

The CONNECTOR



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**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

I trust you had a relaxing Labor Day Holiday. To that end, I also assume you might have seen the news coverage related to the unfortunate incident involving the San Antonio area referee who was 'allegedly' assaulted by two San Antonio area high school football players last week. That incident called for an unexpected change in my plans this week as I returned to work this past Tuesday, after the Labor Day Holiday, only to be notified that my attendance was necessary at an Emergency Meeting of the UIL in Austin regarding this very matter. As a result, it was necessary for me to attend this Emergency Meeting/Discovery Hearing which also garnered national media attention.

Over last weekend and earlier in the week, this incident was been in the national spotlight. It has trended on social media—having received 8,000,000 hits on YouTube—as of Wednesday. The gathering of a select few members of the UIL Executive was certainly no different.

Meanwhile, HCDE's operations were just as busy as mine. We hosted Part III of the Online Instructors' Training, and we also held an information meeting to recruit candidates for the Alternative Certification Program for Teachers. The Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association held its meeting here at HCDE, as well as the Attendance Officers' Share Session/Legislative Update regarding the new truancy laws. Finally, our CASE division held a CPR/First Aid training session. It's obvious that our staff continues to create value, deliver opportunity, and provide service.

I am pleased to report that, as of this week, 80 vendors have reserved booths for the 2015 Choice Partners School Nutrition Expo that will be held at the Humble Civic Center Thursday, October 22, 2015. Moreover, 67 of them will be offering samples to help school districts plan for the 2016-2017 school year. The most discriminating taste buds will be hard at work that day judging the many sample treats—students from the area Harris County School Districts. This is always an exciting event for all who attend.

We are still awaiting information from KHOU Channel 11 regarding the airdate of the interview that took place last week at the Academic and Behavior East campus. I will keep you apprised as I am informed.

Please be reminded that the regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held next Tuesday, September 15, 2015, at 1:00 p.m. I look forward to seeing each of you there.

I hope you have a nice weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Thanks again for your service to HCDE.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Administrative Support and Development Meeting

Assistant Superintendent of Education and Enrichment, Kimberly McLeod, facilitated a meeting September 9 for administrative support professionals. Directors from the Education and Enrichment division presented the Rising Star "You Make a Difference" award to Sanjuanita Vela, Adult Education division, who recently celebrated 20 years of service to HCDE. Topics discussed included changes to Department-wide procedures and updates on area divisions and professional development opportunities. The Education and Enrichment divisions include Adult Education, Center for Grants Development, Teaching and Learning Center, Educator Certification and Professional Advancement, and the Research and Evaluation Institute.



Center for Grants Development District Information Session

Representatives from six area school districts attended an information meeting held by Center for Grants Development on September 3 at HCDE. Division director, Gayla Maynard-Rawlinson, facilitated the discussion of topics which included:

- Discussion of district needs
- How can CGD and districts best work together
- CGD services available to districts



It's a Jungle Out There!

Attend the Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit October 30

Choice Partners invites you to attend its Vendor Exhibit on October 30 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at 6300 Irvington in the Conference Center. This year's theme is "Navigate the Procurement Jungle with Choice Partners."

The exhibit showcases a variety of vendors through exhibit space. Food and door prizes are included. To attend, register at <http://www.choicepartners.org/choice-partners-annual-exhibit>



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

SEPTEMBER 7 TRAINING

Online Instructors' Training - Part III

SEPTEMBER 8 TRAINING

Recruitment for HCDE Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Meeting

SEPTEMBER 9 TRAINING

Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association

SEPTEMBER 10 TRAINING

Attendance Officers' Share Session - Legislative Update

SEPTEMBER 10 TRAINING

CASE for Kids - CPR/1st Aid



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Educators Strategize on Decreasing Truancy at Attendance Officers Meeting September 10

Attendance officers, school counselors and Child Protective Service officers throughout Harris County came to HCDE to meet about the ramifications of HB 2398 on Sept. 10. Discussions between the 200 attendees included how the law will affect schools, families and the court system. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed legislation to decriminalize truancy this summer.



Nathaniel Broussard, Cy-Fair ISD attendance officer, welcomed the group along with Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley. An overview of the criminal juvenile justice system was presented by Katie Chancia, staff attorney for Harris County Justice Courts.



Assistant District Attorney Johanna Craft talked about truancy prevention measures and truancy referrals. The event included a question-and-answer session at the end.

