

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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We are moving forward with purposeful intent as we head toward the fall holiday season. This week, I visited our Fifth Ward Head Start location. I was pleased with what is going on at that site. I saw, in action, an education team committed to advancing teaching and learning with students at an early age, ensuring that our youngest learners are equipped for Kindergarten and beyond.

I also met with members from My Brother's Keeper organization. We continued to explore how collaborating might mutually benefit both HCDE and My Brother's Keeper. I will apprise you if I see where such an intersection might occur.

We are looking forward to next week's Leadership Summit as we expect over 200 educators in attendance from the greater Harris County area. Event speakers will focus on Creating Cultural Responsiveness and Essential Instructional Systems for Advancing Outcomes. The event will take place Monday, November 16. I will be providing the welcome during the opening assembly. We are pleased to have TLC bring such a series of high visibility professional development workshops to HCDE. I have also included future Leadership Summit dates and speakers in this issue of **The Connector**.

I am looking forward to meeting, individually, with the remaining Board Members during my quarterly meetings with you. Thanks to the Board Members with whom I have already met. I am always pleased to have an opportunity to meet with you to discuss our new initiatives. Also, to that end, please be reminded of the upcoming Board Training session which will take place next Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., just prior to the November Board Meeting. A hot lunch will be provided. At that time, I will present new initiatives for your consideration.

This week, we continued to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service to the school districts of Harris County. In the training sphere, we hosted New Math TEKS training for Grades 3 and 4; Writing Standards-Based IEPs- which was a 2 day workshop on using the TEKS and STAAR to write IEPs; and Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS)- Convection: A Current Event and Discovering Density. We also hosted an ESL TExES #154 Supplemental 1-Day Mini-Academy as well as Star-Based Vocabulary Instructional Strategies, Reading Instruction, and an ESL Syllabus Training, just to name a few. Additionally, we are recruiting for HCDE's Alternative Certification Program for teachers and hosted an information meeting, to that end. We also hosted a Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting. As usual, it was a busy week at HCDE in the area of teaching and learning.

In closing, I will be out of the office later next week attending the National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE) Conference. I will return to the office on the following Monday.

I look forward to seeing each of you next week as we continue our training as the Team of Eight, followed by our regularly-scheduled Board Meeting. As always, thanks for your service to HCDE, and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

Human Resources Adds New Fair



The Human Resources division added a new job fair to their list of recruitment campaign events. Earlier this week, HCDE recruiters Roxanne Torres and Laura Nilon Williams attended the American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE) conference and job fair. The event, held in San Antonio, began Sunday and ended Tuesday. It was well-attended and served as an effective venue to recruit competent job candidates. The AAEE is a professional association comprised of representatives from colleges, universities, and school districts.



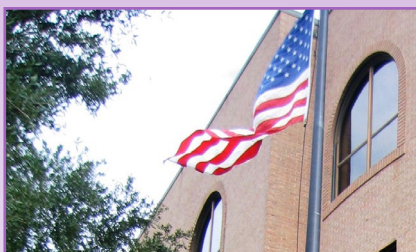
HCDE and Shriners Hospital

Human Resources is working with the Shriners Hospital to host a toy and game drive. Starting this week, through December 11, HCDE employees are encouraged to participate by donating toys and games to be used by patients in the Houston location of Shriners Hospital.



HCDE Observes Veterans Day 2015

At 12:00 noon Wednesday, Veterans Day, HCDE employees were encouraged to observe the holiday through a moment of silent meditation around the flagpole at the 6300 Irvington location. Veterans in attendance were offered the opportunity to share stories of their military experiences with all who assembled. It was a solemn moment in recognition of all Veterans, both those who have served, and those who continue to serve our nation.



Recruiting for Head Start



The Human Resources division was highly visible at a job fair yesterday held at the Adult Learning Center in Baytown. The goal was to recruit eligible candidates to fill numerous vacancies in the Head Start division. Vacant positions range from several teacher and teaching assistant positions, to name only a couple.

Interested attendees gained knowledge about both the Department as well as Head Start. Although this effort was primarily for the purpose of recruiting for Head Start, the Human Resources division is committed to recruiting and retaining qualified staff across all programs, divisions, and services within the Department.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT UPDATE

Goings-on in the Center for Grants Development

The following is a summary of proposals and other requests recently submitted on behalf of HCDE divisions and Education Foundation of Harris County (EFHC). The division continues to seek opportunities to benefit the children of Harris County through HCDE's programs and services.

