

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...

Summer's almost over! We're counting down the days before our client districts return to school. Likewise, our teams are readying for the new academic year as well. We're sharpening the tools in our kits and we're fired up and ready to go!

As mentioned last week, I started this week off in Austin attending the UIL Review Advisory Committee Meeting. In my role on the State Executive Committee of the UIL, I was invited as one of 50 people to review bylaws and other committee procedures. Others in attendance included attorneys, legislators, and leaders in education from across the state. This role provides an excellent avenue to promote HCDE. Serving in this capacity is an excellent opportunity to increase the visibility of HCDE and I am happy to do so every chance I get across the city, state, and nation.

I returned to the office Tuesday and facilitated a Leadership Team Meeting in preparation for the new academic year. Members of my Executive Leadership Team presented to the members of the Leadership Team- informing them of new initiatives, projects, objectives, and goals for the 2015-2016 academic year. The meeting, which lasted nearly 3 hours, was effective and chock-full of information and fresh ideas. It was also a spinoff of the Executive Leadership Team Retreat that I facilitated a couple of weeks ago. Both meetings were thought-provoking, introspective and forward-thinking. HCDE and its clients are sure to reap the benefits of the ideas that grew out of both events. We're committed to creating value, delivering opportunity, and providing service.

Later in the week, I met with Dr. Mark Henry, Superintendent of Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. It was a productive meeting and was a successful information and idea sharing process.

HCDE continued reaching out to prospective educators across Harris County through our Educator Certification and Professional Advancement division's initiatives this week as they hosted two information sessions. One for individuals interested in becoming teachers and the other for those interested in becoming principals. The Teaching and Learning Center further continued its efforts to advance education through a training, "Cooling the Curriculum Hot Spots in Social Studies", for U.S. History teachers and for 8thGrade Social Studies teachers.

Next week, I will be meeting with representatives from the United Way to discuss collaboration related to workforce development initiatives. I will keep you posted on those developments.

I am excited about our Annual Staff Meeting which takes place on Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at the Humble Civic Center, located at 8233 Will Clayton Parkway in Humble, Texas 77338. I look forward to seeing you there.

In closing, I hope you have a great weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Thanks for your service to HCDE.

IN THIS ISSUE:

2 Program Connections

3 Community Connections

4 Board Connections

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Leadership Team Planning Meeting Kicks off 2015-2016 School Year

HCDE Executive Team members met with Leadership Team members August 4 to launch new initiatives and implement plans for the new school year. Superintendent James Colbert kicked off the meeting with a discussion about our core values: Value... Opportunity... Services. Assistant Superintendents Jonathan Parker, Dr. Kimberly McLeod, and Dr. Jesus Amezcua added discussions about divisions and end-of-year processes.

Other topics from division leaders included security updates for buildings, returning staff requirements, time clock plus changes, technology services, social media procedures, branding consistency, new website planning and execution, and public information requests.



Head Start Annual Report Now Available to View

The Head Start Annual Report is now available in an electronic version. The report will be available mid-August in printed form. View the report through the following link: [www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HeadStart/Head Start Annual Report.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/HeadStart/Head%20Start%20Annual%20Report.pdf)



ChildPlus Software Increases Efficiency Amount HCDE Head Start Centers

HCDE Head Start's center-based management team received training on a new software provider to track attendance and child meals. ChildPlus is a professional Head Start management software used by 85-percent of Head Start and Early Head Start agencies across the nation. The new software is a more intuitive system that has lessened the amount of paperwork and increased efficiency.



New Math TEKS Grades 3, 4

Waller ISD's Leisha Alexander receives instruction for a fraction game from presenter Kristin Allen during HCDE's New Math TEKS workshop. Attendees of the two-day training leave with activities to help their students be successful with fractions. The workshop is hosted by HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center.



Scholastic Art & Writing Leadership Group Meets to Plan for 2016 Awards

HCDE's Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Leadership Committee met July 29 at community sponsor's Texas Art Supply to plan for the 2016 awards. Fine arts leaders from YES Prep Public Schools, Klein ISD, Aldine ISD, and Alief ISD planned for the 5,000-plus entries we expect this school year. For more information about entering, judging or sponsoring Scholastic Art & Writing, go to www.hcde-texas.org.



ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 08.05** | Recruitment for HCDE Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Meeting
- 08.06** | Cooling the Curriculum Hot Spots in Social Studies (Grade 8 and U.S. History)
- 08.06** | HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

School Zone Safety Tips from HCDE

HCDE's Communication division is working on a series of public service announcements for the back-to-school season. The first in the series promotes school zone safety and is delivered on behalf of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. PSAs will be released throughout August to spark interest among the media and general public.



See the 6 school zone safety tips from Harris County Department of Education at: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=001.news&a=168>

Houston Area School Public Relations Association Leaders Meet at HCDE for Back-to-School



School public relations leaders in greater Harris County attended a back-to-school meeting hosted by Communication and Client Engagement on Aug. 4 at HCDE. The 35 attendees listened to a presentation from Terry Abbott, former Houston ISD press secretary and former chief of staff

of the U.S. Department of Education. Abbott's presentation focused on a study of school employees nationwide who have been accused, charged and convicted for inappropriate relationships with students.

Abbott, chairman of Drive West Communications, a consulting firm, called the problem epidemic in Texas, which had 116 cases of these inappropriate relationships in 2014. He compared Texas' problem to California's which had 43 cases reported. Social media misuse and abuse is named as a big factor in those sexual abuse cases.

Through his case studies, Abbott had these recommendations for schools:

- Adopt and enforce stricter policies regarding social media interaction between students and teachers.
- Aggressively investigate cases as a means to take care of students.
- Publicly denounce the crimes and never cover them up.
- Have strong social media and text policies. Disallow social media interaction between students and teachers.
- Meet with staff and speak bluntly about the issues and the problems.



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

BOARD PRESIDENT
POSITION 2, PRECINCT 4
Angie Chesnut

BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT
POSITION 4, PRECINCT 3
Kay Smith

Erica Lee Carter
Position 6, Precinct 1

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:

August Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Annual Staff Meeting
Wednesday, August 19, 2015

