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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

I began the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team upon my return from this year's Focal Point professional development session at the United States Army War College at Antietam. It was a productive meeting as we begin the process of winding down yet another academic year.

This past Saturday, CASE for Kids hosted the first round of the Ecobot competition. The event was a success and I look forward to attending tomorrow's event where we will continue to empower youth across Harris County with STEM knowledge via this robust robotics endeavor.

I continued my rewarding volunteerism efforts this week through our Head Start SuperMENTors program. As previously mentioned, this project encourages men to become involved with young children through active engagement by reading to students. It is a very worthwhile program and I believe that I probably gain more from it than the students to whom I read.

Next week, I am tentatively scheduled to fulfill my responsibility as a member of the UIL Executive Committee on May 2, 2017. Through my service as a member of this body, I have the unique opportunity to continue to bring visibility to HCDE as I work to broaden its reach.

Also next week, I will be conducting the monthly Leadership Team Meeting which will be comprised of all directors and principals within the Department. This meeting is always

informative as division leaders bring forward pertinent news and information regarding HCDE programs and services that is valuable to the whole.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Online Instructors' Training- Part I; Social Studies Leadership Group; Build Your Bookshelf Series: YA and Maps—A Cross-Curricular Journey; and Reaching Children and Parents Through Their Personal Love Language. Harris County Department of Education continues to serve as a beacon in the area of professional development for educators in Harris County.

In closing, I have included scenes from this year's Focal Point professional development session which included participation of several superintendents from our client school districts. I look forward to providing each of you with a full summary of the experience at the next meeting of the Board. To that end, please be reminded that the regularly scheduled May Board Meeting is Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

As always, thank you for your service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

**Upcoming Event:**  
**Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, May 16, 2017

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Department of Education La Porte Head Start Program Recruits Students Ages 3-5 for Immediate Openings



Harris County Department of Education La Porte Head Start Center located at 927 S. 1st St. is recruiting students ages 3 to 5 years. The program ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition, and financial services to the families.

For La Porte Head Start grandparent Amanda Kastl, the HCDE Head Start program is a blessing in a variety of ways. Not only does 4-year-old granddaughter Rayne gain socialization skills and early preparation for elementary school while attending Head Start, but the La Porte family

service providers helped Kastl through her most challenging times.

After losing both parents, two brothers and a niece in the span of a couple years, the La Porte Head Start staff became a support system for Kastl and even guided her through the steps to get her Texas realtor license when she was struggling emotionally.

“I was maxed out emotionally,” said Kastl, “but the family service providers at La Porte helped me set goals, stay on track, and provided support when I needed it most.”

Grateful for the help Head Start has provided her family, Kastl stays involved in the center through volunteer work, the parent committee, and the Head Start Policy Council. She was also integral in creating a safer experience for La Porte students while at school.

After recognizing that the small, two-lane road in front of the center was unsafe for families to drop off and pick up students, she worked with city officials to install school zone signs and “No Parking” signs, and change the road to one way to decrease hazardous traffic.

For more information about HCDE Head Start programs, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/headstart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/headstart).

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

**APRIL 24, 2017**

Online Instructor’s Training - Part I

**APRIL 26, 2017**

Social Studies Leadership Group

**APRIL 27, 2017**

Build Your Bookshelf Series: YA & Maps: A Cross-Curricular Journey

**APRIL 28, 2017**

Reaching Children and Parents Through Their Personal Love Language



# Opportunity

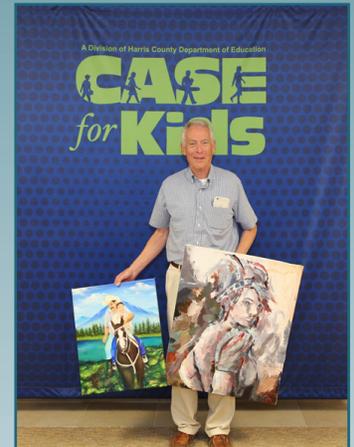
## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



### CASE for Kids Presents 18th Annual End-of-Year Celebration

CASE for Kids hosts its 18th Annual End of Year Celebration on May 3 at the Norris Conference Center, 816 Town & Country Boulevard, suite 210, Houston, Texas, 77024. Emcee for the event held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. is

Yolanda Green Barnes, former KIAH broadcast personality who is now director of Community Investment at Comcast Cable. In celebrating afterschool, CASE for Kids presents the Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Awards.



