

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

Board

I take this opportunity to welcome our newest trustee– Mr. Louis D. Evans, III, as he returns to the HCDE Board to complete the remainder of former Trustee Kay Smith's term. Trustee Evans is no stranger to HCDE as he previously served the Department as a member of the Board of Trustees from 2007 through 2012. As you are aware, Trustee Evans was sworn in at a Special Board Meeting this past Monday. I look forward to him joining our Team of Eight as we continue to advance teaching and learning while creating value, delivering opportunity, and providing service to the students of Harris County. Likewise, I ask that you please keep Trustee Marvin Morris in your thoughts as he undergoes surgery this week. We certainly wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Schools

It's hard to believe that we're already nearing the end of the first semester of this academic year! Our Schools division is wrapping up the fall semester within the next two weeks. The same is true for the 25 Harris County school districts. On that note, I'm pleased to report that as we close out the first semester, our Highpoint School-East location has an enrollment of 107 students. Our Highpoint School-North location is currently engaging an existing client district in increasing its contract by 25 additional students. Our Academic and Behavior School campuses are performing equally well and all four HCDE campus locations have experienced great successes this semester.

Leadership

This week, in addition to my weekly Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Meeting, I also convened my monthly Leadership Team Meeting. These meetings serve as an ideal opportunity for division directors, campus principals, and members of the ELT to come together, and tune into how, as a whole, we're moving the Department forward in perfect alignment with our mission and goals. It is at these meetings that our systemic achievement—with purposeful intent—is in panoramic view. To increase comradery, this week, we closed the meeting with a holiday lunch to celebrate the season and to show appreciation. Yesterday, I had to travel to Austin to attend an emergency UIL Meeting in my capacity as a member of the State Executive Committee.

Successes

Just to mention a few other successes, I am pleased to report that our CASE for Kids division has received full funding for the 12th consecutive year for the next one to two years, from the Houston Endowment. KIPP Academy has selected our Schools division as a partner to implement various elements of their award-winning programming into our existing academic structure. Our Schools division is realizing exceptional results during its implementation of the Edgenuity and especially in its Edgenuity Center for Excellence. Our Records Management division estimates that it's just 45 short days away from becoming a paperless environment and that's no small feat. Great things are happening at HCDE.

Advancing Teaching and Learning

Our Teaching and Learning Center performed yet another yeoman's job of training Harris County area educators this week. We started off the week hosting a Bilingual 164 TExES Supplemental Test Review. The week continued with us hosting a meeting of the Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association and a test prep series for TExES BTLPT exam. Additionally, we hosted a math leadership and writing collaborative professional development training, followed by Digging Deeper: Applying Webb's Depth of Knowledge to the Science Classroom. CASE for Kids hosted another Lending Library workshop demonstration entitled, Put some "STEM" in Your December, and we wrapped up the week with a Social Studies Leadership Group.

In Closing

Next week, we celebrate the Adult Education division's National Honor Society induction event, and our campuses are hosting their various campus holiday events. Also, please make note that our Holiday Employee Receptions will be held on next Thursday and Friday, December 10 and 11 at the North Post Oak and Irvington locations, respectively. Both receptions will take place from 2-3:30 p.m. Board members are invited.

Finally, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a great weekend!

Awareness

BOARD CONNECTIONS

Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees Appoints Louis Evans to Serve Remainder of Term for Kay Smith



Louis D. Evans, III was appointed to serve as HCDE Board of Trustee, Position 4, on November 30 to complete the remainder of the term for HCDE Board Vice President Kay Smith. Smith resigned her position to run for Texas State Representative District 130.

Evans, the executive director of distance education at the University of Houston-Downtown, served on the board from 2007 through 2012 and provided leadership as vice president from 2010 to 2012.

HCDE Board of Trustees voted on Evans' appointment in a special board meeting. Evans was sworn into oath following the meeting to serve the remainder of Smith's six-year term through 2018.

"We welcome Mr. Evans back to our board," said HCDE Board President Angie Chesnut. "His leadership and experience in education will be a great asset to our Harris County community."

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

Employee Holiday Celebrations

Administration and the Human Resources division will host receptions for staff at both the North Post Oak and 6300 Irvington locations of HCDE. Sweet treats will be provided during both employee celebrations before the Winter Break. Employees at the North Post Oak location will celebrate Thursday, December 10 from 2-3:30 p.m. Employees at the 6300 Irvington location of HCDE will celebrate the season Friday, December 11 from 2-3:30 p.m. Staff at respective locations are encouraged to join the festivities. Board Members are certainly also invited to attend.



