

The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education
for the HCDE Board of Trustees



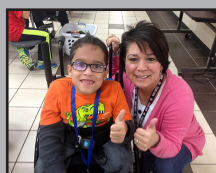
VOLUME 2/ISSUE 18
Week of January 25, 2016

From the office of JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

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OF NOTE

It was a full week at HCDE. From Sunday through Tuesday, I attended the TASA/TASB Mid-Winter Conference in Austin with representatives from my Executive Leadership Team as well as with staff from various divisions within the Department. I also participated in the TABSE Superintendents' Think Tank Session while attending the Mid-Winter Conference where Mike Morath, the recently appointed Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas, addressed superintendents. Other education notables who presented during the Think Tank Session include former U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Rod Paige, as well as Dr. Mike Moses, former Texas Education Commissioner. This experience was an excellent opportunity for professional growth for all in attendance and as always, it afforded superintendents and other education executives the chance to network with colleagues, brainstorm and brain-share, and move forward with a united purpose to advance teaching and learning for all students.

Upon my return to the office Tuesday evening, I attended the Mayor's Committee on Education Transition Meeting which was held at the HCDE Administration Building. The Transition Committee for Education is being co-chaired by Trustee Erica Lee Carter. Dr. Rod Paige also attended that meeting. Chaired by Susie Molina, this committee brings visibility to HCDE and our role in the city of Houston, as well as in the greater Harris County area. I look forward to continuing to serve as a member of this essential mayoral transition committee related to the future of education in our city.

On Wednesday, I met with the Superintendent of Klein ISD as I continue my meetings and discussions with the 25 Harris County superintendents regarding the upcoming Focal Point | Executive Leadership in Action initiative. As mentioned in last week's newsletter, the inaugural breakfast event will be held Wednesday, February 17. I am excited about the energy and interest I have received from my colleagues related to Focal Point, and I look forward to a successful inaugural event and correlating series of executive leadership experiences. To that end, yesterday, I met with the superintendent of Waller ISD, and meetings such as these will continue until I have made my rounds to all Harris County superintendents.

This week, HCDE continued to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service to the greater Harris County community. In fact, we provided the venue for a significant law enforcement audience during a multi-day training session for over 300 law enforcement officers and related officials. We also facilitated education training workshops for teachers and administrators in Harris County in the areas of mathematics, science, and history. Our grants team hosted a webinar in an effort to create opportunities for the clients we serve, and our Human Resources division repeated its internal training session, powered by Pinnacle, on the topic of Reasonable Suspicion for the remaining directors, managers, principals, and other supervisors who were required to attend this mandatory training. Additionally, we facilitated a test prep series for core subject areas for both TExES and STAAR. Finally, our School Finance Council hosted ethics training for accountants. As evidenced by this vast array of necessary offerings catered to the numerous respective audiences, great things are clearly happening at HCDE that have a powerful impact on both our city and county.

Please be reminded that we end this week tomorrow with the highly sought-after R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference that will be held at the Kingdom Builders facility located on West Orem. Your attendance is not required; however, should you wish to be introduced during the opening session of the conference as an HCDE Board Member, please arrive no later than 8:00 a.m.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Area Teachers Attend GEMS Workshop on Animal Defenses

Pre-K and kindergarten teachers from Galena Park ISD, Huffman ISD and Katy ISD attended the HCDE Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS) workshop this week called, Hide a Butterfly/Animal Defenses. During the workshop, participants created fun, hands-on projects that can be used in the classroom to explain camouflage and other animal defenses to pre-k and kindergarten students.



Soraida Morales and Lizbeth Salinas,
Galena Park ISD

Teachers Learn to Engage Students in Math through Manipulatives

Lamar Consolidated ISD teachers Holly Henderson and Emileigh Hebert (shown right) were among teachers who attended a math workshop that teaches ways to improve problem solving in mathematics using manipulatives. The workshop provided teachers with a variety of hands-on activities designed to engage students in math concepts such as distributive property.



Head Start Food Program Gives Thumbs Up

HCDE Head Start completed a successful triennial Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) Audit this week. The reviewer commented on Head Start's strong processes and a well-designed recordkeeping system. Additionally she commended the Business Services division for their documentation and organized records.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 26, 2016

Improve Problem Solving in Operations and Algebraic Reasoning

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Hide a Butterfly/Animal Defenses (6 hours G/T credit)

JANUARY 27, 2016

Uncovering History: Using Primary Sources for 8th Grade STAAR Success

Quest for Grants Training Series Webinar - The Team Approach to Proposal Writing

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy

JANUARY 28, 2016

Teaching Your Elementary ELLs the Academic Language of the STAAR Test (Grades K-5)

Ethics For Accountants

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy

Lending Library - Workshop Demonstration - Engineering for the Non-Engineer

JANUARY 29, 2016

HCDE Employees Only – Reasonable Suspicion (Mandatory training for managers, supervisors, principals, etc.)