### GED Graduation Slated for May 20 at 11 a.m. in 6300 Irvington Conference Center



HCDE Adult Education GED Graduation 2017 will be held on May 20 at 6300 Irvington in the Conference Center. Graduate numbers are growing as students reply to participate in the popular event. To date, over 50 have responded to participate.

HCDE Communications and Creative Services will be streaming Facebook Live

throughout parts of the ceremony. The commencement speaker will be Michele Paul, executive director of Capital Idea Houston. Paul is a life coach who is a popular motivational speaker.

Graduates will arrive at 9 a.m. for photos, but the commencement ceremony takes place from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### First All-Earth Ecobot Event Attracts 1,000-Plus Students for Robotics Competition



More than 1,000 young robotics enthusiasts in grades 6-8 throughout greater Harris County gathered at the Berry Center on April 22 for one of two All-Earth Ecobot Challenges

taking place this month. Their challenges included maritime missions, vaccine development, flood control, and forest firefighting.

The All-Earth Ecobot Challenge is coordinated by the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. The challenge is one of the largest robotics events for



students in Texas and has touched the lives of 6,000 students since its inception.

The second All-Earth Ecobot Challenge will be held on Saturday, April 29 at the Humble Civic Center. View photos from the April 22 event: <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/EducationFoundation/Ecobot-Challenge-2017/> (password: hcde1889).



### HCDE Celebrates Week of the Young Child with Head Start Center Tours

In celebration of the Week of the Young Child, Head Start invited HCDE staff and various community partners to tour two Head Start centers this week and participate in classroom activities. Center visits provide community members the opportunity to see high quality early childhood education services in practice

and encourage partners to join in activities and interact with children. To view photos from the Head Start tours, visit <https://goo.gl/ciBRsu> (password: hcde1889).



# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Highpoint East Students Learn the Value of W.O.R.K.



More than 150 students attended the 2017 Teen Summit at Highpoint East, where they heard from a former NBA player and Harris County judge. They broke into sessions that addressed the theme of WORK, meaning “Worthy of Respect and Knowledge.” The event, held on Tuesday, April 25, was aimed at bringing students together to learn skills and discuss concepts essential to meeting their professional goals.

Harris County Judge Joe Stephens, of Justice of the Peace Court Precinct 3-1, kicked off the day’s schedule with an inspiring keynote address. The former Houston Rockets NBA player and North Shore Senior High school alum said he could relate to the struggles of the average Highpoint East student, but that those struggles need not define them.



*Former NBA Player/Judge Joe Stephens and HPS-East student*

“Shoot for the moon,” Stephens said, “If you don’t make it, you’ll land among the stars.”

Following the keynote message, students broke into workshop sessions aimed at addressing key concepts for succeeding beyond the classroom. These included financial literacy, dressing for success, proper hygiene, and social acceptance.

Social studies teacher Eric D. Joseph called these topics, which also included living above the influence of drugs and alcohol and teambuilding, “pressing”, for the Highpoint East community.

“We envisioned addressing these issues by way of experiential

learning and exposure because we believe that to be the best vehicle for solutions,” Joseph said.

“Our goal for this year’s Teen Summit was to provide our students an opportunity to see, hear, and experience real life situations beyond the classroom,” said Highpoint East Principal Marion Cooksey.

Addressing students in his “Respect and Appropriate Communication” workshop, Officer K. Elis shared insights about how to speak appropriately and safely to police – advice that could end up saving a student’s life.



*Officer K. Elis offers life-saving advice*

“Don’t make any sudden moves, and always keep your hands where officers can see them,” Elis said.

Broderick Wyatt, a Highpoint East teacher, led an engaging seminar on financial literacy, helping students understand the differences between riches and wealth, and encouraging them to be smart about spending money.



The second annual Teen Summit was an “all hands on deck” effort that required the cooperation of Highpoint East Principal Cooksey, Assistant Principals Montgomery and Love, Transition Specialists Babers and Lewis, Counselor Wroblewski, Nurse Raines, paraprofessionals, and teachers.

Client district contacts were also in attendance and expressed gratitude for the work that Highpoint East staff put into the event.

