

# The CONNECTOR

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



WEEK OF NOVEMBER 7, 2016

VOLUME 3/ISSUE 13



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

It was a very busy week at HCDE. I began the week with the usual assembly of my Executive Leadership Team. This was the first meeting after my annual retreat with this group. I am excited, and the group is motivated, to move forward in advancing HCDE's mission and goals, as we continue to provide value, opportunity, and service to the educators of Harris County as we help students achieve.

As you know, this past Tuesday was Election Day. HCDE served as a polling location for Precincts 207 and 78, serving the residents of both the Lindale Park and North Lindale neighborhoods, located in the vicinity of our Administration Building. There was a steady flow of voting traffic in and out of the building throughout the day.

To that end, I congratulate and welcome incoming trustees-elect Eric Dick and George Moore upon winning their elections to HCDE's Board of Trustees. We will bid our departing trustees farewell and welcome our incoming trustees at the January Board Meeting, which is also Board Appreciation Month throughout the state of Texas. I will be reaching out to both incoming trustees next week as we begin planning for a Board Orientation.

In last week's issue of **The Connector** I mentioned that I have begun volunteering as a SuperMentor with our Head Start division. A Meet and Greet reception was held on Wednesday of last week and my first reading was yesterday. It was refreshing to interact with some of our youngest learners. I look forward to continuing to volunteer in this worthwhile program.

On Wednesday of this week, I participated in my monthly obligation to the American Leadership Forum (ALF) as a member of the class of 2016-2017. The meeting was held at the United Way and it was an all-day event. I also attended the Stand with Our Schools event,

featuring the new superintendent of Houston Independent School District. The event was held Wednesday evening.

Today, we hosted the AROSC Recovery Group as we furthered exploration into the possibility of HCDE offering such recovery opportunities to the students in need across Harris County. It was a productive meeting and we look forward to continued collaborations with this group.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, we offered the following trainings and workshops: Moodle User Webinar Series; Proportionality for grades 6-8; Coaching ELA Teachers: Instructional Coaching at a Glance, Part I; How to Googlize Your Classroom; Capturing Kids' Hearts; Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar; Social Studies Strategies for English Language Learners; Leadership Impact Meeting; Workstation Make and Take for Comparing Numbers for Pre-K and Kindergarten; HCDE Literacy Collaborative: Literacy Workstations: Connected Schools: Mindfulness for Afterschool Staff; and School Finance Council.

Looking ahead into next week, I will travel to Lamar University in Beaumont on Monday to speak to the university's Principals' Academy. Please be reminded that the regularly scheduled November Board Meeting will be held Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. On Wednesday, I will serve as the keynote speaker at the Touchdown Club of Houston Scholar Athlete Luncheon and I will attend the monthly Northwest Area Ministries Board Meeting next Thursday.

In closing and as always, thanks for your service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have an enjoyable weekend.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Department of Education CASE for Kids Coordinator Adrian Fields Earns National Afterschool Leader Award



The Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids employee Adrian Fields, 29, is officially a force to be reckoned with in the field of afterschool. Fields was selected for the “AfterSchool’s Next Generation of Afterschool 2017,” awarded by the National Afterschool

Association. He was selected from a field of 100 young afterschool leaders under age 30 throughout the nation.

Fields has worked for CASE for Kids as project coordinator of strategic partnerships for a year and a half. The University of North Texas grad taught in South Korea post-college and also worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa.

In his position, he creates and promotes partnerships with public and private agencies to support afterschool programming. The partnerships he shapes in afterschool include schools, churches and community centers in Harris County.

His strong background in project management and community development is recognized through the National Afterschool Association award. As a skilled organizer, he creates opportunities for youth.

“I decided to work in afterschool because I feel it’s the best way to address gaps in youth development, decrease risky behaviors of students and provide students with more diverse learning opportunities,” he said.

He remembers afterschool as a youth and the opportunity it afforded to play music. As the “orc dork,” slang for orchestra members, he played cello. Doing so, he says, helped him foster skills in self-expression and sharpen his concentration abilities.

“Through my afterschool program, I learned the importance of working in a team and developed organizational and time management skills as well,” he said.

Watching kids write code for websites, program through robotics and master musical pieces through their afterschool experiences showcases the value and need for afterschool, he said.

“Most of these students would not be exposed to these experiences without the work of CASE for Kids,” Fields said.

His own life experiences have helped set the stage for carrying out his career goals. Someday Fields hopes to run a nonprofit consulting agency that guides local and international non-governmental organizations on effective business strategies and sustainable practices.

Behind that dream is an adolescent who once struggled to squeak out a tune on a cello in afterschool but today is confidently mastering the song.

