

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

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OF NOTE

It's been a busy week at HCDE. We started this week over the weekend surveying our facilities for damage as a result of last weekend's rainstorms and tornadoes. While the weather wreaked havoc across the city, we took a small hit at one of our locations. Water managed to seep into our AB School-East location; however, no significant damage was sustained and there was no disruption in classes. Unfortunately, one of our client districts, La Porte ISD, sustained significant damage and was forced to close the entire district Monday, while at least one elementary school was forced to close even longer than the first day of the week. Fortunately, our La Porte Head Start Center was not impacted and we were able to resume service Monday morning. We were in contact with La Porte Emergency Management officials over the weekend as we worked to ensure the safety of our facility.

I had the opportunity to make a site visit to our North Post Oak facility this week. We are in the process of enhancing that facility with several improvements. Our Facilities group spearheaded getting the lighting of the exterior of the facility improved thereby increasing the safety of the parking lot area. New signage was recently installed and elevator improvements are also underway. I am pleased with the improvements made thus far. I also attended the All Kids Alliance meeting which was quite productive and I met with Carole Little, the Executive Director of Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM). I will keep you apprised of future meetings with both of those groups. Today, we celebrate attend Rosie Siller's retirement reception. She has completed 25 years of devoted service to HCDE within the Adult Education division.

We continue to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service for our clients across Harris County and beyond. This week we hosted a Math Institute training session on Aligning the Pre-K Guidelines to the New TEKS for Grades Pre-K and kindergarten. We also facilitated a test prep series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam in the area of math, as well as the a workshop geared toward the new math TEKS for Grades 1 and 2.

Our CASE for Kids division hosted a Lending Library Demonstration Workshop Series entitled Put Some Swirl in Your Afterschool. This training offered innovative opportunities for more enhanced, quality, afterschool programming.

We also hosted a Librarian Leadership Meeting which was comprised of library leaders from throughout the county and we wrapped the week-from a professional development perspective-with a Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam for science educators.

The School Finance Council, along with the Gulf Coast Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) hosted its meeting. It was a technical CPA course, worth 4 hours of continuing professional education and focused on Working with Open Records and how to meet state requirements, Dealing with Sole Source Issues, Gifts of Public Funds, and FLSA and Tax Collections. The last segment focused on grant services. The session was very well-attended.

I look forward to next week, as I begin to meet with you individually regarding my Self-Appraisal. I am excited about the strides that both I, along with the Department, have made over nearly the past year and I am excited to share the progress with you. Time flies in a fast-paced environment, and especially when you enjoy what you do. The past 11 months have flown by.

In closing, thanks for your ongoing service to HCDE. Please stay safe and dry during this weekend's anticipated rainy weather, and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Learning Number Composition with Household Items Helps Teachers Gain New Math TEKS Concepts

Teachers from a half-dozen school districts learned to use household items like spoons, cups, yarn and crayons for numbers 1-10 composition and decomposition. The first and second grade teachers are gaining teaching concepts on the scope and sequence of the new math TEKS standards and how to teach them. Teachers attending were from Crosby, Sheldon and Houston independent school districts and Southwest Charter School. The workshop called New Math TEKS 1-2 will be held throughout the school year to assist teachers in greater Harris County. The workshops are provided by the Teaching and Learning Center and facilitated by Nicole Shanahan, math curriculum director.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

NOVEMBER 2 TRAINING

Math Institute - Aligning the Pre-K Guidelines to the New TEKS (Gr Pre-K and K)

NOVEMBER 3 TRAINING

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291) - MATH Sessions ONLY

NOVEMBER 4 TRAINING

New Math TEKS Grades 1 & 2

NOVEMBER 5 TRAINING

Lending Library-Demonstration Workshop Series: Put Some Swirl in Your Afterschool

NOVEMBER 6 TRAININGS

School Finance Council

Librarian Leadership Meeting

NOVEMBER 7 TRAINING

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291) - SCIENCE Sessions ONLY



Teaching and Learning Center's Nicole Shanahan Visits Charter as School Celebrates Red Ribbon Week

Math Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan visits Mangum Elementary, a school in the Southwest Charter Schools network. Shanahan took this photo as the students participated in Red Ribbon Week and "socked out" drugs.

Rising Stars Named for November by Education and Enrichment

Education and Enrichment recognizes two candidates and a division for "Making a Difference" awards. The awards, given by Dr. Kimberly McLeod, go to Dr. Joyce Akins, manager in the Center for Grants Development and Rosa Murillo, administrative assistant to the Teaching and Learning Center. The division recognized for valuable contributions this month is the Teaching and Learning Center.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Leadership Series Speakers Announced for 2016 at HCDE

The Teaching and Learning Center announced the lineup of speakers for 2016 for educators. The Leadership Series will feature multiple “big name” presenters expected to be in demand. Instructional leaders, counselors, administrators, and teacher leaders attend the sessions. For more information, call 713-696-1308.



Eric Sheninger

January 19, 2016

Turn the Battleship on a Dime: Keys to Initiating Sustainable Change and Mobilize Now

Tony Frontier

May 23-24, 2016

Five Levers to Improve Learning: How to Prioritize for Powerful results in Your School

Ervin Knezek

February 11, 2016

STAAR: Relevant Review

Manuel Scott

June 13, 2016

How to Create an Unquenchable Thirst for Education/How to Reach an Unreachable Youth Today

Michele DeBellis

April 21, 2016

Dispositions for Effective Education Leaders

George Couros

August 10, 2016

Focusing on Your Why: Leading your School in a Digital Age

Scenes from Leadership Cabinet Meeting

This past Tuesday, the Superintendent met with members of the Leadership Team. This is a monthly meeting designed to share information and exchange ideas.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



Becky Bell to Oversee Operations of Texas Virtual School Network within HCDE on Behalf of Education Service Center Region 10

Becky Bell is the new operations director for Harris County Department of Education on behalf of the Texas Virtual School Network, or TxVSN. She will oversee central operations of TxVSN.

