practices will be disseminated nationwide to governments that are members of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

# CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

## ABC West Students Benefit from College Day

College and trade school recruiters visited ABC West on February 26. Students learned about the admissions process, financial aid assistance, and career opportunities. Students were supplied with enrollment packages, brochures and souvenirs from the schools. English teacher and high school advisor Alexandra Sellers organized the event. To date, the students have toured the Universal Technical Institute, Texas Southern University, and the University of Houston, according to Principal Victor Keys. **Photo:** (left) Milton Smith, University of Houston Downtown; Linda Parrish of Tulsa Welding; and Gabriel Zambrano from Spartan Aeronautics



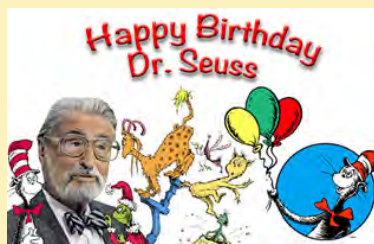
## Students, Faculty, and Staff Celebrate Black History Month at ABC West

The students, faculty, and staff celebrated Black History Month at ABC-West during the last week of February. Students presented information about black Americans who have made an impact on the lives of people around the world. Students also learned about our Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., who is the first black superintendent at Harris County Department of Education. After the program, participants enjoyed ethnic food. Principal Victor Keys reminded the students they were celebrating the contributions of black Americans as they also celebrated the world's diversity.



## ABC-East Celebrates Dr. Seuss

ABC-East celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday through encouraging students to read his books that are filled with fun and laughs for young children and adults alike. Each day this week was filled with different Dr. Seuss-themed and inspired events. Festivities concluded with a door-decorating contest.



## 25 HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Aldine

Alief

Channelview

Clear Creek

Crosby

Cy-Fair

Dayton

Deer Park

Galena Park

Goose Creek

Houston

Huffman

Humble

Katy

Klein

La Porte

New Caney

Pasadena

Pearland

Sheldon

Spring

Spring Branch

Stafford

Tomball

Waller



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## CASE for Kids Hosts Opportunity Fair March 27 at Irvington

CASE for Kids hosts its CASE for Kids Opportunity Fair March 27 at Harris County Department of Education. Two free information sessions will be held from 10-11:30 a.m. or from 12:30-2 p.m. as CASE for Kids expands to provide resources for program providers for school-age children at day cares, summer camps and afterschool programs.

Services for providers will include funding for out-of-school time activities



## HCDE Hosts Appreciation Luncheon for Area Special Education Directors

HCDE hosted a luncheon March 4 to honor special education directors around the county and to introduce them to Harris County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. Guest speakers included attorneys Jim Walsh and Paula Maddox Roalson with Walsh, Anderson, Gallegos, Green and Trevino, P.C.

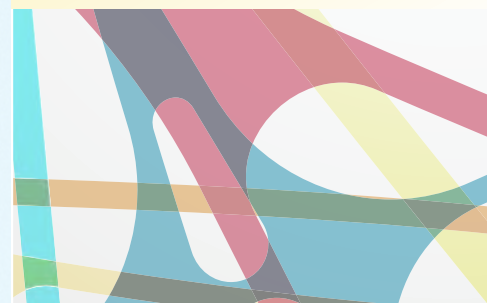
Colbert said the luncheon provided the opportunity for Therapy Services, Special Schools, and Instructional Support Services divisions to personally thank special education leaders for the work they do for students in our community with special needs. Given his training and background with special education, the superintendent was able to share his unique perspective about his appreciation for their leadership.



## Center for Safe and Secure Schools meeting brings awareness to truancy officer safety, human trafficking in schools



During the Center for Safe and Secure School's March 5 Operations Board Meeting, district safety officers and operations staff were invited to discuss safety concerns expressed by district truancy officers. HCDE's Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Jimmy Wynn gave the group an update on legislative issues being introduced this session related to school safety and truancy. In addition, a presentation on human trafficking awareness was presented by Misa Nguyen, director of programs at United Against Human Trafficking. Human trafficking is a hot topic in the Houston area, and districts are asking for help in how to identify it in their schools.





# BOARD SPOTLIGHT

**THANK YOU** for your participation  
in the HCDE Board of Trustees  
Retreat and Training!



## HCDE BOARD

**BOARD PRESIDENT**  
POSITION 2, PRECINCT 4  
**Angie Chesnut**

**BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT**  
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**Marvin W. Morris**  
*Position 1, Precinct 2*

**Don Sumners**  
*Position 7, At Large*

**Diane Trautman**  
*Position 3, At Large*

**Michael Wolfe**  
*Position 5, At Large*

## Upcoming Board Events:

**HCDE Board of Trustees  
Special Call Meeting**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2015  
2:00 pm -5:00 pm**

6300 Irvington Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77022

Small Board Conference Room

Together  
Everyone  
Achieves  
More

