

The CONNECTOR

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for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

Today marks the end of the third week of school for HCDE and most districts in Harris County. HCDE returned from the Labor Day holiday this past Tuesday and resumed its regular business hours.

I began the week with my regularly scheduled Executive Leadership Team meeting, immediately followed by our regularly scheduled Leadership Team meeting with all HCDE division directors. I am pleased to report that all divisions reported efficient productivity within the various programs and our school campuses reported average attendance with an uptick expected during the remainder of this week, as well as into next week.

Also this week, Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker and I made a site visit to one of only two recovery school entities in the greater Houston/Harris County area. We met with the Executive Director of Therapeutic Services for the school and that meeting was productive, informative, and impactful as I work to gather data points related to this unique alternative education platform. I will continue to explore the benefits of such a program and gather as much information as possible in preparation of sharing summary findings of my research with the Board.

I will be attending the Mayor's Inaugural My Brother's Keeper Summit for the Houston area this week. The first of its kind, this event will bring awareness to the organization's efforts. My Brother's Keeper is a national organization formed by the President to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color in an effort to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. Given Houston's urban demographic, this is a necessary mission as the mayor attempts to close the gaps that exist between our youngest citizens, prohibiting them from realizing success in education and in other productive areas of society.

Next week, I will be kicking off the 2016-2017 season of Focal Point—Executive Leadership in Action. Superintendents from across Harris County will convene at HCDE for a breakfast meeting as we plan our initiatives for the current academic year. I look forward to this meeting of education executives from our member school districts.

I will also be hosting my American Leadership Forum (ALF) class next week during our monthly meeting of the minds. As mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**, I am in the current class of the ALF. Its mission is to join and strengthen diverse leaders to serve the common good. As part of the year-long commitment, we meet on a monthly basis to advance the purpose of the organization. Hosting my ALF cohorts at HCDE will bring exceptional visibility to the Department as I work within the community to bring awareness to HCDE and forward public education.

In the area of teaching and learning, this week we focused on student behavior management with Positive Behavior Management Works—Even Online! We continued with a Moodle User Webinar Series as well as Making Connections: Starting with the TEKS and Ending with Quality Assessment: Grades 6-12. We also hosted the Leadership Impact Meeting, Capturing Kids' Hearts, and we ended the week with yet another Making Connections: Starting with TEKS and Ending with Quality Assessment for grades 3-5.

Please be reminded that the September Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. I look forward to seeing you there.

In closing, thank you 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

Six Harris County Teen Artists, Writers to Exhibit Work in Washington, D.C. Institutions



Erin Del Paggio, *Kleb Intermediate, Klein ISD, Sunday Brunch*

Work from six Houston-area Scholastic Art & Writing teen national medalists will be showcased in Washington, D.C. through the “Art. Write.Now.DC” exhibit spanning three locations. The six students are from Houston, Klein, Cypress-

Fairbanks, and Deer Park independent school districts and The Village School and St. John’s Upper School private schools.

“Out of 85 talented teen artists and writers throughout the United States being honored through these exhibits, six of those talented students are from Houston,” said Harris County Department of Education regional Scholastic Art & Writing coordinator Andrea Segraves, who is also director of the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE. “We are honored as the regional sponsor of this iconic program which allows teens to express their art and writing abilities and showcase their talent.”

Students being honored include teen writers Amy Dong (critical essay) from St. John’s Upper School, Peyton Vasquez (personal essay/memoir) from Deer Park Middle School in Deer Park ISD, and Melanie Menkiti (short story) from The Village School. Artists are Andrea Conley (drawing and illustration), Pin Oak Middle School, Houston ISD; Erin Del Paggio (drawing and illustration), Kleb Intermediate, Klein ISD; and Judy Labib (photography), Cypress Woods High School, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

The artists’ and writers’ work will be on display at the U.S. Department of Education, the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Kleb Intermediate teacher Vivian Fridley-Hereford said her student Del Paggio has earned two national Gold Medals

for work she did as a seventh grader, the youngest grade eligible to enter the awards. Earning national recognition has helped the teen recognize and value her artistic talents, Fridley-Hereford said.

Cypress-Fairbanks student photographer Labib is described by her teacher Juan Guevara as kind, hard-working, and selfless. The senior has developed into an incredible artist, he said.

Deer Park student Vasquez, a cancer survivor, used writing to share his story and struggles. The seventh grader had a tumor removed from his eye in second grade which left him with complications and ongoing challenges. The regional and national awards he has received in 2015, and again in 2016, have allowed him to share his story with a broader audience, as well as with his classmates, said teacher Bethany Bradley, who accompanied Vasquez to Carnegie Hall to receive his awards.

Regional entries for Scholastic Art & Writing Awards will be accepted from Sept. 15-Dec. 15, 2016 as teachers throughout Harris County begin entering their students’ work electronically to be judged by professionals who volunteer their time.

Last year, about 8,000 entries were received. This year, Segraves expects that number to climb substantially. Recipients of regional awards will be announced Feb. 3. Gold Key awardees will advance to nationals, where medalists will be announced in May. Ceremonies at Carnegie Hall are held in June.

