

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...

I trust that each of you remained 'high and dry' during the recent torrential deluges across the city and county. As you know, we were closed on Tuesday due to area flooding across the city and county. Unfortunately, as rivers and bayous continue to crest above flood stage, regional flooding is expected to continue into next week. I am happy to report that we haven't experienced any damage at any of our facilities as a result of this week's weather event, thus far.

I am pleased to report that we have received notification from Education Commissioner Michael Williams that the Texas Education Agency is granting a waiver to all area school districts that were forced to close because of flooding and other weather-related challenges on this past Tuesday. Because districts were forced to close on the brink of the semester's end, the TEA waiver allows districts to forego having to make up the missed day. This decision by the Commissioner eases the financial and contractual challenges that accompany weather-related school-district closures.

Upon our return to the office on Wednesday, our Therapy Services division hosted its annual Staff Appreciation Day. Over 100 physical, occupational, and music therapists, along with support staff, were recognized and celebrated for another year of work in our client districts. It was an excellent event and offered a great opportunity for me to address this unique group within our employee population. Hats off to this group for the wonderful work they perform across Harris County.

To update you on the status of the employees affected by the Reduction in Force (RiF) that you approved during the last Board Meeting, several of them have applied for vacant positions within the Department. Our Human Resources division is assisting at least one employee with obtaining Special Education certification. That employee will be utilizing tools available through the Instructional Support Services division to that end. Human Resources staff is continuing to work with the remaining staff to see what, if any other, opportunities within the Department may exist in an effort to transition most of those displaced staff.

As we bring the month of May to a close, Houston and New Caney ISDs are wrapping up their academic sessions today. The remaining 23 Harris County school districts will end school on various days next week. Our campus staff is in symphony with our clients districts as we all focus on year-end logistics.

On that note, with the exception of staff working in programs that are operating over the summer months, HCDE will return to its ordinary summer flex schedule, beginning the second week in June until early August. During that time, our office hours will be 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and closed on Friday. As usual, staff needing to work on Fridays during the summer will be able to do so at the North Post Oak (NPO) location.

The summer flex schedule allows for maximum energy efficiency by our ability to conserve energy at the majority of our locations during the hot Houston summer months. This business decision allows for maximum savings without sacrificing either service or program delivery, making a great impact from a budgetary perspective.

In closing, please be reminded that the Board Budget and Policy Meetings will be held next Wednesday, June 3, at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., respectively. Both meetings will be held in the Small Board Conference Room.

Again, stay safe and dry and have a great weekend. As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

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PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Therapy Services Staff Appreciation Day Held May 27

Therapy Services recognized its employees with Staff Appreciation Day 2015 at the Irvington Conference Center.

About 150 physical, occupational and music therapists, and support staff gathered for a day of team building and celebration to the theme: Moving Mountains, Transforming Lives Once

Child at a Time. In 2014-2015, Therapy Services fulfilled 24 contracts, serving children in 18 school

districts, three charter schools, one special education cooperative, a private school, and HCDE's Early Childhood Intervention Keep Pace program. The year of success was acknowledged by Therapy Services Director Jean Polichino. Photos on SmugMug: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/TherapyServices/2015-Staff-Appreciation/>



ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

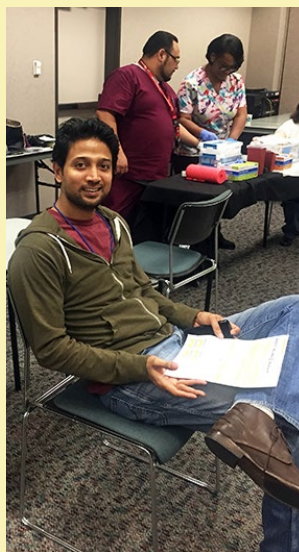
05.26 | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - ART/MUSIC/THEATRE/PE/HEALTH Sessions ONLY

05.27 | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

Ongoing | Classroom Management: Online Course June 1, 2015 to July 31, 2015

Health Matters: Human Resources Hosts Blood Screening at Irvington, NPO

Human Resources hosted blood screenings through its collaborative called Health Matters at both the Irvington and North Post Oak locations. The screenings are part of a health and fitness campaign. They were free for Aetna ActiveCare 1-HD and ActiveCare 2 health coverage, and discounted for all other plans.



HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: DAYTON ISD



Dayton ISD releases a new, free, downloadable app. It allows students, parents and district employees to stay up to date about upcoming district and school events using their mobile device. Download the app: <http://www.myschoolway.com/dayton>.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids End-of-Year Celebration Highlights Achievements

CASE for Kids hosted an end-of-year celebration to recognize partners and afterschool staff at various CASE-funded programs for the 2014-15 school year. By the end of this summer, CASE for Kids will have reached 10,000 Harris County students through out-of-school time. Special recognition was given to HCDE's Video Production Team with the "Internal Support Award."



CASE for Kids collaborators in agencies and school districts were also lauded and awarded for extraordinary service delivery. Special awards went to Williams Company for support of Energy City of the Future Competition and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services employee Corey Garza for support services. 21st CCLC Site Coordinator of the Year went to Kia Reddix, Sharpstown International School in HISD. 21st CCLC program Innovative Family Engagement Award went to Roberts Road Elementary in Waller ISD. Partnership Project awards went to Leslie Hancock of Wharton Academy as the Site Coordinator of the Year. The Innovative Family Engagement Award went to Monahan Elementary, Sheldon ISD. Outstanding site of the year for 21st Century was awarded to Leon Sablatura Middle School in Pearland ISD. Outstanding Site of the Year for Partnership Project was awarded to Stehlik Intermediate, Aldine ISD. The Afterschool Initiative Nonprofit Residency Award went to 5 Works, a nonprofit which provides programming in apartment complexes.

Photos on SmugMug:

<http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/CASE/2015-End-of-Year-Celebration/>

HCDE Head Start Receives \$5,000 from Bechtel Oil Gas & Chemical, Linde Engineering to Support Pre-K Literacy Program at J.D. Walker Center in Baytown

Thank you cards, hugs, and songs of celebration were plentiful as pre-k students and staff at Harris County Department of Education's J.D. Walker Head Start in Baytown gathered to thank Bechtel Oil Gas & Chemical for a \$2,500 donation and a matching \$2,500 donation from Linde Engineering to support literacy. The ceremony included a check to be presented by Bechtel Oil Gas & Chemical officials on May 21, from 1- 2 p.m., at J.D. Walker Head Start, 7316-A Wade Rd.



Bechtel Oil Gas & Chemical is a global engineering, project management and construction company. It is headquartered in San Francisco with an office located in Houston. Linde Engineering, headquartered in Germany, is a worldwide technology partner for plant engineering and construction.

Funds from the donation to HCDE Head Start J.D. Walker will support a male role model literacy project called SuperMENTors Read by supplying books to the program. The donation also supports book purchases for a family reading program called Read and Rise. The event was covered by the Baytown Sun. See the story and photo: www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HeadStart/BaytownSun_052715.pdf



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

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

MOTTO

HCDE...Always Educating

MISSION STATEMENT

Harris County Department of Education supports Harris County by enriching educational opportunities and providing value through services.

GOALS

GOAL 1:

Impact education by responding to the evolving needs of Harris County

GOAL 2:

Deliver value to Harris County by utilizing resources in an ethical, transparent, and fiscally responsible manner

GOAL 3:

Advocate for all learners by using innovative methods to maximize students' potential.

GOAL 4:

Provide cost-savings to school districts by leveraging tax dollars

GOAL 5:

Recruit and maintain a high-quality professional staff

Adopted by the HCDE Board of Trustees at its April 21, 2015 meeting.

HCDE BOARD

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Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe

Position 5, At Large

Upcoming Board Events:

Tuesday, June 3, 2015

Small Board

Conference Room

9:00 a.m.- Budget Meeting

10:30 a.m.- Policy Meeting

Tuesday,

June 16, 2015

1:00 p.m.

June Board Meeting

