

The CONNECTOR

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

 **HCDE**
HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WEEK OF JANUARY 2, 2017

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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

Happy New Year! First off, I take this opportunity to congratulate our new trustees—Eric Dick and George Moore—on having been sworn in as Harris County elected officials this past Monday, as they join our Board. I look forward to working with both gentlemen as we work in unison to forward HCDE's mission.

I trust you each had a great holiday season. HCDE reopened after the Winter Holiday break this past Tuesday, January 3, 2017. Please be reminded that this year's Board Appreciation Reception event will be held at 12:00 noon, immediately prior to the regularly scheduled January Board Meeting. We will recognize our departing Board Members Angie Chesnut and Marvin Morris, welcome our new trustees Eric Dick and George Moore, and thank the remaining trustees for their ongoing service and dedication to HCDE.

I began this week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team on Tuesday morning, followed by a meeting with the Leadership Team Wednesday. We are now officially into the second semester of this academic year. Our schools, programs, and divisions are on track for excellence for the remainder of this year and we are excited about what 2017 has in store for HCDE.

Yesterday, Choice Partners hosted its Vendor Appreciation Luncheon where I provided the keynote address as we

recognized vendors of the Department. The event was well-attended and served as an ideal platform to thank our vendors for their partnership with HCDE.

Next week, in addition to my usual responsibilities, I am scheduled to attend my regularly scheduled Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) Board Meeting. I will continue my volunteerism efforts through Head Start in my role as a SuperMentor, and I will end the week fulfilling my responsibility with the American Leadership Forum (ALF), in my capacity as a member of the 2016-2017 class.

In closing, please be reminded of Monday's tentatively scheduled Special Called Board Meeting.

Congratulations, again, to our new Board Members and a very hearty thank you to our departing Board Members. I appreciate all of you and I look forward to seeing you next week.

Have a great weekend and I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

Upcoming Events:

- January Special Called Board Meeting – Jan. 9 at 1:00 p.m.
- January Board Meeting and Board Appreciation Reception – TBA
- Retirement Reception - Jean Polichino – Jan. 27

Recognition

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

HCDE Bids Farewell and Welcomes HCDE Board Members

HCDE bids farewell to outgoing Board Members Angie Chesnut and Marvin Morris as they depart the HCDE Board. Likewise, we proudly welcome incoming trustees Eric Dick and George Moore.

All of our Board Members will be recognized at the Board Appreciation Reception to be held immediately prior to the January Board Meeting. At that time, our new trustees will be formally introduced to staff. We wish Trustees Dick and Moore nothing but the best as they join HCDE to help guide our mission. We extend heartfelt thanks to Trustees Chesnut and Morris upon the expiration of their terms.



Shown with Superintendent Colbert, Principal Mindy Robinson and Schools Director Dee Mattox Hall, Trustees George Moore and Eric Dick attend AB School East Holiday event.

We Celebrate You



You're cordially invited to be the guest of honor at our HCDE Board Appreciation. It will take place from noon to 1 p.m. in the Irvington lobby, immediately prior to the January Board Meeting. Join HCDE employees and community members as we thank you for serving on our all-star team of VIP

board members. School Board Recognition Month is held annually in January through the Texas Association of School

Boards. Local communities create events to honor their school board members. The event celebrates the crucial role elected board of trustees play in our communities and schools.

This year's theme issued by TASB is "All-Star Team" because board members are extraordinary people who voluntarily tackle the enormous job of governing school districts. Their actions and decisions affect the present and future lives of our children.

Celebrating the work you do is our way of saying thank you!

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Students Featured in Houston Chronicle Stories



Several articles were featured in the Houston Chronicle during the holidays about HCDE students.

View the article about Salvador Escobedo, an adult education student who went back to

school at age 84: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4402/houstonchronicle_122616.pdf.

In addition, CASE for Kids sponsored a Tamalada celebration in a Pasadena ISD afterschool site. Read the

story about how food and culture brings an afterschool community together: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4403/houstonchronicle_121916.pdf

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JANUARY 4, 2017

Educator Certification and Professional
Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Bank of Texas Volunteers are Superheroes at Fifth Ward Head Start Center



Once a month, students at Harris County Department of Education's Fifth Ward Head Start Center eagerly await visits from their superheroes, Chris Frey and Gary Whitt with the Bank of Texas, Houston. Frey, commercial relationship manager, and Whitt, senior vice president, are community volunteers with the Real SuperMENTors Read program and serve as consistent, positive role models for Fifth Ward students.

Three years ago, Frey and Whitt eagerly joined SuperMENTors to promote community involvement, encourage reading and, most importantly, support Head Start students. Since they began volunteering, they've watched students become more engaged as their relationships with the professionals grow.

"You can see the difference from the beginning of the year to the end, and from the 3-year-old to the 4-year-old students," said Whitt. "The students we've known for a year and developed relationships with are much more engaged."

While the 3-year-old students at Fifth Ward are always excited to see Whitt, excitement erupts when he enters the 4-year-old classroom and he is greeted with big smiles and a group hug.

