

The CONNECTOR

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



VOLUME 2/ISSUE 43
Week of July 25, 2016

From the office of JAMES COLBERT, JR. – SUPERINTENDENT

IN THIS ISSUE



Head Start Recruitment
Includes 13 Billboards Across
Northeast Harris County
pg. 4



Three Houston journalists
honored by HCDE
through Statewide Media
Honor Roll 2016
pg. 5



Summer Learning Day
Supporters Rally to Promote
Awareness
pg. 8



Area Educators Get Creative at
You Gotta Have Art Workshop
pg. 8

OF NOTE

As you know, I returned to the office this week after having spent last week in Colorado participating in an extensive professional development experience with my American Leadership Forum (ALF) cohorts. The Wilderness Experience, as it is called, is based on tremendous teamwork; in-depth communication; problem-solving; recognizing, identifying, and reconciling differences; and developing coping strategies, just to name a few. This unique professional development opportunity was very enlightening to my cohorts and me. So much of what we acquired last week, as a result of the experience, can certainly be applied to our professional lives. See pages 2 and 3 for scenes from The Wilderness professional development experience.

I take this opportunity to thank each of you who attended the July Board Meeting this past Tuesday. As always, thank you for your service to HCDE.

This week, I continued my meetings with Harris County school superintendents, as I shore up HCDE's relationship with the education executives of the school districts we serve. Our relationship with the Houston area superintendents help to further solidify and validate the missions of both the 25 Harris County school districts as well as HCDE.

I also met with a representative from Upskill Houston in the Department's ongoing efforts to increase the skillset and associated earning power of our Adult Education student population. Our collaboration with various entities towards this end has proven to be productive and offers our Adult Education population the opportunity for alternative but lucrative career paths—especially for women. I will continue to keep you abreast of these developments.

Today, I attended Commissioner Jack Morman's Annual Precinct 2 Superintendents' Luncheon. It was hosted by Keith Moore, the Superintendent of Crosby ISD. This forum for superintendents from Precinct 2 is an ideal opportunity to meet and discuss issues facing our parts of Harris County. It is also an excellent venue to continue our collective networking efforts. For me, it provides yet another chance to increase the visibility of HCDE.

This week in the area of advancing teaching and learning, we hosted a variety of pertinent trainings and workshops including Interpreting Multiple Representations of Data for grades 3-5, Proportionality for grades 6-8, and several Biology EOCs such as A Closer Look at the Mechanisms of Genetics, A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification, A Closer Look at Biological Processes and Systems, as well as a Closer Look at Interdependence and Environmental Systems. Other sessions this week included Unlock REAL Success: 4 Keys to Leveraging Leadership and Reaching Your Potential and Model Drawing for grades 6-8.

As you know, our hearing before the Senate Education Committee as it relates to the Interim Study of HCDE will be held Wednesday, August 3, 2016. I will travel to Austin Tuesday evening and will return to Houston Wednesday night. The hearing will be held Wednesday morning in Austin, at the Capitol Extension in Room E1.028. I am pleased to represent Harris County Department of Education during those proceedings. Please note that HCDE is only one of three topics being discussed.

Please be reminded that our Annual Staff Meeting will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2016 at the Kingdom Builders' event venue located at 6011 West Orem Drive in Houston, just off of Beltway 8. 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. All members of the HCDE Board of Trustees are invited to attend. I look forward to this annual opportunity to recognize and motivate our hard-working staff.

In closing, thanks again for all you do and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a relaxing weekend.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SCENES FROM THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

In conjunction with The American Leadership Forum

As mentioned, I attended mandatory professional development in order to help fulfil my obligation to this year's ALF class. The Wilderness Experience, in Florissant, Colorado, takes place in the mountains and defines each class, creating trust and understanding necessary to work collaboratively for the duration of the ALF experience and beyond. Every principle is applicable to the professional lives of each participant. It is opportunity for class members to remove themselves from everyday life and devote significant time to closely interact with cohorts and allow for both professional and personal introspection.

The following images capture the essence of The Wilderness Experience. Primary elements focused on, but were not limited to, the following:

- Trust
- Teamwork
- Perseverance
- Problem-solving



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



About the American Leadership Forum:

The American Leadership Forum joins and strengthens diverse leaders to serve the common good. This occurs through an intense yearlong program that fosters learning and trust among experienced leaders from every sector of the community. The result is a unique forum where barriers between people are removed, issues are openly discussed, and solutions emerge that benefit the entire community.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Recruitment Includes 13 Billboards Across Northeast Harris County



Billboard located on I-10 near Lathrop Road

Head Start recruitment for both families and teachers kicks into high gear this month as 13 electronic and poster billboards feature two messages. One billboard recruits families for Head Start. The other recruits Early Head Start teachers for HCDE. In particular, HCDE is targeting families in the La Porte area and near our new Tidwell Head Start location, said Venetia Peacock, senior director. The billboards are partially paid for by Head Start. Community partner Clear Channel Outdoor continues to generously donate in-kind billboard space to help with the recruitment process.

Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JULY 25, 2016

Interpreting Multiple Representations of Data in Grades 3-5

Proportionality, Grades 6-8

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Cell Structure and Function

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at the Mechanisms of Genetics

JULY 26, 2016

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification

JULY 27, 2016

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Biological Processes and Systems

JULY 28, 2016

Unlock REAL Success: 4 Keys to Leveraging Leadership and Reaching Your Potential

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Interdependence and Environmental Systems

Model Drawing for Grades 6-8

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

2016 School Safety Summit Set for August 3 at HCDE to Strategize for Back-to-School



The 2016 School Safety Summit is scheduled for Wednesday, August 3 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas. School-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, teachers, and campus-level staff are invited to the free event.

"Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools and Crime Stoppers are partnering to bring in some of the best minds in education to talk about how we can keep our schools safe in light of trending concerns," Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley said. "These concerns include the rise in active shooter incidents, implementation of new truancy laws for Texas, and the need to reduce the heavy reliance on exclusionary practices such as out-of-school suspension to discipline our students."

Due to an expected high demand for the free event, registration is required by accessing: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/teachers-workroom/wms/> (search for workshop by date).

Keynote speakers for the event include Constable Alan Rosan of Harris County Precinct 1 and Don Alwes, National Tactical Officers Association. Breakout session topics will cover de-escalation techniques, mental health, officer-administration relationships, juvenile law updates, open carry, restorative justice, and more.

Other presenters include representatives from the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Region IV Education Service Center, Mental Health America, Restorative Justice Collaborative of Houston, Klein ISD Police Department, Highland Park ISD, Childress ISD, and United Against Human Trafficking.

"The summit is a great way for educators to jump-start the school year by coming together and collaborating with experts in the field of school safety," Burley said.

For details about registration, contact Michelle Sacks, msacks@crime-stoppers.org.



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

Three Houston journalists were 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. The recognized communicators were 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. Both Univision 45, and KHOU Channel 11 ran stories about our heralded media heroes:

(left front) Jessica Rivera, Univision 45, Lauren Talarico, KHOU-TV and Sylvia Oben, Semana News accept their Texas Association of School Boards Media Honor Roll awards from HCDE board members (left back) Marvin Morris, Eric Lee Carter, Don Sumners, Vice President Louis Evans, Mike Wolfe, Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. and HCDE Board President Angie Chesnut applauding their accomplishments.

View TV coverage:

<https://youtu.be/b247fg9i4oE> <https://youtu.be/GoYe4AWsvM0>

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Community Spotlight: Pastor Maceo Dillard, Jr. Impacts Students through Connection to Compton Head Start Center



When Pastor Maceo Dillard, Jr. of Restoration Missionary Baptist Church enters the Compton Head Start Center, he hears excited chants of “Pastor, Pastor!” throughout the hallways. Dillard has been an official volunteer at the Compton center for two years and from the moment he stepped on campus he was a positive, encouraging role model for students.

Giving back to the community is in Dillard’s nature, but he has a special connection to the Compton center and Head Start. Before Dillard began kindergarten in 1970, he was taught for three years by the Compton community center namesake, Esther Compton.

“Esther Compton inspired us to learn,” said Dillard. “When I started elementary school I felt I was ahead of my classmates and was always willing to help my peers. It is the foundation on which I am still standing today.”

Dillard has become a staple at the Compton center and volunteers in a variety of ways. He reads to students once a month as part of the SuperMENtors program, a male-mentoring reading program, but visits the center at least once a week. He supports teachers in their classrooms, helps with field days and other events, or simply visits with students to uplift and encourage them.

“Having a positive male figure at the center is important for our students,” said Compton Center Manager Merevonna Ross. “It provides a well-balanced and structured environment in the classroom and community.”

In addition to his experience with Esther Compton, Dillard’s mother was a Head Start center director for more than 14 years. These connections and first-hand experiences with Head Start led him to send his four children to Head Start.

“Head Start is the foundation that my children’s education and life skills are built on,” explained Dillard. “They all graduated school in the top five percent of their class, and it all began with Head Start.”

Like many parents, volunteers, and community members, Dillard has seen the benefits Head Start provides Harris County children. He hopes that others will continue to invest in the future by supporting Head Start services, just as Esther Compton invested in him as a child.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



(left) Clear Channel Outdoor Vice President of Public Affairs Lee Vela; CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers; Harris County Precinct 2 Youth Education Town II Director Tiffany Harding; Harris County Precinct 2 Senior Director of Operations Helen Berrott-Tims; and Harris County Precinct 2 Superintendent of Youth Services Tammy Taylor.

