

# The CONNECTOR

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for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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From the office of JAMES COLBERT, JR. – SUPERINTENDENT

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## OF NOTE

As I mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**, this week I attended a professional development retreat, The Wilderness Experience, as part of my responsibility to the current class of the American Leadership Forum. I will return to Houston tonight. I look forward to providing you a summary of this unique professional growth opportunity in the next issue of **The Connector**.

This week in the area of advancing teaching and learning, we hosted trainings for Harris County educators including Part I of an Online Instructor's Training, a Career Choice Recruitment Seminar, the 11th Annual You Gotta Have Art Workshop, and a Charter School Roundtable. I am pleased to report that we also hosted the Science Teachers and Industry Workshop this week—a several-day workshop where more than 40 middle and high school science teachers were in attendance. The event, which took place Monday through today, was sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council and a host of chemical companies. It featured industry speakers who addressed the chemical industry's concern for the environment as well as the industry's impact on the environment. The event was very well-attended and garnered great visibility for HCDE. It allowed the Department to continue to partner with various entities within the community. Please see additional information regarding this event on page 2 of this issue of **The Connector**. HCDE continues to lead in equipping educators to help students achieve.

Also, in partnership with the community, Crime Stoppers and HCDE will host the 2016 School Safety Summit on August 3, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Irvington location. This event will convene school administrators and school-based law enforcement officers to discuss those issues facing campuses during the upcoming school year.

You may recall that the Department usually hosts an Annual Staff Meeting during the month of August. This year's event will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2016 at the Kingdom Builders' venue located at 6011 West Orem Drive in Houston, Texas. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the program will start at 10:00 a.m. Activities will conclude at 12:00 noon. As referenced in previous issues of **The Connector**, this event serves as a kickoff convocation for the start of the academic year—providing an opportunity for nearly all staff to convene at one location. All members of the HCDE Board of Trustees are invited to attend. This serves as a great opportunity to recognize and motivate staff.

Please be reminded that the July Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 26, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. During the meeting, we will recognize three area journalists. The journalists will be honored by HCDE through the TASB-sponsored Statewide Media Honor Roll. This year's journalists to be recognized include Lauren Talarico (KHOU Channel 11), Jessica Rivera (KXLN Univision 45), and Sylvia Oben (Semana News). These three media professionals are being placed in the spotlight for their contributions to public education with fair, accurate, and balanced reporting. Please see page 2 of this issue of **The Connector** regarding the 2016 Media Honor Roll honorees.

Also, please note that the date of the hearing for the Interim Study, as it relates to HCDE, is fast-approaching. It will take place before the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, August 3, in Austin, Texas.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend. Thanks for your service to HCDE.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Three Houston Journalists Honored by HCDE through Statewide Media Honor Roll 2016



Three Houston journalists are honored by Harris County Department of Education through the Texas Association of School Boards Media Honor Roll 2016 on July 26 at 1 p.m. at the HCDE board meeting, 6300 Irvington Blvd. The recognized communicators are Lauren Talarico, reporter and fill-in anchor for KHOU-TV Channel 11, Jessica Rivera, managing assignments editor for KXLN-TV Univision 45 and Sylvia Oben, multimedia journalist for Semana News.

The journalists are being honored for their contributions to public education with fair, accurate and balanced reporting.

"These journalists abide by their public duty to report bad news, but they also supply good news by sharing the success stories of our students, teachers and educational services," said James Colbert, Jr., superintendent at HCDE. "By honoring them, we are showing our appreciation for their support of public education in Harris County."

Talarico reported about HCDE's school for students with intellectual or behavioral disabilities. HCDE serves area school districts that have children with severe emotional and special physical needs through its Academic and Behavior Schools, schools with low student to teacher ratios and individualized student learning plans.

Rivera assigned several news stories related to HCDE's Adult Education program and its teacher alternative certification program. The stories helped with recruitment of students and teachers.

Rivera and Talarico also both served on a media panel for the Houston Area School Public Relations Association, an event that supports networking between school district communications and local media.

Oben provided vital information to the public about bullying through HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools and also helped with student recruitment for Adult Education through a GED graduation story. Both stories were delivered through print, and online through video.

