

# 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...

First off, let me welcome back Karla Cantu! She returned to the office this week after having been on Family/Medical Leave following the birth of her son. We're happy to have her back. As usual, please don't hesitate to contact Karla regarding matters related to scheduling, Board Agenda, and other related concerns. The administrative team warmly welcomes her and I look forward to working with her.

Last weekend, we experienced phenomenal success at the annual Early Childhood Winter Conference (ECWC). For the past 29 years, HCDE has hosted the ECWC as a professional development opportunity for early childhood educators. The day-long event features over 90 workshop options focused on behavior management, math, science, literacy, technology, bilingual and dual language education, technology, art, and music. I was impressed by the attendance of more than 1,000 educators. The enthusiasm was contagious and by all measures, it was a great success. I also had the chance to meet former HCDE Trustee and Board President Ray Garcia. It was a pleasure. He's a true advocate for public education, having served HCDE for more than a decade.

As I referenced in the last issue of **The Connector**, I attended the University Interscholastic League (UIL) meeting in Austin this past weekend. The event resulted in tremendous progress on behalf of the UIL, and I achieved my goal on behalf of HCDE as it relates to relationship development. To that end, I had the opportunity to meet with superintendents from both Katy and Cypress-Fairbanks independent school districts over the course of last weekend, while tending to UIL business.

This week I met with the Superintendents of Houston and La Porte independent school districts. Both of those meetings went well, and I look forward to continuing discussions with all of the superintendents I've met thus far, and of course, establishing a rapport with the few I have yet to meet.

Please be reminded that I've scheduled our first Board Walk for next week. You are encouraged to apprise Karla of your availability on either February 10th or February 12th. The Board Walk gives you an opportunity to experience our programs up close and in person. We will meet in the lobby on the day of your choosing at 8:00 a.m. We will visit various HCDE programs and locations and then we will have lunch to debrief at the conclusion of the Board Walk. It is important to coordinate with Karla regarding the day you wish to join me as policy doesn't permit me to have more than three trustees accompany me at one time.

Also, please be reminded of the Board Training that is scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m. at the Kingwood Country Club, located at 1700 Lake Kingwood Trail, in Kingwood, Texas (77339).

I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Thanks so much for your attention, especially as it relates to the reminders and I hope to see you next week for our very first HCDE Board Walk! Have a great weekend.

Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) has received preliminary verbal notification of a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership initiative in eastern Harris County, Texas.

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# PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

## Kids' Day at HP 2015 Set for May 15

On May 15, 15 schools with teams of elementary and middle school students will compete in a robotics competition during Kids' Day at Hewlett-Packard. The CASE for Kids event is a tradition which brings together HP staff and afterschool students at the HP campus in north Houston. HP donates prizes to the students. To learn more, watch the video.



## Adult Education Staff Leads, Presents, Attends Statewide Conference

Our Adult Education staff is busy with leadership duties and continuing education opportunities as they attend the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education Conference on February 5-7 in the Houston Galleria. Martin Loa, manager, is the conference chair and Kay Vaccaro, coordinator, is the awards chair. Presenters include Vaccaro, Dr. Eduardo Honold, director; Clydene Reep, teacher; and Angela Johnson, coordinator. Fifty-five adult education teachers are attending the statewide conference which traditionally attracts about 450 participants.



## Adult Education Staff Leads, Presents, Attends Statewide Conference

The Center for Grants Development submitted a bid proposal on behalf of HCDE's Technology division, including Cirrus LearnSM and the Texas Virtual School Network, to provide technology services to the Education Service Center Region 10, school districts in its service area, as well as, for statewide projects operated by the center. If selected, HCDE's Technology Division will provide any of the following services: 1) Technology Integration; 2) Desktop Application; 3) Help Desk Function; 4) Server Administration; 5) Email, Security and Backup Efforts; 6) Web-based System, Website and Web Tool Hosting; 7) Data Integration and 8) Application and Platform.