Summer Learning Day Supporters Rally to Promote Awareness

Local afterschool supporters show off several miniature versions of billboards sponsored through Clear Channel Outdoor that promote Summer Learning Day in Houston. The annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) was initiated to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer. Locally the event involved children enrolled in summer enrichment programs through Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, and Harris County Precinct 2. Children at the Youth Education Town II, a Harris County Precinct 2 community center at 10918 Bentley, participated with an endurance course, superhero masks, "power" snacks, community leader readers and superhero comic strips.



Avery Acquires Book Donation

Dr. Vida L. Avery, Resource Development Specialist with the Center for Grants Development, secured a 226 book donation from the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company for CASE for Kids' Summer Learning Day reading event for youth aging from 5 -17yrs. of age. The donation included 50 big books for early childhood and a variety of genres for middle and high school grades in English and Spanish. The Summer Learning Day is an annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association to elevate the importance of kids learning and being safe and healthy every summer.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Area Educators Get Creative at You Gotta Have Art Workshop



Harris County elementary teachers got creative during the 11th Annual You Gotta Have Art workshop July 20-21. This two-day workshop allowed teachers to create art projects that they are able to recreate with their students in the classroom, complete with lesson plans.

Under the instruction of artist and consultant Joe Culotta, teachers were able to explore new ways to use existing and new media to make art exciting and fun for students.

"I use art as a teaching tool for educators to help kids get excited about school," said Culotta. "During the workshop, we also infuse art with social studies, math, and language arts to create interdisciplinary art projects."

For more than 20 years, Culotta has traveled throughout school districts in Texas to assist art teachers and other educators who incorporate art into their lessons.

A few of the projects completed during the workshop include relief sculptures from a flat surface, fabric design with applied design techniques on cotton and silk fabrics, and art pieces with five canvases to practice design flow.



For Aldine ISD's Sara Gomer, You Gotta Have Art provided a foundation for her classroom and an outlet to share ideas with other art teachers. Previously a kindergarten teacher, she will begin her first year teaching art in the fall.

"Art is important for students because it provides them with an opportunity to let go and express themselves creatively," said Gomer. "Through this workshop, I gained fundamentals for my classroom and experienced working with new art materials."

For more information about workshop opportunities, visit www.hcde-texas.org.

HCDE Represented at Philanthropy Awards Event



First Place of \$3,000 went to Kempner High School student, Dorothy Le, who created a volunteer program with fellow students where they provided ushers, box office assistants and concert production crew for River Oaks Chamber Orchestra. Dorothy had club dues for all members and encouraged volunteers to purchase student rate tickets to the concerts they worked.

Dr. Vida L. Avery attended the Association of Fundraising Professionals-Greater Houston Chapter's 5th Annual Youth in Philanthropy Awards luncheon. As the Board Chair for Diversity and Community Outreach, she is responsible for the Youth in Philanthropy component. Currently throughout the Houston area, young adults are performing numerous selfless acts and inspirational community service projects. This award recognizes students in the Greater Houston area who have been compassionate and innovative in their community through volunteerism and fundraising activities.



First Runner up: \$1,000 went to Clements High School National Honor Society students who participated in a team service project and worked to raise funds through bake sales for The Sunshine Kids Foundation.



Second Runner up: \$1,000 went to Klein Forest High School, Klein Forest Interact Club who worked with Hermann Park Conservancy to help restore a large section of the park near downtown.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In accordance with the Board's expectations 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 community; and to
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.

This week, Harris County Department of Education recognized three area journalists as recipients of TASB's 2016 Media Honor Roll at the July Board of Trustees Meeting. This year's recipients have represented HCDE in a positive light in local media outlets over the past year. Our honorees included:

- Lauren Talarico, Reporter and Fill-in Anchor, KHOU-TV Channel 11;
- Jessica Rivera, Managing Assignments Editor for KXLN-TXZ Univision 45; and
- Sylvia Oben, Multimedia Journalist, Semana News



Further, as a result of HCDE honoring this year's Media Honor Roll, we garnered even more positive visibility on behalf of both our Board and the Department by two of the entities represented having covered the story news broadcasts on Tuesday evening. To view the video links of the news coverage, please visit the following URLs:

<https://youtu.be/b247fg9i4oE>

<https://youtu.be/GoYe4AWsvM0>

This opportunity to honor our local journalists exemplifies the Board's goal of HCDE and me related to Community Relations. In doing so, we illustrated HCDE working 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 community, and it also showcases 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; and finally, we
- Communicate the needs of the Department in a variety of formats through communication with the media, community, and school districts.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Position 2, Precinct 4

Angie Chesnut

Vice President

Louis Evans, III

Position 4, Precinct 3

Erica Lee Carter

Position 6, Precinct 1

Marvin W. Morris

Position 1, Precinct 2

Don Summers

Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman

Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe

Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

August Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 16, 2016

1:00 p.m.

Room 400

Senate Education Committee Hearing

Wednesday, August 3, 2016

9:00 a.m.

Capitol Extension

Room E1.028

Austin, Texas