The SuperMENTors program is part of the ongoing Head Start Significant Male Initiative established to encourage male involvement throughout the HCDE Head Start centers. Community volunteers like Frey and Whitt provide more than a fun, engaging lesson. They promote reading and writing while creating a consistent support system for students.

"I think there's value in professionals coming in and spending time with students in their environment," said Frey. "The SuperMENTors program is easy to commit to and is very rewarding. That's why I keep coming back."



Frey and Whitt also hope to use their superhero status with the students to demonstrate the importance of community involvement.

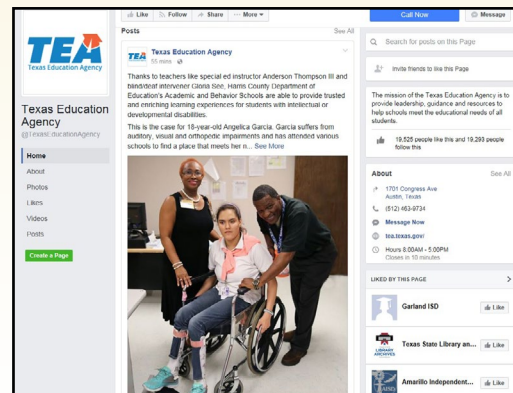
"We want to instill that even though we work and are involved in business, we're still involved in our community," said Whitt.

For more information or to participate in the Head Start Real SuperMENTors Read program, visit <https://goo.gl/XOYTYU>.

The Texas Education Agency Features a Student from Academic and Behavior School West for a "Good News" Story

The Texas Education Agency reached out to school districts recently and requested "good news" stories. HCDE submitted a story about a student named Angelica from Academic and Behavior School West who is partially blind.

Angelica's story and others are chronicled through the TEA Facebook and Instagram accounts under the hashtag #IAMTXEd. Access the story through the TEA Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/TexasEducationAgency/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE&fref=nf



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Posts Record-Breaking Submittals



Local teachers submitted a record-breaking number of art and writing entries through HCDE's regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Altogether, 519 teachers submitted 8,748 works through

submitted 6,875 works of art to the adjudication. For writing, 1,750 students submitted 1,873 works to be judged.

Local judges are still needed for the adjudication process which will begin January 2-13. Writing entries may be judged online. About 50 additional writing judges are needed. For more information, call 713-696-1318.

Gold Key, Silver Key and Honorable Mention recipients will be notified by email by February 3, 2017.

Harris County school districts and private schools.

Coordinator Andrea Segraves said a total of 3,400 students



Secondary Educators Use Young Adult Fiction to Grow Reluctant Readers

High school educators recently learned to use young adult literature to grow reluctant readers at the latest "Build Your Bookshelf" workshop. Using a wide range of topics and interests, the interactive session explored four popular young adult fiction books to engage reluctant readers. Books used during the workshop included "A Game for Swallows" by Zeina Abriached, "Unwind" by Neal Shusterman, "Because I am Furniture" by Thalia Chaltas and "Race to Incarcerate" by Marc Mauer.



Top-Performing Businesses Honored at Vendor Appreciation

Choice Partners honored 31 of its top-performing vendors on Thursday, January 5, at HCDE's offices on Westview Drive. Superintendent Colbert thanked the vendors for their partnership and for being outstanding members of the business community in Harris County.

Vendors, who sell their products and services to school districts and other governmental entities using cooperative purchasing contracts awarded by HCDE's board of trustees, enjoyed lunch and received plaques commemorating their success. Honored vendors included Borden, a well-known dairy company; Bosworth, a Texas-based paper company; and ISI Commercial Refrigeration, located in Houston.



Superintendent Colbert addresses attendees at Vendor Appreciation event held yesterday

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me as it relates to this element of performance 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



Bank of Texas volunteers Chris Frey (Commercial Relationship Manager) and Gary Whitt (Senior Vice President) continue to serve as SuperMENTors at HCDE's Fifth Ward Head Start Center, visiting once a month to read



HCDE Superintendent Colbert also serves as a SuperMENTor.

to students. Both Frey and Whitt are into their third year of serving in this worthwhile endeavor. This partnership brings great visibility to both our Head Start program as well as to the Department as a whole.

The SuperMENTors program is part of the ongoing Head Start Significant Male Initiative established to encourage male involvement throughout HCDE Head Start centers. HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, also serves as a Head Start SuperMENTor.

Through this outreach, I am ensuring that I achieve the Board's goals to maintain HCDE visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents, elected officials, community leaders, and the HCDE Board. Additionally, it offers the opportunity to be open to the ideas of others to enhance HCDE's programs and services.

HCDE BOARD

Board President
Vacant

Vice President
Louis Evans, III
Position 4, Precinct 3

Erica Lee Carter
Position 6, Precinct 1

Eric Dick
Position 2, Precinct 4

George Moore
Position 1, Precinct 2

Don Sumners
Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman
Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe
Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

January Special Called Board Meeting
Monday, January 9, 2017
1:00 p.m.
Room 400

January Board Meeting and Board Appreciation Reception
TBA

Retirement Reception - Jean Polichino
Friday, January 27, 2017
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
500 Rooms