Through collaboration with the Katy ISD Education Foundation, Sharvon D. Pipkins, CGD Development Coordinator, presented a grant writing workshop on the foundation's 2015-2016 Inspiring Imagination Grants for educators at Katy ISD on February 3, 2015. The grants are designed to encourage, facilitate, recognize and reward innovative and creative instructional strategies. Following the workshop, Ms. Pipkins served as a panelist alongside members of the Education Foundation's board and recent grant recipients for a discussion on the topic. A total of 64 teachers, counselors, librarians and instructional coaches employed by Katy ISD attended the event. Participants learned about the funding opportunities, gained tips on how to write an effective proposal, and received a grant application packet. Ms. Pipkins will present the workshop again on February 12, 2015.

## ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

### Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

- 02.11 | Quest for Grants: It Takes Planning to Save the World
- 02.12 | The Nurtured Heart Approach to Classroom Management, Administration, Parenting
- 02.12 | Sun, Smiles and Summer Programming from CASE for Kids Training Series
- 02.17 | Early Childhood Leadership Group Meeting: Increasing Parent Involvement with Your School

## HIRE RIGHT TRAINING

The Human Resources division is hosting Hire Right training for new supervisors related to the HCDE interview and hiring process. The workshop will be held on Tuesday, February 10 from 10 a.m. until noon.

### HCDE Goes Platinum

Congratulations to the Business Office on having successfully implemented financial transparency and receiving a Leadership Circle Award for another year. The Texas Comptroller's regional representative just informed HCDE this week that our Business Services division has earned a PLATINUM Leadership Circle Award by scoring **23 of 23 possible points** on the rating criteria. The award designation signifies our participation in the Comptroller's Office program for the sixth year, and it is valid for one year.



### Choice Partners Publishes February Newsletter, Presents at TASA

The February Choice Partners Leader's Choice newsletter is now posted at [http://www.choicepartners.org/admin/uploads/pdf/LeadersChoice-2015-Issue1\\_1423152120.pdf](http://www.choicepartners.org/admin/uploads/pdf/LeadersChoice-2015-Issue1_1423152120.pdf). The newsletter published by Client Development Services provides features stories and information about vendors and members.

David Wrangler, Client Development Services coordinator, and Louise Henry, Client Development Services director, also recently presented a workshop at the Texas Association of School Administrators conference called "Using Infographics to Tell Your Story."

### Mileage, Travel Directives Sent from Business Services on Behalf of Superintendent

Business Services released a memo to HCDE management from Superintendent Colbert regarding the standard mileage rate being raised from 56 cents to 57.5 cents per state guidelines. Also, all out-of-state travel must be approved by the Superintendent with a request-to-attend form.

### Budget Season Underway

The HCDE budget season commenced this week with budget training for directors, principals, and budget managers. During the training, Business Services staff reviewed the results of FY2014-15 in anticipation for FY2015-16 projections. The training session included budget instructions, risk assessment procedures, and fixed asset annual reviews.

# CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Counselors at ABC West Receive Flowers, Accolades During National Counseling Week

Per ABC West Principal Victor Keys: "ABC West has the best counselors in the world. We are extremely fortunate to have such a wonderful counseling team on campus." Included in the acknowledged counselors during National Counseling Week are the following: (left) Malcolm Greer, assistant principal and licensed professional counselor and school counselor; Dr. Monica Hampton, licensed professional counselor and school counselor; Tayyaba Ali, school transition specialist and licensed professional counselor; and Gloria Beckham, Special School's licensed specialist in school psychology.



- 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

## HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Galena Park ISD offers free Technology Training for parents of Galena Park ISD students. The training focuses on Word Processing and Internet tools. Snacks and free babysitting for children under 12 years old is provided. Click on the link for registration and scheduling information. [http://www.galenaparkisd.com/november/Parent%20Training%20Flyer\\_Tech2015.pdf](http://www.galenaparkisd.com/november/Parent%20Training%20Flyer_Tech2015.pdf)

## 6 Local Organizations Gain Afterschool Funding in January for \$44,470 in Awards

Six Houston organizations gained \$44,470 in afterschool funding from the City Connections grant last month. The January 30, 2015 grant announcement enables the organizations to use the funds immediately through June 30. CASE for Kids also announced that 19 applications from multiple council districts were received by February 2. Those awarded will be notified by the end of February.

