

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...

It was a great week at HCDE. For several months, the Department stared down the barrel of a gun, Senate Bill 1216 (SB1216), which called for our abolishment. Although SB1216 was modified to send HCDE into a Sunset review process, it did not survive the legislative process. Having said that, we have much work to do to ensure that we continue to evolve as we meet the needs of the students and school districts across Harris County. In doing so, we minimize a future threat to our existence.

On Tuesday, in a memo to every employee, I provided an overview of the outcome of SB 1216, commended the Board on the time you spent during thoughtful deliberations relative to our refreshed mission and goals, and I also informed them of the minor tweaks and changes to the Department's organizational chart, by releasing a copy of the revised chart. By doing this, I provided a glimpse of how I plan to move the Department forward, and I am pleased to have made the necessary adjustments within the organization that I believe will allow us to soar even higher, and exceed your expectations.

As yesterday marked the end of the academic year for all remaining school districts except for Channelview, which ends its session today, our programs have remained in full gear. Our Head Start division celebrated the end of its year through a team-building event last Friday. Our 19 CASE for Kids AmeriCorps members are committed to work in summer out-of-school time programs with area at-risk, refugee youth. The Department hosted the Dianne Bynum Administrative Support Services Conference this week with over 200 attendees present, and Head Start hosted a job fair for teaching assistants.

On another important note, we hosted a Truancy Update for truancy officers yesterday. This meeting was most timely, as it provided pertinent information with respect to the recently passed legislation surrounding truancy laws in the state of Texas. We plan to host a summit on this same issue as we move toward the summer months. As you can see, we are continuing to make our mark in the greater community that supports public education.

Also, to that end, I met with two Houston City Council Members this week. Both meetings were productive, and were part of my commitment to network with key officials across the city, county, and state in an effort to continue to fortify HCDE's relationships within the community. I am scheduled to meet with another city council member next week.

I take this opportunity to extend congratulations to Trustee Erica Lee Carter and family on the birth of her babies, daughter Ellison and son Roy, III. From my family to hers, best wishes! (Please get a sneak peek of the babies on the back cover of this issue of **The Connector**.)

Thanks to all of you who attended Wednesday's Budget and Policy meetings. Your input toward both of those processes is essential and we appreciate your time in those efforts.

In closing, please be reminded that next week begins the Department's summer flex schedule. As discussed before, this schedule allows us to conserve financial and energy resources during the hottest, most expensive months of the year—from an electricity cost perspective. During the summer flex schedule, HCDE will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The main location will be closed on Friday, while the North Post Oak (NPO) location will be open to accommodate the needs of divisions that must remain open on Friday to meet the needs of clients.

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

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PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Celebrates End-of-Year at Mardi Gras Themed Team-Building Event

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.



19 CASE for Kids AmeriCorps Members to Work in Summer Out-of-School Time Programs With Area At-Risk, Refugee Youth

Nineteen AmeriCorps members took the pledge last month to work in summer out-of-school time programs with at-risk and refugee youth in Harris County. The 10 weeks of community service and working with youth will undoubtedly leave them with lifetime impressions.

"When AmeriCorps members fulfill their terms of service, the experiences help them cultivate who they are and who they can become," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning for Kids, or CASE for Kids. "Many of them are contemplating service careers like teaching or medical care, and these experiences with community help them explore possibilities." AmeriCorps members assist with service projects and teach established curriculum developed by CASE for Kids. Members will be working in nine community- and school-based sites throughout Harris County, including a site which serves refugee youth and their integration into society through the refugee support organization, Amaanah Refugee Services.

The quarter-time members must fulfill a 10-week commitment in summer afterschool programs, providing direct services to Harris County youth in grades elementary through middle school. Members receive a modest monthly stipend and tuition reimbursement for their service to the community via a grant from OneStar Foundation.

ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- Ongoing** | Classroom Management: Online Course June 1, 2015 to July 31, 2015
- 06.01** | HCDE TExES Principal EC-12 Test Preparation Online
- 06.01** | TExES Special Education K-12 Certification Test Preparation (June - July, 2015)
- 06.01** | Teaching Methods for Diverse Learners: June 1, 2015 - July 1, 2015
- 06.01** | Balanced Literacy: 4-Part Online Course (24 credits) June 1, 2015 - August 1, 2015
- 06.01** | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191)-All Content Areas
- 06.01** | Operations Board Quarterly Meeting
- 06.01** | Test Prep Series for TExES Generalist EC-6 Exam (#191) - ELAR Sessions ONLY
- 06.03** | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting
- 06.04** | School Finance Council
- 06.04** | Attendance Officer's Share Session Legislative Update

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Hosts Job Fair for Teaching Assistants



About 40 job candidates attended the Head Start teaching assistant recruitment event on May 28 at Irvington. Head Start is hiring new teaching assistants as it expands in Baytown to include Early Head Start students ages birth to 3.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE hosts Dianne Bynum Administrative Support Services Conference

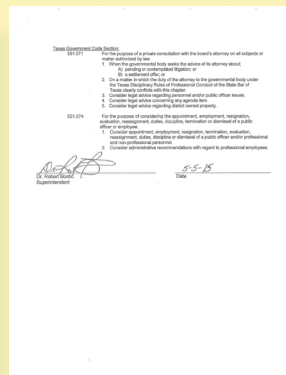
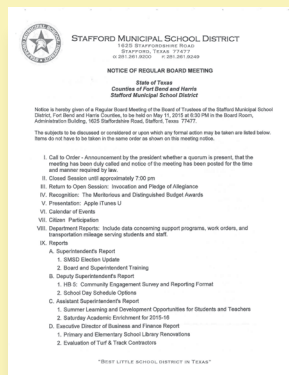
The Dianne Bynum Administrative Support Services Conference was held at HCDE on May 28 with 215 attendees participating. The event supports administrative assistants across Harris County and is co-sponsored by the Department of Family and Protective Services, Houston Community College, and Texas Southern University. The conference features workshops for clerical and administrative support personnel, and also honors them for their services. Several booths with goods from local entrepreneurs were prominent within the conference center. HCDE administrative staff was allowed to attend the conference free of charge.



BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Business Services Acknowledged for Business Awards Assistance with Stafford Municipal School District

Business Services received an official thank you from Stafford Municipal School district for assistance in helping the district gain two financial transparency awards for 2014-2015. Those awards are from the Association of School Board Officials International and the Government Finance Officers Association. The district sent a certificate of thanks to Assistant Superintendent of Finance Jesus Amezcua.



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

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Seven Seniors Recognized at ABC West Graduation 2015 among Tears and Cheers

Graduation at ABC West on June 3 included pomp and circumstance, tears from staff and parents and smiles from the five young men crossing the room to gain their diplomas. Graduates include Amr Ahmed, Joshua Goldsberry, Alan Guerra, David Mullen, Andre Pierson, Marquis Weatherspoon, and Ashley Williams.

Also recognized were students graduating from middle school: Jason Gehring, De'Joine Hunt, Jonathan Livingston, Juan Rodriguez, and Tyler Tojza. Elementary graduates include Josephy Agreda, Angel Marroquin, and De John Clark.

"The faculty and staff of ABC West would like to thank our parents and guardians for the opportunity to educate and nurture our Class of 2015 graduates," said Dr. Victor Keys, principal. Dr. Dee Mattox Hall gave the commencement speech which centered around the word "opportunity." Other presenters included Malcolm Greer, Taajwar Ali, Desmond Pettitt, Stephanie Lewis-Stamps, and Gaylynn Sanders.



HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: HUFFMAN ISD



Huffman ISD offers a free, summer reading program for current students in grades pre-k through 3 at the Copeland Elementary/Huffman Intermediate Library, 24405 E. Lake Houston Pkwy. The program is offered every Monday in June from 10 a.m.-noon and features prizes and free activities. Details: <http://www.huffmanisd.net/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=22909>



T together
E everyone
A achieves
M more

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

It's a girl! It's a boy! Trustee Erica Lee Carter and her husband proudly welcome the birth of their children—daughter Ellison Bennett Carter (“Elle” or “Ella”), and son Roy Lee Carter, III (“R.C.”). The babies weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces and 5 pounds, 8 ounces, respectively, at birth, and were 18 and 19 inches long. The babies were born on Thursday, May 28. Mom and babies are doing well. Congratulations to Dr. and Mrs. Roy L. Carter, Jr. on the arrival of their little bundles of joy!



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Upcoming Board Events:

**Tuesday,
June 16, 2015
1:00 p.m.
June Board Meeting**