5 tips from Cyber Education Specialists to Keep Kids Digitally Safe, Create Responsible Online Citizens:

When it comes to student safety in the cyber world, digital content and education specialists David McGeary and Lynnice Hockaday know about the threats. From predators to hackers to intellectual property theft, they hear many a story in the trenches.

Still, these digital educators who provide services for educators and students through Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center prefer to focus on the positives of online learning. They believe they are preparing young responsible digital citizens of the future.

A responsible digital citizen is defined as someone who uses an online digital community as a communication and collaborative tool for the greater good.

"You build an online presence in a socially ethical way and also are able to judge the credibility of the information online while protecting users' privacy and safety," said Hockaday.

As HCDE digital specialists, the pair helps teachers find online resources that enhance learning in the classroom. They also help teachers develop a positive online presence to provide information and resources to students and parents.

"We help teachers build engaging online content for mainstream curriculum, as well as support for struggling students," said McGeary.



Facilitators Lynnice Hockaday and David McGeary

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Employees Wear Blue Ribbons, Flags Flown at Half-Staff for Deputy Darren Goforth

Employees wore blue ribbons and flags were flown at half-staff on September 4 as HCDE honored deceased Harris County Deputy Darren Goforth.

Ginger Thomas, Facilities, crafted the blue ribbons and made them available at Irvington and North Post Oak lobbies. Adult Education staff took many of them to classrooms with teachers and students to honor Goforth.

Both the Texas and American flags were flown at half-staff throughout the week. Thomas said the ribbons were a way for staff to pay respect to the officer, his family and fellow officers.



HCDE Hosts HCAD 3rd Annual CFO Summit

HCDE is hosting the Harris County Appraisal District's 3rd Annual Chief Financial Officer Summit on October 7, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. in the HCDE Conference Center. Connecting the Dots: Impacts of the 84th Legislative Session focuses on how Harris County economic trends and the new laws from the recent legislative session will impact property values and taxes.

Speakers will include Mike Sullivan, Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector; Patrick Jankowski with the Greater Houston Partnership; John Kennedy with the Texas Taxpayers and Research Association; Donna Warndorf with Harris County; Debbie Cartwright, Olson & Olson; and Jim Popp of Popp Hutcheson.



Keynote luncheon speaker is Texas State Senator Paul Bettencourt. To register, go to <http://wms.hcde-texas.org/> and search by workshop date.

Value

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

HCDE Technical Assistance Responsible for Pay Raises in La Marque ISD; Mentioned in Houston Chronicle

In yesterday's online Houston Chronicle edition, HCDE was acknowledged for its technical business assistance to La Marque ISD. Because of HCDE's ability to get the troubled district's finances in order, La Marque ISD was able to give a much-needed raise to its district staff. The article was entitled La Marque ISD Strives to Leave Troubles Behind. Dr. Jesus Amezcua and other members of HCDE's Business Services division have been working closely with La Marque ISD officials since January of this year.

Conflict of Interest Forms Released to the Public

Due to recent changes to Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code by the Texas legislature, new rules have expanded personnel who are subject to conflict of interest requirements. In summary the new CIS form requires that applicable staff file these forms if they have a conflict of interest, and if they are involved in the (a) planning, (b) recommending, (c) selecting, or (d) contracting of a vendor. Conflict of interest is defined as having: (1) an employment/business relationship, (2) receiving a gift of more than \$100 in the aggregate, or (3) or having a family relationship.

These forms are available at our website, and the Texas Ethics Commission website at https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/filinginfo/conflict_forms.htm

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's goals for the superintendent to **work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way**, I served in my capacity as a member of the UIL State Executive Committee during this week's Emergency Meeting/Discovery Hearing regarding the San Antonio football players and referee incident. My appointment to this committee consistently increases HCDE's visibility. **This week, as a result of HCDE's representation on the UIL State Executive Committee, the Department received exposure at the local, state, and national levels through the nearly 20 media outlets that covered this newsworthy event.**



Photo taken from www.khou.com (KHOU/Channel 11 website)

Still, in keeping with the same goal, for the superintendent to **work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way**, HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools division hosted a Truancy summit for attendance officers, school counselors, and Children's Protective Services officers throughout Harris County. **HCDE was the focal point of this county-wide event that discussed the ramifications of HB2398—the recent legislation that impacts districts across the state of Texas.**



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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

SEPTEMBER 15
September Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.