- **Concept Paper – FINRA Investor** – Teaching and Learning Center Financial Literacy
- **Proposal – LyondellBasell** – Teaching and Learning Center Financial Literacy Initiative
- **Proposal – Department of Health and Human Services** – Balance of Funds – Early Head Start
- **Proposal – Department of Health and Human Services** – Supplemental Funds – Early Head Start
- **Proposal – State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Program** – Center for Safe and Secure Schools
- **Proposal – Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities** – Teaching and Learning Center Special Education
- **Proposal – Houston Endowment** – CASE for Kids Afterschool Sustainability Initiative

Adult Education Highlights

- 20 day teachers at Cy-Falls High School recently stayed after normal school hours to meet the adult students in Norma Nieto's ESL class. Ms. Nieto's class is one of four HCDE classes to meet three nights each week. In an event entitled Amigos y Amigas, organized by assistant principal Robert Lopez, teachers and students had an opportunity to become acquainted through the help of prepared questions. Topics ranged from content being taught in class to "What do you say to your child's teacher during a parent-teacher conference?" Several brave teachers and students participated in role-play for the group. This was an amazing event reflecting the power of education and collaboration!
- All 11 students enrolled in the Integrated Education Training CNA/GED class jointly taught by an HCDE adult education teacher Camilla Gilbert and a nurse from partner organization Volunteers of America, passed the Certified Nurses' Assistant State Board Examination. Students in this program will continue to work on their GEDs, transition to community college, or begin to look for jobs. This class is part of the division's efforts to accelerate adult students' path to careers, by combining vocational and basic skills training.

Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

NOVEMBER 9 TRAININGS

New Math TEKS Grades 3 & 4

Online Instructor's Training - Part III

Recruitment for HCDE Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Meeting

Captivate Students with HSTRY

NOVEMBER 10 TRAININGS

Writing Standards-Based IEPs - 2 day workshop on using the TEKS and STAAR to write IEPs

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Convection: A Current Event & Discovering Density

NOVEMBER 11 TRAINING

ESL TExES #154 Supplemental One-Day Mini Academy

NOVEMBER 12 TRAININGS

Nurtured Heart Approach

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

NOVEMBER 14 TRAININGS

Star-Based: Vocabulary Instructional Strategies

STAR-Based Reading Instruction: Focus on Comprehension

ESL Syllabus Training

Customer Service

Multi-Level Classroom: Best Practices for Teaching Adult Learners

Engaging Instructional Strategies to Promote Persistence

Beginning Literacy ESL

Graphic and Math Skills for GED Science, Math and Social Studies

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT UPDATE *(continued)*

Teaching and Learning Center Update

- The division continues to develop new trainings in special education, dyslexia, and GT. At this time, workshops are being developed in collaboration with both math and science directors to present workshops as a team to address instruction that supports general education, and also to ensure that teachers meet the needs of the special education students whom they also serve in the classroom.
- In the area of Science, the division continues to Raise the Bar in Literacy Strategies in Science, Elementary STEM, and Secondary STEM.
- TLC recently participated in Data Mining for ELA and Social Studies; was invited by HMNS, and attended the Excellence in Science luncheon at the Houston Country Club;
- Developed timeline for Hearst Foundation grant;
- Met with HGAC, City of Houston officials, City of Stafford, and others to plan Student GIS Day Day
- Received a math contract to provide 66 days of service to Southwest Charter School;
- Upcoming workshops include
 1. Digging Deeper: Applying Webb's Depth of Knowledge to the Science Classroom
 2. GEMS-Matter
 3. Captivate Students with HSTRY!
 4. GEMS-Convection: A Current Event
 5. Student GIS Day (200 students registered!)