Employee Holiday Receptions on December 10 or 11 to Include 'Ugly Holiday Sweater Contests'

Board members are invited to attend the HCDE Employee Holiday Reception of choice as we host two holiday receptions from 2-3:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10 at North Post Oak and Friday, December 11 at Irvington. Human Resources will host a friendly "Ugly Holiday Sweater Contest" at both facilities during the receptions. Attendees are urged to wear their favorite ugly holiday sweater and contact HR so that each employee has a number for voting purposes. Winners will

be selected by attendees and announced on each afternoon. If you're thinking about participating, you'll likely face some fierce competition!

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids News



November 4, 2015

CASE for Kids welcomes new member to the team. Jesselyn Allen will be the new 21st Century cycle 7 Coordinator.

November 5, 2015

CASE for Kids hosts Put Some Swirl in Your Afterschool: a Lending Library Demonstration workshop.

November 9, 2015

CASE for Kids welcomes two new VISTAS to the team.

November 11, 2015

Sit down meeting with Childcare Center Directors to talk about the needs they have.

November 12, 2015

Rising Up: Train the Trainer workshop

November 17, 2015

HCDE Board meeting presentation, All CASE staff were in attendance



November 5, 2015

CASE for Kids hosts Put Some Swirl in Your Afterschool: a Lending Library Demonstration workshop.

Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

NOVEMBER 30 TRAINING

Bilingual 164 TExES Supplemental Test Review

DECEMBER 2 TRAININGS

Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association

Test Prep Series for TExES BTLPT Exam

DECEMBER 3 TRAININGS

Math Leadership and Writing Collaborative

Digging Deeper: Applying Webb's Depth of Knowledge to the Science Classroom

Lending Library - Workshop
Demonstration - Put some "STEM" in Your December

Quarterly Operations Board Meeting

DECEMBER 4 TRAININGS

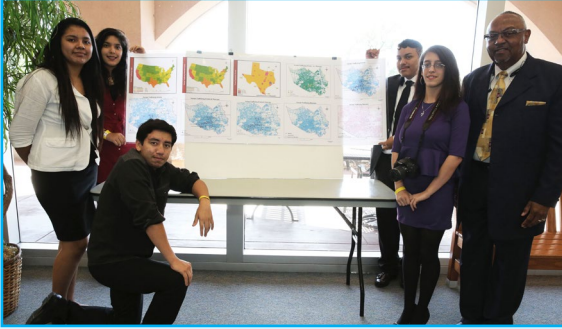
School Finance Council

Social Studies Leadership Group

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HISD Teens Present Human Trafficking Mapping Project, Explore Geographic Information Systems Careers at Event Held at HCDE



High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice students showcase their GIS mapping project supporting their study on human trafficking in Harris County. Geographic Information Systems Day 2015 was supported by GIS specialists throughout Houston and hosted by Harris County Department of Education. Left: Cristian Perez, Noelia Ochoa, Jennifer Tovar, Josue Soto, Anastasia Rabalais and Valgene Holmes

When five High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice High School students took on a project to track and map human traffickers in Houston, they never imagined they would be presenting their findings to 245 fellow geographic information systems enthusiasts at Harris County Department of Education.

The students are enrolled in a national security class in a career technology track with teacher Valgene Holmes. The panel of five Houston Independent School District students presented at the Houston Area Geographic Information Systems Day 2015 on November 19.

HCDE hosted the event as part of its commitment to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM activities in public school. GIS industry specialists from governmental organizations such as the City of Houston, the City of Stafford and the Port of Houston Authority

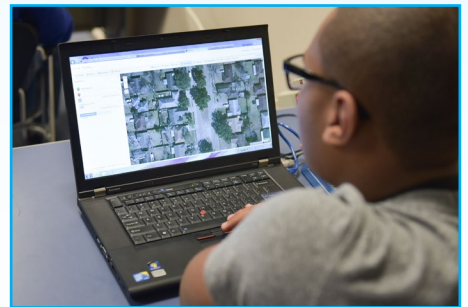
have promoted and supported the student day since 2001. Science curriculum director Lisa Felske says GIS mapping touches almost every industry, including medical, oil and gas, public works and law enforcement.