The three journalists will receive plaques and accolades through a video presentation at Tuesday's meeting of the HCDE Board.

### Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### **JULY 18, 2016**

Online Instructor's Training - Part I

#### **JULY 19, 2016**

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

#### **JULY 20, 2016**

You Gotta Have Art:  
11th Annual Workshop

Charter Roundtable

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Science Teachers and Industry Workshop at HCDE Helps Educators, Students Understand Local Industry through Hands-On Training



Humble ISD Creekwood Middle School teachers Kim Delacruz and Paul Tagliabue gather products produced at area chemical plant manufacturing, including Coke bottles and Gorilla Gel.

Teachers throughout Harris County gained a better understanding of the chemical manufacturing industry and area chemical plants through a summer workshop from July 18-22 hosted by Harris County Department of Education and sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council and a host of companies. In turn, area middle and high schools benefited by learning how science applies to the workplace.

Included in the workshop were tours of chemical plants, an overview of the Houston Ship Channel, and a consumer product bucket assembly of products produced by companies in the Houston area such as Ziploc baggies, Gorilla Gel, masking tape, Ivory soap, and baby diapers. Educators take those buckets back into their classrooms to show students tangible items produced by industry.

Academic science specialists and industry experts presented a full scope of environmental viewpoints during the four-day workshop. The workshop ended with company representatives explaining about careers in the industry, and educational requirements to qualify for the jobs.

Monty Heins, Dow Chemical Company employee and chairman of the East Harris County Manufacturers Association, represents about 90 companies in the association which collaboratively reach out in the community to recruit new workers. His overview of the Houston Ship Channel at the workshop helps equip the teachers with knowledge about professional opportunities for their students.

"We offer a spectrum of jobs in our industry but our workforce is our future," he said. "It's an important piece of what our organization does."

Karen Nickel, Pearland High School chemistry teacher, said the knowledge she gains to help students get to know the local chemical industry helps her get across the concept of how many jobs rely on chemistry knowledge in the Gulf Coast.

Paul Tagliabue, Humble ISD Creekwood Middle School science teacher, said it's every science teacher's challenge to make real-world connections.

"This workshop is so relevant to our kids—this is our challenge—to make things relevant," he said.

Baytown Nature Center teacher and naturalist Christina Butcher conducts field trips at the nature center with Goose Creek Consolidated students. She believes in the balance between nature and industry. Neighboring company Exxon Mobil is funding nature center field trips for preschoolers at the center. Chevron funds a summer science camp in the wetlands refuge.



Pearland High teacher Karen Nickel gathers her bucket of items produced locally through Houston-area chemical plant manufacturing.



Baytown Nature Center naturalist and teacher Christina Butcher finds products produced by many of the plants neighboring the nature center in Baytown.

HCDE science curriculum director Lisa Felske coordinates the workshop each year. She believes it's important for teachers to meet industry professionals so that they can explain chemical industry processes to their students.

"Teachers get an overview of the cycling of plastics—from raw materials to manufactured products to plastic recycling," she said. "They meet chemical engineers, plant managers and other industry professionals as they go on tours and take in the seminars."

Teachers take the information back into the classroom and are empowered with first-person background information for their students, including details about everyday products that consumers use related to the chemical industry.



The workshop was sponsored by Covestro, the Association of Chemical Industry of Texas, Dow, INEOS Olefins & Polymers USA, LyondellBasel, Lubrizol, the American Chemistry Council, BASF, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP, Ashland, Eastman, Kaneka, Purse Salt Baytown, LLC, REF-CHEM, TPC Group, Underground Services Markham, LLC, Underground Storage, LLC, and OXEA.

For more information about upcoming educator workshops at HCDE, go to [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org).

More than 40 middle and high school science teachers attended the Science Teachers and Industry Workshop July 18-21 at Harris County Department of Education sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council. The workshop features industry speakers and addresses the chemical industry's concern for and impact upon the environment. Pictured are Monty Heins, Dow Chemical Company and East Harris County Manufacturers Association chairman; Lisa Felske, HCDE science curriculum director; Gene Chiappetta, retired University of Houston professor; John Koegel, Dow Chemical Company and Science Teachers and Industry Workshop chair; Jennifer Wolf, INEOS Olefins & Polymers USA and Texas Chemical Council Outreach Committee; and Jhon Cuthbertson, BIC Alliance member services representative.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



### Roberta Scott Joins HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools as School Safety Solutions Specialist

Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools has appointed Roberta Scott to a new position as safety solutions specialist. The center was formed in 1999 by HCDE at the request of local superintendents to provide increased safety and security strategies in school environments for students and educators.