# Executive Leadership

IN ACTION

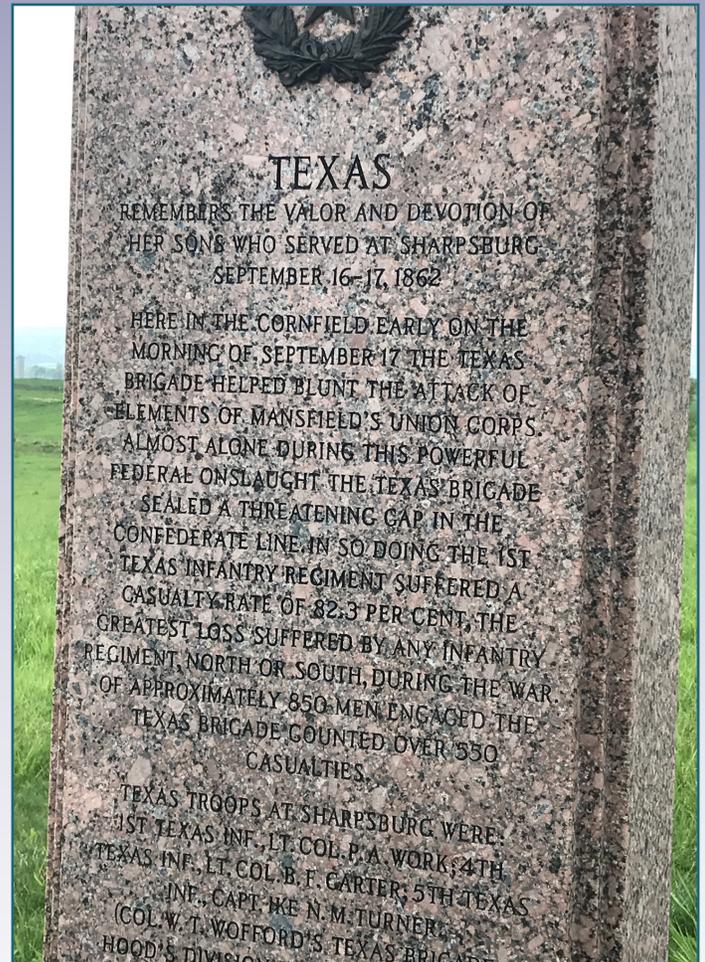
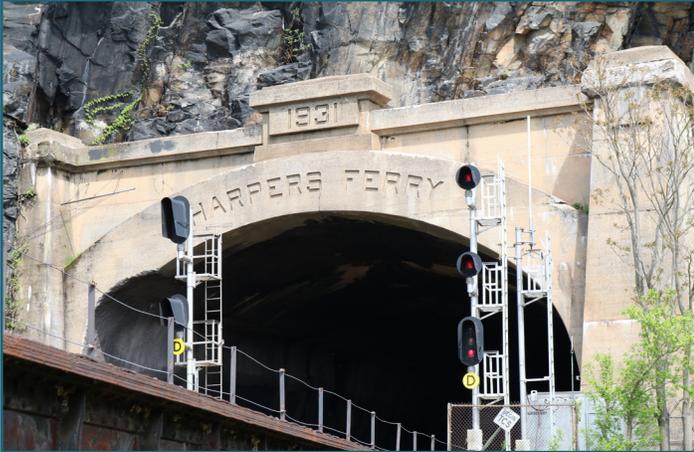
Scenes from the Focal Point 2017



# Executive Leadership

IN ACTION

Scenes from the Focal Point 2017 (continued)



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In an effort to meet the Board's expectations of me to achieve the element of performance related to this goal to:

- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration

Late last week, a delegation of superintendents and education leaders from Harris County, and I, participated in Focal Point 2017 which was held at the battle site of Antietam through the U.S. Army War College Battlefield Leadership Seminar Program. During this experience, we expounded on the following leadership topics:

- Leadership Style (and when to change it);
- Empowerment of trusted agents;
- Communicating leader vision;
- Managing toxic/immature leaders;
- Avoiding cognitive bias;
- Hazards of inner circles/nepotism;
- Separating personal and professional relationships;
- Weighing risk vs. reward;
- Controlling "The Narrative"; and
- Transforming tactical success into strategic effect.

The U.S. Army War College Battlefield Leadership Seminar Program is a leadership development opportunity for senior executives from private corporations, governmental organizations, and academic environments. It is offered as an outreach initiative to increase public awareness of the high quality of Army leadership education.



As a delegation of education executives, we gained invaluable and applicable information to better serve the learners of Harris County.

Through Focal Point professional development experiences, I am striving to meet the Board's expectation of me to assess development tools available and apply the various leadership tools in my daily leadership of HCDE.

## HCDE BOARD

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**Position 4, Precinct 3**

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**Position 6, Precinct 1**

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**Position 7, At Large**

Diane Trautman  
**Position 3, At Large**

Michael Wolfe  
**Position 5, At Large**

## UPCOMING BOARD EVENT:

**Board Meeting**  
Tuesday, May 16, 2017

