

# 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's been another progressive week at HCDE. My Executive Leadership Team and I began the week with a leadership retreat at DePelchin Children's Center. The setting was perfect for introspective discussion and the exchange of forward-moving ideas. I charged each member with goals and expectations for the new academic year and beyond, and I gave each a set of directives to be carried out within defined timeframes. It was a productive meeting for me, and for the group as a whole. It was an ideal opportunity to refocus, recalibrate, and rejuvenate. As a team, we are laser-beam focused on the mission and goals of the organization.

In the teaching and learning realm this week, science teachers gained a better understanding of the chemical industry through a summer workshop hosted by HCDE, and sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council. The training equipped teachers with quality information directly from industry leaders to apply in the secondary academic setting. Industry experts, along with academic science specialists, facilitated a field trip to the Houston Ship Channel. A Dow Chemical Company presenter discussed the importance of hydraulic fracking and the boom it has created. Teachers from across the county gained a lot from this experience through BASF Corporation, Bayer Material Science, Chevron Phillips Chemical Co., The Dow Chemical Company, Eastman Chemical Company, Formosa Plastics Corporation, INEOS Olefins & Polymers USA, Kaneka, and TOTAL Petrochemicals USA, Inc. HCDE continues to partner with the community that supports public education.

As it relates to bridging industry and education, this week I attended a meeting of UpSkill Houston Construction which is a sub-committee of the Greater Houston Partnership. The meeting was composed of 20 leaders in the commercial and industrial communities. My purpose for attending the meeting was to advocate on behalf of our Adult Education population by exploring how HCDE can meet some of the critical needs of today's local workforce by utilizing our Adult Education students.

On Wednesday of this week, I attended a UIL meeting in Austin where I asked to serve on the interview committee for the Athletic Director for the State of Texas. I am excited about what this experience will bring as the interview and selection process unfolds. I am pleased to report that Dr. Kimberly McLeod has completed two full weeks at HCDE. I am excited about what she brings to the table of advancement in education. She has met with all of her direct reports and various representatives from the programs and services in which she is responsible, and she has already hit the ground running. Please see the profile on Dr. McLeod in this issue of

**The Connector.**

HCDE hosted other trainings this week including Part III of the Online Instructor's Training Series, The Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar on the topic Diversify Your Funding through Government Grants, and the BEST Plus Refresher Toolkit. I am pleased to report that we remain on the cutting edge of the Train the Trainer model throughout the summer months, as well as throughout the academic year.

This week, we also said goodbye to 35 AmeriCorps members who were part of the CASE for Kids division. The members provided services to 600 afterschool children through CASE for Kids. Collectively, they provided over 30,000 hours of service to youth through 11-month, yearlong positions and three-month summer terms of service. A community celebration was held in honor of their accomplishments yesterday from 10 a.m. until noon. We salute this talented group of movers and shakers in today's society.

In closing, please be reminded that the July Board Meeting will be held on next Tuesday, July 21, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. I look forward to seeing you there and thanks for your continued service to HCDE. Have a great weekend, and I hope you enjoy this issue of

**The Connector.**

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# PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## Former Texas Southern University leader Kimberly McLeod gains HCDE assistant superintendent post



Kimberly McLeod, Ed.D., has been named the new assistant superintendent for education and enrichment at Harris County Department of Education. She will lead programs in adult education, alternative teacher and principal certification, grants development, research and evaluation, and educator professional development.

McLeod is the former executive director of academic instruction and dean of Texas Southern University's Northwest Campus. At TSU she also served as executive director of the Teaching and Learning Excellence Center and professor for the college of education for the past 12 years.

Her rich history in the field of education includes nine years as a public school teacher, counselor and administrator. She also owned an early childhood learning center. McLeod holds a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies, a master's degree in guidance and counseling and a master's degree in educational administration from Texas Southern University. She earned her doctorate degree in counselor education from the University of Houston.