Teaching Your Secondary ELLs the Academic Language of the STAAR Test (Grades 6-12)

JANUARY 30, 2016

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291)-All Content Areas

30th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



A Look at School-Based Therapy Services

On January 19, Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker visited with Nora Contreras at Lamkin Elementary School in Cy-Fair ISD. Contreras is a Physical Therapist Assistant, and is the Lead Therapist for HCDE's Occupational Therapy,



Physical Therapy, and Music Therapy team assigned to Cy-Fair ISD. During the visit, Parker was able to meet the supervising therapist and campus principal, as well as some other staff and students. Assistant Superintendent Parker was able to witness the dedication and experience that Ms. Contreras brings to the table. She attributes the success of the program to the effective leadership provided by School-Based Therapy Services Senior Director Jean Polichino, Managers Janice Toyota and Amy Collins, as well as her supervisor, Penny Schick. HCDE provided School-Based Therapy Services to 1600 students in Cy-Fair ISD during FY2014-15. Also of note, during Mr. Parker's site visit, the campus principal commented that HCDE has been providing school-based therapy services to her campus for several years and the service is excellent.

HCDE Adult Education Employee Jane Wilks Retires After Helping Thousands of Adult Learners



Adult Education's longtime employee Jane Wilks retired from the Baytown Learning Center after 27 years of service. Wilks helped register an estimated 27,000 students for GED and ESL classes throughout her career. See the article in the Baytown Sun: http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Press%20releasesNewFolder/BaytownSun_012516.pdf

CASE for Kids January Events

CASE for Kids continues to serve students, families, schools, and communities with workshops and trainings held throughout the month. This month, CASE for Kids held a comic book workshop that introduced literacy to afterschool in a way students can relate to, and a CPR and First Aid training to provide staff with safety procedures and steps for handling incidents onsite.

Additionally, last week was the final City Connection RFP meeting of the spring term. City Connection is a new initiative funded directly by the City of Houston to support nonprofit organizations and school districts that address the need for youth services outside the school day.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Teen Awardees Named by HCDE for Scholastic Art & Writing Awards 2016 as Volunteers Judge Record 8,177 Art, Writing Entries

Talented teen artists and writers in Harris County schools earn regional awards in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards 2016. Harris County Department of Education announced the Gold Key, Silver Key, and honorable mention awardees on January 26 through its website at www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting.

Teen recipients of awards hail from 18 Harris County school districts, 16 private schools, two charter schools, and a home school. A total of 8,177 entries were submitted—2,100 writing and 6,077 art. Of the 2,100 writing entries (including 33 portfolios), awards consist of 124 Gold Key, 172 Silver Key, and 302 honorable mentions. For the 6,077 art entries (including 324 portfolios), awards consist of 252 Gold Key, 352 Silver Key, and 506 honorable mention.

"This year we judged 40 percent more entries, allowing for more opportunities for young writers and artists in Harris County," said Andrea Seagraves, coordinator for the regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education. "We thank community professionals who volunteered to judge this unprecedented increase in student entries. We celebrate the support we have from corporations and nonprofits who value the futures of these talented teens."

Local receptions and showcases for Scholastic Art & Writing awardees will be announced on the website at www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting. Venues include The Museum of Fine Arts Houston Glassell School of Art, Archway Gallery, and Texas Art Supply, along with receptions held at Harris County Department of Education.

Teens gaining Gold, Silver, and honorable mentions this year come from the following districts: Aldine, Alief, Clear Creek, Crosby, Deer Park, Fort Bend, Galena Park, Goose Creek Consolidated, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Pearland, Spring, Spring Branch, and Tomball. Charter schools include Calvin Nelms High School, and KIPP schools. Private schools are Art Studio, Cypress Christian School, Duchesne Academy, Episcopal High School, Houston Christian School, Incarnate Word Academy, Presbyterian School, River Oaks Baptist School, St. Agnes Academy, St. John's School, St. Thomas Episcopal School, St. Thomas High School, The Branch School, The Kinkaid School, The Post Oak School, and The Village School.

Gold Key Awards in art and writing advance to the national level. Winners will be announced in May, and many students will gain the opportunity to attend ceremonies in Carnegie Hall in New York City where Scholastic Art & Writing is located.