Research and Evaluation Update

The Research and Evaluation Institute group has been engaged in the following projects:

- **Lunar and Planetary Institute STEP project**—Completed the annual program evaluation report for the fourth year of the Sustainable Trainer Engagement Program for Earth and Space Science, in collaboration with the Lunar and Planetary Institute, and funded with a grant from NASA.
- **Head Start Community Assessment**—Through an invited collaboration with the Head Start grantees in Harris County, our Research and Evaluation Institute group has met with AVANCE'S Director of Research and Evaluation and reviewed the census structure for abstracting data in preparation for Head Start's Triennial Community Assessment for years 2013-2015.
- **Head Start Research paper 1**—Finalized and sent for publication the research paper presenting the results of the social emotional development by age, gender, and language of HCDE Head Start students during 2015, with recommendations for practice and future studies of early childhood learning.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT UPDATE *(continued)*

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Staff Recently

- Attended an annual 3-day conference for the Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE) which serves as a coordinating body for all Texas educator preparation organizations;
- Conducted a practicum visit/observation in Dallas ISD for an HCDE Principal Certification Academy candidate who led the professional development session;
- Collaborated with Center for Grants Development staff to discuss grant proposal project description to be submitted to the Wallace Foundation; and
- Submitted proposed language being considered for chapters 227, 228, and 229 of the Texas Administrative Code (Title 19, Part 7), consistent with legislative changes resulting from the 84th Legislature.



Educator Certification and Professional Development staff collaborate for work session with Center for Grants Development staff

Ongoing TLC Leadership Series

TLC is gearing up for its Leadership Speaker Series. The following leaders are scheduled to speak on the following dates:

JANUARY 19, 2016

Eric Sheninger

APRIL 21, 2016

Michele DeBellis

JUNE 13, 2016

Manuel Scott

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

Jennifer Serravallo

FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Ervin Knezek

MAY 23 & 24, 2016

Tony Frontier

AUGUST 10, 2016

George Couros

OCTOBER 20, 2016

Todd Whitaker

Over 200 Expected to Attend HCDE Leadership Summit

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) is hosting a Leadership Summit next Monday, November 16 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. HCDE Superintendent Colbert is delivering the welcome and sessions will be facilitated by Dr. Kelly Brown and Dr. Nancy Robinson. Topics include Creating Cultural Responsiveness and Essential Instructional Systems for Advancing Outcomes. Sessions will be followed by lunch, networking opportunities, collaborative discussions, and reflections.

The goal of this summit is to

- Learn how to develop systems that organize teaching and learning outcomes to advance teacher and student growth;
- Understand how PLCs are used in a reflective practice model that guides teachers through a collaborative planning model: dissecting the TEKS and creating learning cultures that produce successful outcomes;
- Empower campuses with a culturally responsive model in which teachers better understand, connect, and are able to empower learning, and enrich the learning environment; and
- Reduce teacher burn-out by creating cultural buy-in through a systemic, intentionally-driven success model.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Visits Region 10



Region 10 facility

Last week, Head Start Director Venetia Peacock and Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker visited the Preschool Division of Region 10. The HCDE duo spent the first half of the day meeting with the Region 10 Preschool



HCDE's Head Start Leadership Team meets with Region 10 colleagues



Exterior of Region 10's Early Head Start facility



Venetia Peacock tours a Region 10 Head Start classroom

Division leadership team discussing "best practices" and inquiring about the facets of their Early Head Start Program. The remainder of the day was spent visiting three sites—two in Rockwall, and one in McKinney. As a result of this meeting, both entities are committed to collaborating and working together to ensure that young children are ready for Kindergarten and beyond.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Dr. Vida Avery Co-Hosts Panel Discussion at UH

As AFP-GHC Board of Directors Chair of Diversity & Community Outreach, Dr. Vida L. Avery, Resource Development Specialist with the Center for Grants Development, and Carme Williams, Executive Director and Certified Fund Raising Executive of the Houston Community College Foundation, jointly conducted a *Philanthropic Practices of Diverse Cultures* presentation and panel discussion with the University of Houston's Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Certificate Program (formerly *America Humanics*). This event served as a valuable resource to all in attendance.



HCDE's Dr. Vida Avery shown on second row, far left.