Scott's tenured experience in education will enhance the center's ability to serve area school districts with increased safety and security strategies, said Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley.

Her diverse résumé reflects many areas of expertise, including more than 10 years of experience enhancing educational standards for schools. She worked for Baltimore County Public Schools as counselor coordinator and also served students in Houston Independent School District as academic program manager for Apollo 20, an initiative created six years ago to increase academic performance and close the achievement gap.

Originally from Beaumont, Scott has lived in the Houston area for 24 years. She earned a doctorate in educational leadership and a master's degree in counseling education from Prairie View A&M University and a bachelor's degree in speech communication from Texas Southern University.

"Roberta Scott is a smart, dedicated professional whose vast experience in education will be a huge asset to the center as she brings knowledge and enthusiasm to her new role," said Burley. "Her ability to put in place long-term strategies to improve the lives of students will help us continue to increase safety and security in area schools, which now more than ever is extremely important."

Scott, also a parent of a school-aged daughter, emphasized the critical and timely nature of her role, which among other things involves conducting safety audits to ensure that schools are prepared for the unexpected.

"As educators, it's so important that we do not forget our responsibility to protect and nurture the stars of our future, our students," she said.

**About the Center for Safe and Secure Schools:** Developed at the request of local superintendents in the spring of 1999 to advance safe and secure environments for learning and teaching, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools is a leader in the development of increased safety and security strategies in school environments for students and educators. Learn more about the trainings and other opportunities we offer at [www.safeandsecureschools.org](http://www.safeandsecureschools.org).

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Crime Stoppers, Center for Safe and Secure Schools Host 2016 School Safety Summit August 3



In partnership with Crime Stoppers, HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools hosts the 2016 School Safety Summit on August 3, 2016 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd. This free event will bring together school-based law enforcement officers, school

administrators, and those responsible for student safety for a back-to-school summit focused on issues facing campuses in 2016-2017.

The summit will feature keynote speakers Constable Alan Rosen from Harris County Precinct 1 and Don Alwes from the National Tactical Officers Association among others who will speak on mental health, restorative justice, open carry laws, and more. To register, visit <https://goo.gl/rD8oDU>.

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



### AB School West Hosts End-of-Summer School Activity Featuring Hydraulic Arm

Five AB School West students participated in a Hydraulic Arm Challenge last week as part of the end-of-summer activity. Using the hydraulic arm, the students were challenged with completing a series of tasks such as stacking items and placing items in a cylinder.

Participating students were Elizabeth Davis (first place), Jose Jaimes (second place), Kywan Utley and Gabriel Mazagios (third place), and Eoiel Vega (fourth place).

"Each year these challenges are designed to encourage teamwork and the social and academic skills learned throughout the school year," said AB West Principal Dr. Victor Keys.

In addition to the social and academic skills, the challenges add an element of fun and help develop fine- and gross-motor skills. To view photos from the challenge, visit <https://goo.gl/BI44SX>.



# 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 students and the community in a coordinated way



This week, July 18-21, HCDE hosted the Science Teachers and Industry Workshop sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council and a host of area chemical companies. The event was attended by

more than 40 middle and high school science teachers as well as the Science Teachers and Industry Workshop Chair.

This event exemplified the Board's goal for HCDE to work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.



**In doing so, it fuels our path to meet the Board's expectations that we communicate the needs of the Department in a variety of formats and listen and take into account differing viewpoints of various constituencies using good judgment to discern the best decision and action for the Department.**

## HCDE BOARD

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Diane Trautman  
*Position 3, At Large*

Michael Wolfe  
*Position 5, At Large*

## UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

**July Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, July 26, 2016  
1:00 p.m.  
Room 400

**Senate Education Committee Hearing**  
Wednesday, August 3, 2016  
3:00 p.m.  
Capitol Extension  
Room E1.028  
Austin, Texas

