

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...

This was an exciting week at HCDE! Trustees Kay Smith and Don Sumners joined me for our very first Superintendent's Board Walk, making rounds to various HCDE campuses and locations. Our first stop of the day was Highpoint East, followed by Sheffield Head Start Center. We then traveled to the North Post Oak location and then to the ABC-West campus. We concluded the Board Walk by debriefing over lunch. It was an excellent opportunity to see our faculty, students, campus administrators, and other staff in motion, doing what they do best—advancing the teaching and learning process for students of varied ages. Between the two campuses and the Head Start location, we visited nearly 20 classrooms—meeting students ranging in ages from 3-20, all with varied needs and personalities. I look forward to future Board Walks as I believe this is a valuable exercise.

On Wednesday of this week, I attended the HISD State of the Schools luncheon. Superintendent Terry Grier delivered an inspiring message about the advancements and great strides that district is making in meeting the needs of an ever-changing urban student population. The event was a great networking opportunity and was certainly worth attending.

Today, I attended the State of the County address where County Judge Ed Emmett delivered an equally interesting speech and provided a great snapshot of the accomplishments and successes the county has realized over the past year. Again, I look forward to continuing discussions with both the County Judge and Superintendent Grier as to how HCDE can even better meet the needs of their constituents and student population(s), respectively.

Please be reminded of next week's Board Training event that will be held from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 21, 2015 at the Kingwood Country Club, located at 1700 Lake Kingwood Trail in Kingwood, Texas (77339).

To that end, if you are interested in attending the National School Board Association annual conference, then please contact Theresa Torres regarding both hotel accommodations and travel reservations. The conference takes place March 21-23, 2015 in Nashville, Tennessee. This year's keynote speakers include Arianna Huffington, David Pogue, and Montel Williams. Theresa can be reached via telephone at 713.696.0713 or via email at ttorres@hcde-texas.org.

Thanks for your attention and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend!

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CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- STAAR Alt 2 testing began this week at ABC-East.
- DARS Parent Workshop was held on Wednesday of this week at ABC-East.

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Workshop Provides Reinforcement for Early Childhood Science Experiments Through Children's Literature

Children's storybooks mix with science to create literacy and science lessons for early childhood educators of grades pre-k through 2 with Science Fiction: Teaching Weather with Children's Literature on February 10. Science curriculum director Lisa Felske presented the workshop for Instructional Support Services. In one experiment, children study the concept of freezing point depression by adding salt and food coloring to blocks of ice. The experiment is paired with the children's book "Making a Friend" by Mark Rosenthal, a storybook about a child's friendship with a snowman and its disappearance as the seasons change.



Reinvigorate Your Social Studies Classroom with a Relevant Review PEP Rally

Over 100 social studies educators from across the state gathered February 6 to gain helpful tips for the social studies TEKS at the workshop: Reinvigorate your Social Studies Classroom with a Relevant Review PEP Rally. Jodi Denton of Lead4ward presented the workshop, coordinated by Instructional Support Services. During an activity, teachers worked in groups to examine objects and discuss how to create analogies from those objects. The activity is said to help students make a correlation between an object and information presented on a test.



100 Early Childhood Educators Focus on STEAM Through Accelerate Learning Curriculum

Science, technology, engineering, art, and math, or STEAM, brought 100 educators from 30 school districts, charter schools, and private schools to HCDE on February 12. The free event sponsored by Accelerate Learning focused on STEAM opportunities for early childhood educators. Inquiry-based science stations with art applications, vocabulary strategies, and science-and-art activities provided hands-on activities for the educators who came from as far as Waco ISD.



Dr. Cheryl Lewis, principal at Bellfort Early Childhood Center in Houston ISD, looks for activities to integrate journaling with her pre-k students. "The centers have skills with different components as they focus on fine motor skills, literacy, science and math," she said. "The activities are exciting." Lewis worked at a station with soil which allowed students to weigh it, touch it, and discuss the different types of soil through comprehension questions.

"Teachers will take these ideas back to their classrooms but are also given free trial access to Accelerate Learning's online curriculum," said Lisa Felske, HCDE science curriculum director.

For more information about upcoming workshops, access <http://wms.hcde-texas.org>.

ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING by training the trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

02.17 | Early Childhood Leadership Group Meeting: Increasing Parent Involvement with Your School

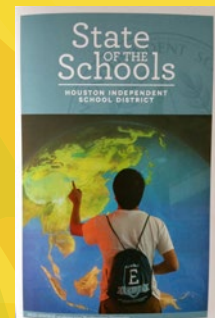
HARRIS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT



Pearland ISD Dual Credit Program

Pearland ISD offers its high school students the opportunity to earn college credits through a partnership with Alvin Community College. Dual credits earned through this program may be transferable to any Texas four-year college or university.

Superintendent Colbert attended both the HISD State of the Schools and State of the County luncheon events this week.



STATE OF THE COUNTY

Featuring Harris County Judge Ed Emmett

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Recruits Quarter-time Members at Rice University

CASE for Kids AmeriCorps members recruited potential AmeriCorps candidates to serve from May 11 through July 31 in quarter-time positions for service at the Rice University Career Services Expo February 6. AmeriCorps members gain a \$3,000 stipend plus a \$1,468 scholarship for completing their quarter-time service hours. Candidates may apply by calling 713-696-1331 or by visiting www.afterschoolzone.org

Photo: CASE for Kids AmeriCorps members Ashley Turner and Cassandra Smith recruit at the Rice expo.



Superintendent visits Acres Homes

Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. along with assistant superintendents Celes Harris and Linda Pitre attended the Acres Home Chamber of Business and Economic Development's monthly luncheon on February 5, 2015. The featured speaker was Aldine ISD superintendent Dr. Wanda Bamberg. Dr. Bamberg gave an overview of the district's successes and challenges and provided detailed information about the magnet school programs. Chamber Chairman Roy Douglas Malonson stressed the importance of community engagement in public education.

Valentine's Day Highlights Achievement of Young Spring Branch ISD Artist: Her Art to be Exhibited February 20 at Artist Reception

For Valentine's Day, we acknowledge our Harris County Department of Education Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recipient Michelle Moore from Spring Branch Independent School District's Memorial High. Her Gold Key art entry is entitled "Valentine." She earns our Trustees' Incentive Award of \$500 for her "sweet" drawing and illustration. Thanks to her supporting teacher Cathleen May for participating in Scholastic. Meet our artists and writers February 20 at our Artist Reception in the Museum District's Glassell Junior School, 5:30-8 p.m., 5101 Montrose. You Tube promo: <http://youtu.be/s-6ecw-dPGc>



Teen Scholastic Writing Awardee Featured on Houston Public Media's Houston Matters

Teen writer Sanah Jivani of Klein ISD, winner of our regional American Voices Award, a best in class writing award, is featured through Houston Matters, a Houston Public Media program. Sanah earned a Silver Medal and attended a ceremony last year at Carnegie Hall in New York City. We're proud of Sanah and wish her luck as she advances to national judging! <http://www.houstonmatters.org/segments/segment-d/2015/02/11/student-sanah-jivani-writes-about-family-struggles>

Energy City of the Future 2050 Attracts 13 Student Teams for UH Matchup on February 21

Energy City of the Future 2050, an energy-conscious competition for teams of students in grades 6-12, will be held at the University of Houston Bauer

College of Business, 334 Melcher Hall, February 21.

The first round of judging

is from 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., and the second round is from 12:30-2 p.m. Energy City is organized and coordinated by CASE for Kids and funded by the Education Foundation of Harris County.



Students learn about the energy industry and then create their model city of the future for judging, along with a PowerPoint presentation. Thirteen teams are slated to compete this year. Outreach for the competition includes the National Society Black of Engineers Jr., a pre-college initiative program designed to stimulate interest in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM. Williams Company is a new sponsor, and University of Houston students will be supporting the competition as mentors and judges.

The competition provides cash scholarships for winning teams and stipends for teachers who participate. Sponsorships are provided from the Consumer Energy Alliance, University of Houston, the Finance Association of University of Houston Bauer College of Business, Sequent Energy Management and Williams Company. For more information, go to <http://www.energycityofthefuture.com>.

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

BOARD WALK PHOTOS



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 Summers
Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman
Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

Upcoming Board Events:

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.



Contact Theresa Torres at 713.696.0713 regarding travel arrangements. Visit <http://www.nsba.org/conference> for additional information regarding conference details.