

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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As I mentioned in the last issue of **The Connector**, I spent much of last week and last weekend in Austin attending two conferences—the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators (TABSE) Conference as well as the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)/Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Conference. In my role as Superintendent, I serve as the Treasurer for the Texas Academic Decathlon (TAD) Board. While in Austin attending TASA/TASB and TABSE, I also attended a meeting of the TAD Board. All conferences were very well-attended with impressive presenters and educational leaders hailing from districts across the state of Texas. These convergences presented excellent opportunities for professional growth and also for continued visibility for HCDE. Over the past several years, I have participated in an interactive Superintendents' Think Tank Forum during the TABSE conference. As a result of those experiences, I have been asked to facilitate the next Think Tank Forum for Superintendents across the state of Texas during the mid-winter TABSE meeting. One of the highlights of the TASA/TASB conference was the address by Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner Michael Williams. Having the opportunity to network with superintendents, board members, and other leaders in education was both informative and refreshing. There was great deal of brain-share, among master educators, in the exchange ideas and processes to meet the needs of today's students in both urban and rural environments, alike.

This week, among numerous events benefiting both the community-at-large and educators in Harris County, we hosted the 3rd Annual CFO Summit for the Harris County Appraisal District. This year's topic, **Connecting the Dots: Impacts of the 84th Legislative Session**, focused on how Harris County economic trends and new laws resulting from the recent legislative session will impact property values and taxes. Senator Paul Bettencourt was the keynote speaker during lunch. This summit is a great example of HCDE's importance to the community-at-large as it relates to offering a neutral venue and serving as a conduit for bringing people and organizations together.

In addition to the HCAD Summit, HCDE also hosted the IMPACT Meeting composed of presidents of area boards from our school districts. The meeting was a successful coming together of governing leaders and HCDE is pleased to be at the center of such a platform.

In my efforts to reach out to area leaders in the community who may benefit from HCDE's programs and services, I met with officials from My Brother's Keeper. My Brother's Keeper is a sustainable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides effectual assistance throughout Harris County to stabilize and strengthen individuals and families in crisis. Their mission is to provide emergency assistance, social services, and training for individuals and families in crisis that will stabilize, strengthen, and empower them to help themselves. We engaged in conversation to explore how connectivity, at some level, might benefit both entities.

In closing, I am scheduled to attend another UIL Meeting in Austin towards the end of the next week. Due to the nationwide interest in the case currently before the UIL, I have been approached by numerous leading media entities (leaders in broadcast, print, and web media) including Sports Illustrated, ESPN Outside the Lines, MSNBC, The Today Show, and CNN, just to name a few. Because of my role on the Executive Committee of the UIL, I am in a unique position to bring great visibility to HCDE. I am always proud to mention when approached by reporters that although I am serving in my UIL capacity, that I am a constant extension of Harris County Department of Education, as the County School Superintendent.

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

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT

Cracking Up: Plate Tectonics and the Structure of the Earth

Middle school science teachers create an edible model of the process of plate boundaries during the “Plate



Tectonics and the Structure of the Earth” workshop presented by the Lunar and Planetary Institute. Students struggle to understand the concept of plate tectonics, so the workshop introduces data analysis and hands-on lesson plans using modeling. The workshop was hosted by HCDE’s Curriculum Director of Science, Lisa Felske on October 1.



Finding Grants Using Web Resources and Social Media

New proposal writers and education professionals needing to start identifying multiple funding streams attend



‘Finding Grants Using Web Resources and Social Media,’ hosted by the Center for Grants Development. This interactive training helps participants research funding opportunities that support medium to large projects, clarify and analyze organizational fit with funding criteria, and analyze organizational fit with funding opportunities. The workshop was presented by Kristal Johnson, development associate, with the Center for Grants Development on October 6.