The six organizations awarded the January grants are **Brenda & John Duncan YMCA**, \$5,719, District A (77041); **Partnership for the Advancement & Immersion of Refugees** (Paul Revere Middle School), \$3,750, District G (77042); **Multicultural Education and Counseling Through the Arts, or MECA**, \$15,000, District H (77007); **Partnership for the Advancement & Immersion of Refugees, or PAIR**, (Lee High School), \$3,750, District J (77057); **Houston Youth Symphony** (Sherman and Looscan Elementary Schools), \$7,000, District H (77009); and **Brentwood Economic Community Development Corporation**, DBA, Brentwood Community Foundation (Brentwood Life Long Learning Center), \$9,251, District K (77045).

Grants range from \$5,000-\$15,000 per awardee. Applications for the grants are available at [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).

## HCDE Co-Sponsors Heart Festival for Children for Adoption

HCDE is co-sponsoring the Heart Festival with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Rotary International. The festival is intended for agencies that have approved adoptive families interested in adopting children currently in the custody of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Activities for both interested families and children are included, along with an info booth and refreshments.



## 29th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference

Over 1,000 educators attended the 29th annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference on January 31 to get rejuvenated and gain new teaching ideas. Eric Litwin, author of the best-selling children's book series, Pete the Cat, had attendees up, singing and dancing during his early-morning keynote address. With 90-plus sessions to choose from and over 50 exhibitors providing early childhood curriculum services and products, the conference continues to attract teachers from across the state. View the photos from our HCDE SmugMug account: <http://hcdetx.smugmug.com/ISS/ECWinterConf/2015-Early-Childhood-Winter/>



## Community Art Reception Planned in Museum District on February 20 for Gold Key Artists, Writers

An Artist Reception is planned for Gold Key Scholastic Art & Writing recipients on February 20 from 5:30-8 p.m. at the Glassell Junior School, 5101 Montrose in the Museum District.



Students and their families along with community are invited to view the art and hear parts of award-winning prose from the students who are from public, charter, private and home schools in Harris County. Students will be photographed and media is invited. Melba Kent, HCDE coordinator, says an invitation to the event may be downloaded to share through the following HCDE website link: [http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Scholastic%20Art%20and%20Writing/ScholasticArtWriteInvite\\_Email.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Scholastic%20Art%20and%20Writing/ScholasticArtWriteInvite_Email.pdf).

## About Scholastic:

Since 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have recognized the vision, ingenuity, and talent of our nation's youth, and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated. Each year, increasing numbers of teens participate in the program, and become a part of our community--young artists and writers, filmmakers and photographers, poets, and sculptors, along with countless educators who support and encourage the creative process.

# BOARD SPOTLIGHT

## WHO'S WHO ON THE HCDE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



**ANGIE CHESNUT**  
Board President  
Position 2, Precinct 4



**KAY SMITH**  
Board Vice-President  
Position 4, Precinct 3



**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

## HCDE BOARD

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

**BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT**  
POSITION 4, PRECINCT 3  
**Kay Smith**

**Erica Lee Carter**  
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**Marvin W. Morris**  
Position 1, Precinct 2

**Don Summers**  
Position 7, At Large

**Diane Trautman**  
Position 3, At Large

**Michael Wolfe**  
Position 5, At Large

## Upcoming Board Events:

**Board Walk**  
February 10-12, 2015  
(Please select one of the dates above)  
Depart from HCDE Lobby at 8:00 a.m.

**Board Retreat**  
February 21, 2015  
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Kingwood Country Club  
1700 Lake Kingwood Trail  
Kingwood, Texas 77339

**February Board Meeting**  
February 24, 2015  
1:00 p.m.

**No Board Meeting in March!**

**HCDE Board of Trustees featured in the current online issue of The Forward Times. Visit the URL below:**

<http://forwardtimesonline.com/2013/index.php/lifestyle/society-pages/item/2281-this-week-in-houstons-buzz-40z-rock-magazine-anniversary-party-honoring-congresswoman-sheila-jackson-lee-for-20-years-of-service-in-the-united-states-congress-and-more>

**Let's put our Trustees in the SPOTLIGHT!**

All members of the HCDE Board of Trustees are encouraged to submit your highlights and tidbits to [boardhighlights@hcde-texas.org](mailto:boardhighlights@hcde-texas.org). Let's get to know each other even better!