The Texas Virtual School Network provides online courses to students in public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. TxVSN is a clearinghouse of rigorous online courses offered by approved providers. Because the Texas Education Agency approves all courses, students are assured that courses meet the state's high standards for teaching and learning.

Through its role in TxVSN, Harris County Department of Education supplies help desk services, management of all network functions and application development, and hosting for the project. Harris County Department of Education has served as a subcontractor of TxVSN operations services to the Education Service Center Region 10 since 2008.

Bell, a Channelview, Texas resident, has worked within HCDE since 2002. She holds a bachelor's in business administration from LeTourneau University. She is formerly the manager of operations for TxVSN, and has also served as the administrative assistant to the chief information officer at HCDE.

"My goal for operations at TxVSN is to continue to support and promote online courses as an innovative method to maximize students' potential," Bell said.

Adult Education Nears 5,000 Mark

As of Tuesday of this week, the Adult Education division had a total of 4,847 students enrolled in its program!

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Red Ribbon Week Celebrated at Academic and Behavior School West

ABS West held its annual Red Ribbon week from October 23-October 31. Red Ribbon Week is a nationally-recognized event that is held every year which represents the nationwide commitment to raising drug awareness in schools. Students were educated on the dangers of drugs and the domino effect that can lead to a negative spiraling in lives. Some of the activities included signing a pledge and a boat ride field trip. In addition to Deputy Ellis having an assembly with the students and staff about the importance of making the right decisions each and every day, Shantel Rayford, the ABS counselor who coordinated the week-long event, stressed the importance of youth respecting themselves in order to have a positive future.



School District Highlight: Humble ISD

Humble ISD Education Foundation hosts its annual Foundation Golf Tournament on Friday, November 6, 2015. Proceeds from the event fund innovative grants for students. Details:

<https://humbleisdef.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/Foundation-GolfTournament2015/tabid/718356/Default.aspx>

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

HCDE Professional Development

The Human Resources division unveiled, to the Leadership Team in a meeting this past Tuesday, its newest list of professional development sessions provided by the division. Of the trainings listed, all managers, supervisors, and Leadership Team members are required to attend the Bullying/Harassment and Reasonable Suspicion training sessions. All of the sessions also will offer excellent opportunities for professional growth and development to HCDE staff.

Professional Development 2015-2016

Bullying/Harassment are not welcome here
Della Church - attendance is mandatory for managers, supervisors, and leadership team members
December 7, 2015 room 502 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
This engaging, interactive workshop teaches the differences between bullying and harassment and how to diffuse and eliminate both types of bad behaviors in the workplace.

Reasonable Suspicion Training
Dr. Harvey Graves - attendance is mandatory for managers, supervisors, and leadership team members
January 14, 2016 room 1034B 10:00 am - noon
January 21, 2016 room 502 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Topic: review drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace providing techniques to help recognize and maintain a safe environment.

Hire Right
Human Resources
March 11, 2016 room 1034C 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Topic examines legal steps and processes assisting hiring teams to recruit and successfully find the right candidate.

Health and Fitness Month Topics - - -
Alliance Work Partners - webinars
• **Choosing Happiness**
May 11, 2016 9:00 am - 10:00 am
Learn ways to increase the joy in your life regardless of external circumstances.
• **Parenting in the 21st Century**
May 19, 2016 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Learn about clips we look on for our children and expectations and goals that come with parenting.
• **Overed Dreams, the importance of sleep**
May 24, 2016 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Learn what could be keeping you awake and how to get around it to make the most of your sleepy hours.

HCDE

TimeClock Plus Upgrade

The Human Resources division, in symphony with the Technology Support Services division, successfully implemented the recently-upgraded Version 7 of the TimeClock Plus system. The more efficient program rolled out Monday morning of this week. Staff worked tirelessly over the weekend to ensure implementation. The new version saves end-users time as they approve time and leave for staff.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Improvement

In keeping with the Board's expectation of me to:

- Oversee procedures to ensure effective and timely compliance with all legal obligations, reporting requirements, and policies

The TimeClock Plus time-keeping system has been upgraded to a newer version. The implementation of Version 7 was rolled out Monday morning of this week. It allows for much more streamlined functioning for end-users.



In doing so, I am meeting the Board's expectation related to this performance element to:

- **Assess risk and determine appropriate actions using sound business judgment to provide programs and resources that support educational opportunities.**

Professional Growth and Development

In keeping with the Board's expectation of me to:

- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available, and monitor staff development for effectiveness

The Human Resources division released, in this week's Leadership Team Meeting, its 2015-2016 Professional Development and Training Schedule of upcoming workshops.

In doing so, I am ensuring that I meet the Board's expectation of me to communicate staff development opportunities and make them available to employees, while also assessing new and effective development tools, and determine their applicability to

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Fee: No cost
Audience: HCDE staff only
For additional information about each workshop and how to register, visit: <http://hrm.hcde-board.org>
ASAP! (preferred), email by date
Questions? Call Patricia Menard, Assistant Director Human Resources ex. 1763 or pmenard@hcde-board.org
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HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

NOVEMBER 17, 2015
November Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.