Advancing Teaching and Learning by Training the Trainer

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

OCTOBER 5 TRAINING

Evaluating the Rigor of Instruction and Assessment in Elementary Science

OCTOBER 6 TRAININGS

Finding Grants Using Web Resources and Social Media

Lead4ward: Leading Intentional Intervention

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

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

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#191) - ELAR Sessions ONLY

OCTOBER 7 TRAININGS

Evaluating the Rigor of Instruction and Assessment in Middle School Science

Managing Student Misbehavior

CONNECTING THE DOTS:
Impacts of the 84th Legislative Session



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Adult Education Division

- Since July 2015, HCDE has 10 GED completions compared to six as of this time last year.
- The division submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the first application ever, for delivering a Work-Based Literacy Project for a Texas employer.
- U.S. Representative Gene Green has accepted an invitation from one of our civics and citizenship teachers to visit her class on October 13 at 5:30 p.m. at the Irvington Learning Center.
- HCDE received a letter from the H-GAC accepting the 2015 audit of HCDE Adult Education and Literacy contract, indicating there were no audit findings or questioned costs in the report.

Center for Grants Development Division

- Assisted and submitted Houston Endowment online application/proposal based on discussion with Houston Endowment grant officers for \$1M over a period of two years on behalf of CASE for Kids.
- Continuing work on State Farm Good Neighborhood Citizenship Company Grant with Center for Safe and Secure Schools.
- Recently submitted Autism Speaks proposal for Academic and Behavior Schools- Success for All training.
- Hosted session with five client districts: Alief, Aldine, Cypress-Fairbanks, Pasadena, and Spring Branch, resulting in districts' interest in a quarterly networking meeting and other related outcomes that will ultimately meet the needs of educators and students across the service area.

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Division

- The Teacher Alternative Certification class commenced last week. Of the 49 applicants, 16 hailed from the rigorous selection process and were admitted for the fall cohort.
- 41 previous participants are currently in their internship phase and are working as teachers-of-record in Houston area schools. At least three are interviewing and are expected to be hired shortly.
- There is a 105% increase of interns this year as compared to this time last year.
- Principal Academy recently began with 27 principal candidates.
- The Academy is gearing up for a seminar later this month with the renowned Dr. William Sommers, a professional consultant and author of several books related to educational leadership.

Research and Evaluation Institute Division

- Coordinated data entry of 16 divisions into an assigned database on the portal that documents services delivered and numbers served throughout 2014-2015. These reports will be helpful to Business Services as they will be integrated into HCDE files for auditors and consultants to review.
- In conjunction with the Head Start Assessment, the division presented results of Gulf Coast Community Services Association's Families' Strengths and Needs component of the Triennial Community Assessment to the Policy Council of the grantee's Head Start program.
- Prepared vendor surveys in support of the Choice Partners Food Expo to be held on October 22.
- Assisted Digital Education and Innovation through preparation of Satisfaction Survey ultimately to assist Cy-Fair ISD.

Teaching and Learning Center

- Preparations continue for the 30th Annual Early Childhood Winter Conference set for January 2016.
- Curriculum Director for Science, Dr. Lisa Felske, presented at Houston Arts Partners' Conference. She partnered with Jonathan Gonzalez from Main Street Theatre on STEAM work: Embodied Learning and Innovation through a Theatre and Science Collaboration.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Sen. Bettencourt Attends Summit at HCDE

HCDE hosted the 3rd Annual CFO Summit for the Harris County Appraisal District this past Wednesday. This year's topic, **Connecting the Dots: Impacts of the 84th Legislative Session**, focused on how Harris County economic trends and new laws resulting from the recent legislative session will impact property values and taxes. Senator Paul Bettencourt was the keynote speaker during lunch. This annual event is also part of the School Finance Council's calendar of events facilitated by HCDE Business Services officials. The event served as a useful vehicle to inform CFO forecasting and business projections.



CASE BIG Check Presentations

CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education, invites Houston City Council Members representing Houston's eleven districts to meet all the nonprofit organizations awarded funds for City Connections Grant Term I.