The longtime Texas resident is a senior fellow with the American Leadership Forum. She was awarded the YMCA Minority Achiever Award and received the College of Education Teacher of the Year Award for Texas Southern University. In addition, she was inducted into the Judson Independent School District Hall of Honor.

As a research-driven educator, she presents at national and international forums and has authored 12 textbooks and workbooks used in early childhood, public school and higher education communities.

The Spring resident is the mother of three boys who attend public schools and calls parenting "an honor and a privilege."

McLeod says she is a great believer in public schools and their potential to create unimaginable possibilities in the lives of all learners.

"My goal as a leader is to build on the legacy and strength of HCDE and to serve as a catalyst for innovation that is relevant to the 25 school districts we serve," she said.

## AmeriCorps Members Celebrate Year of Service



Saying goodbye was bittersweet for 35 AmeriCorps members who are part of CASE for Kids.

The members provide services to 600 afterschool children through CASE for Kids, an intermediary which supports afterschool in greater Harris County. Collectively, members provided over 30,000 hours of service to youth through 11-month, yearlong positions and three-month summer terms of service.

Members attended a community celebration for their accomplishments at HCDE on July 16 from 10 a.m. to noon.

The CASE for Kids AmeriCorps program is funded in part by the OneStar Foundation and Houston Endowment, Inc. The federal program provides hourly stipends as members earn service hours. Upon successful completion of service terms, members also earn tuition reimbursement scholarships.



## ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

### Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 07.13** | Online Instructor's Training - Part III
- 07.13** | Science Teachers and Industry... Learning about Chemicals and the Environment - July 13-16, 2015  
\*\*SESSION FULL/CLOSED\*\*
- 07.15** | The Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar - Diversify Your Funding through Government Grants
- 07.18** | BEST Plus Refresher Toolkit

# PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## 'Science Teachers and Industry Workshop' Gives Teachers Tangible Connections with Science through Local Chemical Industry



Teachers gained a better understanding of the chemical industry and area chemical plants through a summer workshop hosted by HCDE and sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council. In turn, teachers take information back to their middle and high schools students to learn how science applies to the workplace.

Academic science specialists and industry experts presented a full scope of environmental viewpoints during the three-day workshop. Included were field trips to a chemical plant, an overview of the Houston Ship Channel, careers in the chemical industry, and materials and experiments to take back to the classroom.

Dow Chemical Company employee and workshop presenter John Koegel says hydraulic fracturing or fracking has created a boom for the industry and a need to hire talented and qualified workers moving forward. Sharing career opportunities with teachers so they can impart them to students is a means to attaining future employees, from office workers to engineers to plant operators.

The Texas Chemical Council which Koegel's company is a part of provided the workshop free of charge to teachers as a community service project.

A product bucket assembly line allowed teachers to take products back to the classroom as a show and tell to students, said HCDE Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske. The buckets feature products manufactured in Houston by the petrochemical companies. Samples include plastics used in products and containers used for glue, soaps, tape, hair gel, Ziploc bags, lint sheets, dry erase markers, plastic containers, plastic bags, Coke bottles, and toy cars.



Cypress-Fairbanks physics teacher Frank Gill says the trainings connect teachers to the outside world so that they can talk about science subjects along with career opportunities and pathways for students as they graduate. Telling teens how they can make money through careers in science is integral to hooking them on science, he explained.

Galena Park Independent School District high school chemistry teacher Maria Vargas says the chemical industry is outside her district's back door. Seeing how chemistry is used to create products made in the plants is meaningful and engaging for students, she said.

"It allows them to see what they can contribute to the real world once they have finished school," the second-year teacher said.

Houston companies participating were BASF Corporation, Bayer Material Science, Chevron Phillips Chemical Co., The Dow Chemical Company, Eastman Chemical Company, Formosa Plastics Corporation, Texas, INEOS Olefins & Polymers USA, Kaneka and TOTAL Petrochemicals USA, Inc.



# BOARD CONNECTION

## 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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## Upcoming Board Events:

**July Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday,**  
**July 21, 2015**  
**1:00 p.m.**