Education Foundation of Harris County in Global Spotlight



The Education Foundation of Harris County was included in the LUKOIL Overseas Oil Journal for its Ecobot Challenge Team's participation in Houston's recent Energy Day Festival. This photograph shows just one of the many impressive Energy City scale models. The Education Foundation was a proud promoter of both the Energy Day Festival as well as Ecobot. Hats off to the Foundation for having received such recognition via an international medium. To see the

newsletter, please visit the following URL:

<http://lukoil-overseas.com/upload/iblock/1a6/08112015.pdf>



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Character Education Session at Highpoint School-North

Highpoint School-North location recently hosted a Character Education presentation. Highpoint education leaders, Mr. Angeletti and Mr. Chizer, arranged for a panel of speakers to come speak to the students. The focus of the presentation was "The Power of Being Persistent." The speakers focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education. The goal of the session was to stimulate students' interests in this academic area. The panel included the following leaders in STEM education and the overall STEM professions:



Kenneth Morris

Founder/ CEO Universal Elite Aerospace.

Dr. L. Hamilton, Founder/Director

STEM UP- Science, Technology, Engineering, Math with A Urban Perspective

Mr. J.N. Beasley, Project Engineer

Chevron Corporation

Mr. W. Jones, Air Traffic Controller

Federal Aviation Administration

School District Highlight: Pearland ISD



Pearland ISD launches its new website with a scavenger hunt. New features of the site are previewed every Wednesday with a website webisode.

Details:

<http://www.pearlandisd.org/pearland>

Honoring our Veterans



AB-West location
Veterans pose for
photo in observance
of Veterans Day
2015

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Highpoint School-North Honors Its Veterans

Highpoint School-North location recognized its on-campus United States Veterans on Veterans Day. Highpoint School-North location is honored to have two teachers who are U.S. Veterans— Mr. Celeste Chizer and Mr. Theodis Robertson, both served in the United States Air Force. Highpoint School-North is also honored to have a custodian who served in the United States Marine Corps, Mr. Ronald Richard.

The three Veterans presented to the students about their military service and also provided an overview of the general history of Veterans Day, itself. The Veterans were recognized with a Certificate of Appreciation for their sacrifice. They have earned their right to be celebrated!



Annual Fall Parent Workshop at AB School-West



AB School-West held its annual Fall Parent Workshop on November 12, 2015. Dr. Keys, the school 's principal described the event as being well-attended, with more parents in attendance this year, than in previous years. School staff shared important resources pertaining to behavior support, drug prevention education, coping strategies, among other

relevant issues. Ms. Fabiana Bezerra, a Spring Branch representative, imparted a great deal of knowledge to help parents help their children be successful in school. It was evident that the parents bonded with one another and were very appreciative of the opportunity to come together for the betterment of their children. We demonstrated that it takes a village to raise a child and that AB School-West creates partnerships between school and home.



Navy Visits AB-East to Commemorate Veteran's Day

United States Navy Sailors (NOSC Houston) volunteered their time to visit with our students on November 12 as a community outreach platform. The soldiers' visit made a positive impact on AB-East students.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

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

- Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and the community; and to
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way

As AFP-GHC Board of Directors Chair of Diversity & Community Outreach, Dr. Vida L. Avery, HCDE Resource Development Specialist with the Center for Grants Development, and Carme Williams, Executive Director and Certified Fund Raising Executive of the Houston Community College Foundation, jointly conducted a Philanthropic Practices of Diverse Cultures presentation and panel discussion with the University of Houston's Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Certificate Program (formerly America Humanics). This event served as a valuable resource to all in attendance.



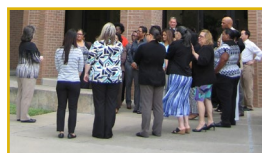
Through this event, I am helping to ensure that I meet the Board's expectations of me to have HCDE represented by attendance at events and that HCDE staff are presenting professionally to various audiences in all arenas. We are also achieving the Board's expectation to maintain visibility and involvement in the community.

Organization Morale

In keeping with the Board's expectation of me to

- Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate; and to
- Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence

In celebration of Veterans Day, the Human Resources division organized an opportunity for staff to assemble for a solemn moment of silent meditation in observance for Veterans Day. Veterans within HCDE were given the opportunity to share stories of their military service with those gathered. The moment of silent medication was held around the flagpole on the front of the building at the 6300 Irvington location.



Through my participation at this event, I am working to ensure that I meet the Board's expectations of me to attend such Department events, but moreover, to acknowledge and treat every person with respect and dignity.

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:

NOVEMBER 17, 2015

Board Training Session
11:30 a.m.
100 Rooms

NOVEMBER 17, 2015

November Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.