WHEN:

Thursday, October 15, 2015

WHERE:

Harris County Department of Education
6300 Irvington Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77022

TIMES AVAILABLE:

10:00AM - 10:30AM
10:30AM - 11:00AM
11:00AM - 11:30AM
11:30AM - NOON

CASE for Kids will coordinate a photo event in one location for Council Members to present a BIG check (18" x 36") to each grantee awarded City Connections funds in their district. In addition, Harris County Department of Education will generate a press release and use social media to share the story about all the afterschool programming in each district.

HCDE Sponsors Houston Public Media Spelling Bee

HCDE is a supporter of the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee 2016 to be held beginning next January with the "final bee" on April 2. As sponsor, HCDE will provide information about services and programs for Houston Public Media. Fact: The Houston Public Media Spelling Bee is the nation's second largest spelling bee, with spellers from 1,000 schools in 42 Texas counties, to represent 100,000-plus students. Learn more: <https://youtu.be/VYvqfUuZpY8>

Early Childhood Conference Celebrates 30th Anniversary with Popular Early Childhood Author Dr. Jean on January 30



Early childhood author and longtime educator Jean Feldman (or Dr. Jean) provides the keynote address at the 30th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference on January 30 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. The event will be held at the Kingdom Builders' Center at 6011 West Orem in Houston, Texas.

The Saturday event for teachers of children in pre-k through second grade features interactive activities as educators choose from 100 workshop breakout sessions on topics like literacy, music, math, science, and bilingual studies. Special featured speaker is Carl Anderson, a leading expert on teaching writing to young students.

The conference, which celebrates a landmark 30 years, was established to provide early childhood teachers with new materials and teaching techniques. Networking opportunities allow teachers to share ideas and resources. Exhibitors provide materials for educators.

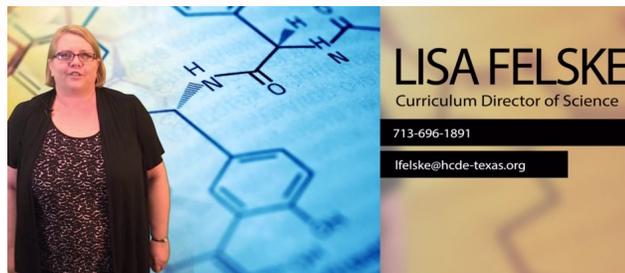
To register or to learn more about the conference, go to www.hcde-texas.org/ECWinterConf. Cost is \$85 before December 1 and \$100 afterwards. Onsite registration is \$125. Lunch is included, and parking is free.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Video Calling Cards Market Services for Teaching and Learning Center Directors

Teaching and Learning Center directors are being provided with video calling cards for marketing their services in school districts. The first calling card is for Lisa Felske, science curriculum director. See her short video produced by Communication:
<https://youtu.be/XvBHa1LO3Rs>



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Academic and Behavior School West Holds Open House 2016

AB School West held its annual Open House on September 30. Families came to meet staff and see how their children were progressing as the school year begins. The evening included refreshments and fellowship.

“Communication is a very important component, and having both the families and staff under the same roof led to improvement and promoted further accomplishments,” said Principal Dr. Victor Keys.



School District Highlight: Clear Creek ISD

Clear Creek ISD hosts Imagination Celebration. Imagination Celebration is a one-day event activity for elementary-aged children and their families. It all children to create and exhibit their art. Details:

<http://www.ccisd.net/departments/visual-performing-arts/districtwide-events/imagination-celebration>



AB West 'Pinks Out'



Staff at AB School-West wore pink this past Thursday in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Each Wednesday staff at all four HCDE schools will participate and do their best to generate an ocean of pink in the hallways.

Awareness

EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS

Human Resources Goes PINK

HCDE Human Resources begins its annual awareness raising program during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Each Friday in October, employees are being asked to dress for a theme. Themes include the following:

- **Tackling Cancer:** Wear a favorite sports jersey.
- **Give Cancer the Boot:** Wear boots.
- **Hunt for the Cure:** Wear camo.
- **PINK Out Breast Cancer:** Wear pink.
- **Zap Out Breast Cancer:** Wear superhero t-shirts or capes.