"Our students are learning about GIS so that they can explore the different career paths which are going to give them opportunities," said their teacher Valgene Holmes.

Senior Josue Soto said he is hopeful about using GIS to track his career options.

"I could work with the City of Houston or other governmental agencies," he said. "I could work on making maps for infrastructure and transportation."

Applying the GIS mapping to projects helps students attach the science to real-life situations and future professions, Holmes explained. Last year his students used GIS mapping to track sex offenders within proximity to schools. That information was fed to law enforcement to make several arrests, he said.



For more information about trainings and workshops hosted by the Teaching and Learning Center, go to www.hcde-texas.org/TLC . For more information about GIS Student Day and other yearlong activities, go to <http://www.houstonareagisday.org/> .

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

4 Students Highlighted in Story to Promote Adult Education National Honor Society 2015



Stories from four Adult Education students will be showcased to media and through the HCDE website as part of the Adult Education National Honor Society ceremony on December 11 at 10 a.m. at 6300 Irvington. Many more stories will be told on the day that 20 students will be honored as outstanding students and leaders as they are inducted by Dr. Eduardo Honold, Adult Education director.

Students include Edgar Garcia, an immigrant who survived a near-death experience which changed his life goals. Another is Raquel Lopez, a 54-year-old breast cancer survivor from Deer Park who is also committed to helping her peers in class accomplish their goals. A third student is Alief student Marianna Lende Khellah, a student from Sierra Leone who is stricken with lupus and undergoes nightly dialysis. Joseph Jeremy Gonzalez, a Bear Creek area student, is working part-time for a moving company so that he can complete his GED and to study to become an EMT through a local community college. Because he dropped out of school at age 17, it has taken him a full year to study for all parts of the new rigorous GED exam.



Science Curriculum Director Felske Presents to State Board of Education about Science TEKS Revisions

Teaching and Learning Center Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske presented to the Texas State Board of Education upon the request of member Barbara Cargill in November. Currently there is a push to streamline versus rewrite the science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS. Felske was asked to present her interpretation on streamlining revisions. She also expanded on her opinion about why she thought all of the science should not be rewritten.

Felske answered numerous questions during the presentation and was also asked to stay afterwards as an expert for an lengthy discussion about the science TEKS.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

You're Invited : School Board Recognition Month Reception on January 21

January 2016 is School Board Recognition Month on January 21 before the scheduled board meeting. HCDE is honoring its trustees during a cake-and-punch reception beginning at noon on the fourth floor at Irvington. Employees will be attending the meet-and-greet. The theme this year for the recognition month is "Super-Heroes for Schools."



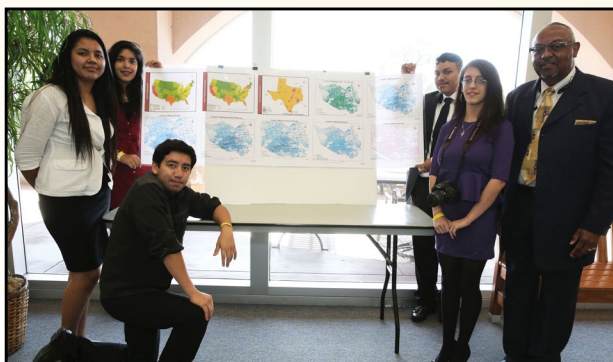
Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of the students and the community in a coordinated way



High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice students showcase their GIS mapping project supporting their study on human trafficking in Harris County. Geographic Information Systems Day 2015 was support by GIS specialists throughout Houston and hosted by Harris County Department of Education. Left: Cristian Perez, Noelia Ochoa, Jennifer Tovar, Josue Soto, Anastasia Rabalais and Valgene Holmes

HCDE hosted over 250 students and professionals at a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) event with participants from HISD, the City of Houston, City of Stafford, and the Port of Houston Authority, as well as other area organizations with an interest in GIS. By providing the venue for such a showcase, HCDE had the opportunity to once again demonstrate its relevance as an integral part of the education

landscape. Moreover, by HCDE serving as the physical focal point of this event, I am keeping with the Board's expectations of me ensure that we maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents, elected officials, and community leaders.



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:

DECEMBER 15, 2015
December Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.