(As an afterschool intermediary, CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement.)

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### GIS Student Day Set for November 17 at HCDE Helps Promote STEM Activities in Schools



Students from five area high schools are learning about career opportunities in geographic information systems, or GIS, through hands-on activities during Houston Area GIS Students Day on November 17 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas.

The students from DeKaney, Silsbee, Spring, Waltrip and Westfield high schools will be working in a GIS lab, geocaching with emergency vehicles, participating in a geography bee and learning about careers with GIS.

GIS is used in industries including engineering, transportation, telecommunications and business. GIS systems are used to capture, store, analyze and manage geographical data. For instance, GIS is used to map infrastructure and transportation.

The student day, a 15-year tradition, is sponsored by Harris County Department of Education, the Houston-Galveston Area Council Geographic Data Workgroup and TranStar. A student essay contest is also part of the annual event.

Last year a group of students from Houston Independent School District presented a project applying GIS mapping to track sex offenders within proximity to schools. Their information was fed to law enforcement.

“Applying GIS mapping to projects helps students attach the science to real-life situations and allows them to ponder career paths using GIS,” said Lisa Felske, HCDE science curriculum director.

Hosting the GIS Students Day is part of a long-term initiative to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM activities in public schools, said Frances Watson-Hester, senior director of the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE.

### Houston ISD Autism Students Engage, Interact with Therapy Dogs



HCDE Therapy Services employee Angelle Radesky recently organized a hands-on learning experience for Houston ISD high school students with autism who have limited communication skills. The experience was provided by therapy dogs and their handlers from The Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs of Houston, Inc., a non-profit organization. The students prepared for the visit by watching videos and a presentation that included information about therapy dogs and instructions on how to approach owners and their dogs safely.

One student’s mother remarked that her son had never interacted with a dog before. During the visit, he not only petted the dogs, he took the largest of the dogs for a walk around the classroom! The teacher was pleased to see another of her students get out of her chair to approach a dog, smile, and engage with the dogs. For this particular student it was both unusual and very special. The teacher felt the experience helped the students overcome their fears and make connections with new people, their peers, and the dogs.



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Article about School-Based Therapy Services Published in Texas Tribune



An article about School-Based Therapy Services is published in the November Texas Tribune. The article written by Client Engagement staffer Justin Jannise profiles graduate Kyle Abbate, who was

born with cerebral palsy. School-Based Therapy Services provided services to Abbate throughout his school career in Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District. Communication and Client Development will be providing student stories to the magazine throughout the year. View the story: <https://www.tribtalk.org/2016/11/07/how-harris-county-department-of-education-helped-kyle-land-his-dream-job/>

### 'Time for Toys' Holiday Gift Drive Launched by HCDE for Needy Head Start Children



Harris County Department of Education is collecting toys and books for needy children ages 3-5 in a holiday giving campaign called "Time for Toys."

The 1,200 children benefitting from the drive are enrolled in HCDE Head Start programs throughout the department's 15 Head Start centers in northeast Houston.

Toys may be delivered to the lobbies at two HCDE locations: 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas, 77022 and 6005 Westview, Houston, Texas, 77055. Donations will be graciously accepted from Nov. 14-Dec. 9, 2016.

We are requesting items like story books, coloring books, and nontoxic crayons or markers, sorting toys, or musical toys, dolls, or push/pull toys.

For more information about making individual or group donations to Time for Toys, email [abarker@hcde-texas.org](mailto:abarker@hcde-texas.org) or call 713-696-2113.

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### **NOVEMBER 7, 2016**

Moodle User Webinar Series

#### **NOVEMBER 8, 2016**

Proportionality (Grades 6-8)

Coaching ELA Teachers: Instructional Coaching at a Glance, Part I

How to Googlize Your Classroom

Capturing Kids Hearts

#### **NOVEMBER 9, 2016**

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

#### **NOVEMBER 10, 2016**

Social Studies Strategies for English Language Learners

Leadership Impact Meeting

Workstation Make and Take for Comparing Numbers for Pre-K and Kindergarten

HCDE Literacy Collaborative: Literacy Workstations

#### **NOVEMBER 11, 2016**

(Re) Connected Schools: Mindfulness for Afterschool Staff

School Finance Council

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Choice Partners Annual Exhibit Held in New Location



Scott Uselman and Terri Guinn, sales reps for High Point Sanitary Solutions, show off the latest innovations in janitorial supplies to Linda Anderson and Pam Martin, purchasing professionals from Columbia-Brazoria ISD.