The second part of the campaign enlists a pumpkin decorating contest as employees decorate pumpkins to show support in the fight against breast cancer. Entries will be judged on October 30, and winners will be announced in the new employee newsletter called **The Hub**.



IN RECOGNITION

Many observances are taking place during the month of October at HCDE.

National Bullying Month:

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools is creating awareness of the ever-growing problems associated with bullying in schools

National School Bus Month:

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools is working to create awareness of school bus safety.

Texas Principals' Month:

The Schools division recognizes all of our HCDE principals and principals in the county and state for the great work they do.

Value

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Choice Partners News

Visit the following URL for the most recent issue of Leader's Choice:

http://www.choicepartners.org/admin/uploads/pdf/LeadersChoice-2015-Issue-5-for-web_1444055681.pdf



SAVE THE DATE for the Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit

Choice Partners hosts the Annual Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit on October 30 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at 6300 Irvington in HCDE Conference Center. The theme this year is "Navigate the Procurement Jungle." Over 250 procurement professionals are expected to attend to view products and services from 60 vendor companies.

Event link: <http://www.choicepartners.org/choice-partners-annual-exhibit>

RSVP link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/choice-partners-2015-vendor-exhibit-tickets-18100035694>

Members of the Executive Leadership Team Pose with Fictitious EDGAR at TASA/TASB

EDGAR is the acronym for the Education Department General Administrative Guidelines (EDGAR). Those guidelines provide the framework for the federal regulations that govern all federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education on or after December 26, 2014. This is part of the ongoing Choice Partners campaign, "**WE KNOW EDGAR!**"

EDGAR appeared at the CP booth at TASA/TASB.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development

In keeping with the Board's expectation of me to:

- **Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration**

I recently attended **FOUR** major conferences as well as ongoing meetings that provide me opportunities to stay informed, apprised, and abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration across a variety of issues facing education including but not limited to finance, instruction, administration, athletics, and scholastic achievement—just to name a few. Professional growth and development opportunities have included and continue to include:

- 1. TASA/TASB FALL CONFERENCE**

This conference provided me with a platform to network with my education colleagues and attend presentations by masters of education and education processes. Additionally, it allowed additional exposure to best practices and the comparison of practices. Such reflection provides the essential benefit of knowing what works, what doesn't, affirming the same, and the elimination of duplicative execution of processes.

- 2. TABSE FALL CONFERENCE**

This event allowed me the opportunity to serve as a mentor to my colleagues and to also participate with others simultaneously through a Superintendents' Think Tank Session. While I have participated in such activities in the past, each one allows for additional growth and development. As a result of these opportunities, I have been asked to facilitate the next Think Tank Session during the mid-winter event.

- 3. ONGOING UIL AND EMERGENCY CALL UIL MEETINGS/HEARINGS**

As a result of my role on the State Executive Committee for the UIL, I have reaped the benefits of serving with a cross-section of professionals across the state of the Texas as it relates to the regulation of athletics in Texas. This role is a very unique one and not many have the privilege of serving in such a capacity. These experiences range from exposure to the legalities associated with, administration of, consequences affiliated with, and all other business operations in conjunction with athletics in education in the state of Texas.

- 4. TEXAS ACADEMIC DECATHLON**

In my role as Superintendent, I serve as the Treasurer on the Texas Academic Decathlon Board and must attend meetings accordingly. Because this program provides high school students an opportunity to experience the challenges of rigorous academic competition through participation in team activities and since it involves members of business and industry as active supporters of a program promoting academic excellence, it gives me yet another unique vantage point to not only impart wisdom but to also become even more abreast of the inner-workings of another longstanding educational entity that is not only a statewide effort, but also one with a national affiliation.

In having participated in and continuing to participate in these activities, I am meeting the Board's expectation as it relates to me adequately having the administrative and leadership capacity to effectively manage the organization.

HCDE BOARD

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Position 4, Precinct 3
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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:

OCTOBER 20, 2015
October Board Meeting
1:00 p.m.