Since its beginnings, the Awards has established a track record for identifying the early promise of our nation's most accomplished and prolific creative leaders. Alumni artists include Andy Warhol, Robert Indiana, Kay WalkingStick, and John Baldessari. Writers include Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Joyce Carol Oates, Zac Posen, Robert Redford, Lena Dunham, and Ken Burns.

For more information about Awards recipients or to judge or sponsor, go to www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Early Childhood Winter Conference Provides Action-based Learning Opportunities for 1,000 Teachers of K-2 Students

Early educators leap into action with national presenter and best-selling author Jean Feldman at the 30th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference set for January 30 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Kingdom Builders' Center.

Here are highlights planned for the day:

- Dr. Jean Feldman presents learning through song and dance from 8:30-10 a.m. as 1,000 teachers are on their feet learning through action.
- Carl Anderson, writing expert, presents singing, moving, learning at 10 a.m.
- 60-plus presenters provide break-out sessions throughout the day. Many of these expert presenters are our HCDE staff, including The Teaching and Learning Center, Center for Grants Development, and Head Start.
- Radio personality Sarah Pepper presents from 11:30 a.m.-1:45 p.m. from CBS Radio 95.7 FM with a testimonial about teachers.
- A lively exhibit hall provides products for teachers, ranging from instructional support, games, software, jewelry, and clothing.



Scene from R.T. Garcia ECWC 2015

Cybercrime Training Held by HPD at HCDE Brings in National Expert Bazzell for 300 Officers

Three hundred investigator and analysts throughout the nation attended a three-day cybercrime workshop at HCDE organized by Houston Police Department Vice Division Captain Dan Harris.

The Open Source Intelligence training was led by world renowned cybercrimes and online investigations expert Michael Bazzell.

With the growth of the Web, law enforcement finds it imperative to stay on top of online investigative techniques, whether it is criminal activity on the Internet, communication of illegal activity or gathering information on suspects.

With over 18 years of law enforcement experience as an investigator, Bazzell specialized in cybercrimes, investigations into child exploitations, homicides, and more. Gaining notoriety in the world of online security, Bazzell is an annual keynote speaker at the global Blackhat conference, famous for bringing together the world's leaders in online security. He is also the author of two bestselling books. With assistance from Bazzell, law enforcement can stay relevant and up-to-date with online activities and social network trends.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

AB School West Celebrates Honor Roll, Perfect Attendance Students

The students and staff at AB School West celebrated those students who made the honor roll and had perfect attendance for the third six weeks. Principal Dr. Victor Keys said he used the celebration to remind students that hard work does pay off.



Highlights

2016 TASA/TASB Mid-Winter Highlights



Former United States Department of Education Secretary Dr. Rod Paige presents to superintendents during the TABSE Superintendents' Think Tank Session this week in Austin, Texas during the TASA/TASB Mid-Winter Conference



Recently-appointed Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas Mike Morath meets with superintendents from all areas of Texas during Think Tank Session



Dr. Mike Moses, former Commissioner of Education for state of Texas and renowned leader in public education engages group during Think Tank Session

District Highlight: Tomball ISD



Tomball ISD hosts its 40th Annual FFA Project Show January 28-30, featuring 300-plus exhibitors showing chickens, goats, lambs, rabbits, swine, and steers. Show and auction details...

Details:

<http://www.tomballisd.net/apps/news/article/530123>



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

- Function as the primary ambassador for the Department;
- Present a positive professional image of myself and of the Department;
- Maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents, elected officials, and community leaders;
- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness; and
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration

This week, several employees of the Department and I attended the TASA/TASB Mid-Winter Conference in Austin which served as yet another excellent opportunity to increase HCDE's visibility, allow me to serve as the primary ambassador for the Department, interact with superintendents who were in attendance from all areas of the state of Texas, stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration, and hear from education leaders in the state of Texas. Further, upon my return from that conference, I attended a meeting in conjunction with the Mayor's Education Transition Team, in which HCDE served as the meeting venue. This meeting provided additional visibility for HCDE and my role on that committee serves as yet another avenue for me to continue meeting the goals of the Board.



Through HCDE's representation at the TASA/TASB Mid-Winter Conference, the TABSE Superintendent's Think Tank Session held during the Mid-Winter event, and at the Mayor's Education Transition Team Meeting, I am ensuring that I meet the Board's goals of me to

- **Communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department in a variety of formats, platforms, and public meetings;**
- **Represent HCDE by attendance at such events;**
- **Listen and take into account differing viewpoints of various constituencies; and**
- **Assess any new and effective professional development tools available, and determine their applicability to HCDE staff.**

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

1:00 p.m.

Room 400