More than 200 government employees attended the Choice Partners Annual Vendor Exhibit on Friday, Nov. 4, 2016 at the Norris Conference Center in West Houston. The event, which has been held annually for the past 20 years, gave Choice Partners co-op members an opportunity to meet with nearly 90 vendors

offering supplies and services in the areas of education, facilities, food/cafeteria, technology, and more.

Purchasing professionals in attendance said that they look forward to the gathering of vendors, whose services they can access using Choice Partners cooperative purchasing contracts at no added cost for membership.

“I enjoy coming every year,” said Linda Deleon, facilities manager, AVANCE-Houston, Inc.

“It was good to meet some vendors and put names to faces,” said Kelly Durney, business specialist, Humble ISD.

Many vendors credited Choice Partners staff with putting on an event that helps them grow their businesses and achieve greater visibility in the community.

“It’s the perfect size” for vendors looking to have one-on-one conversations with potential clients without being swallowed up by the large crowds at bigger trade shows, said Ashley Puerto, education sales specialist, Mobile Modular.

Other vendors remarked that exhibiting at the event each year leads to valuable connections in the government and education markets.

“Great visibility, great contacts,” said Sherrard Thomas, president and CEO of LyncVerse Technology.

To keep school officials up-to-date on the latest trends and best practices in purchasing, the event also included a presentation by HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Business Jesus Amezcua on complying with HB 1295 and meeting Education Department Guidelines and Regulations (EDGAR).



### HCDE Serves as Election Day Polling Place

HCDE served as a polling location for two precincts, 207 and 78, during Election Day 2016 as residents from Lindale Park and North Lindale provided a steady flow of voting traffic.

Photo: Lindale residents Ricardo, Wendy and Elsa Jimenez made Election Day a family affair. Afterwards, they rested on a bench inside our lobby and took a selfie for the road before posing for us.



### SCENES FROM STAND WITH OUR SCHOOLS EVENT

Superintendent Colbert attends reception for HISD Superintendent Richard A. Carranza

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Highpoint East Students Prepare for Tomorrow with College and Career Fair



Highpoint East students in grades 8-12 attended a College and Career Fair held on the campus last week to prepare them for success after secondary school. The fair included representatives from Prairie View A&M University, Texas Southern University, U.S. Army Recruiting Office, Everest Institute and College, and Sheldon Fire and Rescue who talked with students about the opportunities available to them and how to reach their goals after graduation.



The College and Career Fair Event Committee headed by social studies teacher Eric Joseph, included Garland Greene, Tia Jenkins, Lenora Lewis, Sonia Lopez, Maria McLean, Melanie Petaway, Tomeisha Reed, George Sanders, Jaclyn Wroblewski, and Broderick Wyatt.



### AB West Students Learn about Renaissance Period by Attending Annual Texas Festival

Academic and Behavior School West students attended the Texas Renaissance Festival as part of School Days, the festival event open to only teachers and students in the area. AB School West students had the opportunity to step back in time as they entered the New Market Village, an authentic recreation of a 16th century European village. They were able to interact with hundreds of costumed characters representing the courts, culture, art, science, and literature of the Renaissance Period. Additionally, students learned courtly dances, the ancient art of falconry, the history of arms and armor, blacksmithing, and other trades of the time period.

# Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

## Management of Administrative, Fiscal, and Facilities Function Personnel Management

In keeping with the Board's goal for me to

- **Recruit and maintain high-quality, professional staff at all levels; and to**
- **Ensure that the system for recruiting and selection results in personnel.**

This week, Harris County Department of Education participated in the **HIRING RED, WHITE AND YOU!** Statewide Veterans' Job Fair event at Minute Maid Park, featuring over 150 employers from across the state. Sponsored by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), this year marks the fifth annual event of its kind. In cooperation with 28 Workforce Solutions partners, the event connects Texas Veterans and their spouses with Texas employers who value the experience, discipline, and other exceptional qualities inherent with a military background.



According to the TWC, in the first four years of this event, it connected more than 42,000 veterans with over 6,400 employers. It is estimated that there are 927,000 veterans in Texas who are eligible for work. By hosting the **HIRING RED, WHITE AND YOU!** Statewide Hiring Fairs, employers in Texas can more easily connect to this highly-qualified group of service men and women across the state.

**By HCDE participating in this important event, I am forwarding the Board's expectations of me to establish a culture among the staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance and ensure that all supervisory staff administers personnel practices with consistency and fairness with respect for the individual. Further, I am ensuring that an effective backup plan is in place for all functional areas in the event of absence of personnel, especially key personnel, through exceptional recruitment efforts.**

## 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:

**November Board Meeting**

**November 15, 2016**

1:00 p.m.

Room 400