“We actively look for judges who would like to be involved, and sponsors who might want to provide venues for students to showcase their work, or scholarships for students to travel to New York City when they earn national awards,” said Segraves. For more information, go to www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Classes Begin at Early Head Start Baytown Center

Classes began last week at HCDE's Early Head Start Baytown Center. The Baytown center currently serves 40 students ages 6 weeks to 3 years, and HCDE's Early Head Start Child Care Partnership serves an additional 60 children at seven community centers in our service area. Learn more at www.hcde-texas.org/headstart.



Head Start Recruits Mentors for Baytown Center



HCDE Head Start is currently recruiting male volunteers from the Baytown community for the R.E.A.L. (Read, Excel, Achieve, Lead) SuperMENTors Read Program. The volunteers commit one hour of their time to read to Head Start students at the Baytown center each month from October to May.

The SuperMENTors Read Program is reinforced by four principles: teaching students that reading is fun; joint reading positively impacts children learning to read; literacy knowledge and skills lay the foundation for reading and writing; and community involvement matters. For more information on the SuperMENTors program, visit <http://goo.gl/XOYTYU>.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

SEPTEMBER 5, 2016

Positive Behavior Management Works - Even Online!

Moodle User Webinar Series

SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

Making Connections: Starting with TEKS and Ending with Quality Assessment: Grades 6-12

Leadership Impact Meeting

Capturing Kids Hearts

SEPTEMBER 8 2016

Making Connections: Starting with TEKS and Ending with Quality Assessment: Grades 3-5

School Discipline and Equity Conference Co-Hosted by Center and TLC October 3



The School Discipline and Equity Conference is set for October 3 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington. The conference is co-hosted by the Center for Safe and Secure Schools and the Teaching and Learning Center. School leaders such as principals, counselors, school safety officers, and staff may attend the free event. The conference presents a comprehensive, transformational approach to school discipline. Keynote speaker is nationally recognized Judge Steven C. Teske, child judge of Clayton County Juvenile Court in Georgia.

Providing a new approach to discipline, the conference aims to restore a sense of community in a disconnected world, prevent students from entering the "school-to-prison pipeline," and teach a holistic approach to help children resolve conflict.

View the flier: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4235/school-discipline-and-equity-conference-3.pdf>

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

La Porte CPAs Deliver Back-to-School Supplies for HCDE Head Start Pugh Center

A dozen bags of school supplies arrived at Harris County Department of Education Head Start Pugh Center as employees from La Porte CPAs & Business Advisors delivered back-to-school necessities to children and their families.

Seventy-four children attend the center in northeast Houston. Center Manager Catherine Jones said the center appreciates community help from businesses as the donated resources and time support families and prepare children for success in school. To

volunteer or donate to Head Start, contact arodriguez@hcde-texas.org or call 713)696-2179. To enroll in any of HCDE's 15 Head Start centers in northeast Houston, go to www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart.



HCDE Hosts Area Assistant Superintendents for Leadership Impact Meeting



HCDE hosted a Leadership Impact Meeting with nine assistant superintendents from surrounding school districts on September 7. The meeting focused on mental health issues and included a panel discussion with John Cates of Lifeway International, Charles Rotramel with

Houston:reVision, and Janet Pozmantier with Mental Health America of Greater Houston.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT: Cy-Fair ISD

Cy-Fair ISD is recruiting mentors to encourage students to finish school and focus on

future education and career goals. Mandatory training sessions are offered in the fall.

Learn More:

<http://www.cfsd.net/en/community-involvement/community-engagement/mentor/>



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In keeping 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 the 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 I will be attending the Mayor's Inaugural Summit for My Brother's Keeper in the Houston area.

This necessary event will be a pivotal one in many areas of the city of Houston as HCDE works to help the students in Harris County achieve. I will be in attendance at this milestone event, representing HCDE and its stakeholders.



Next week, I will be hosting the superintendents from the Harris

County area as we convene to forward our collective goal to help students in Harris County achieve, and to have a positive impact on education. Formed last year, this meeting will kick off our second year. We anticipate great results from these organized interactions that produce powerful ideas and discussions for the betterment of public education in not only Harris County, but also around the state of Texas.

Also, next week, I will be hosting the American Leadership Forum for its September monthly



meeting of my cohorts of the 2016-2017 class. This event will bring even more awareness to HCDE in my efforts to increase HCDE's visibility, especially in the community that supports public education.

By attending and hosting these two events, along with other ongoing community relations initiatives, I am achieving the Board's goal of me to

- Function as the primary ambassador for the Department;
- Present a positive, professional image of myself and the Department in all venues—community, political, educational, business, and board;
- Maintain visibility and involvement in the community with ISD Superintendents, elected officials, community leaders, and the HCDE Board; and to
- Be open to the ideas and needs of those, while listening and accepting criticism.

In doing so, I am communicating the needs and accomplishments of the Department through a variety of formats: through written reports, communication with school districts, political arenas, and public meetings. I am representing HCDE by attendance at events and speaking professionally. I make professional presentations to all audiences in all arenas, listening and taking into account differing viewpoints of various constituencies, using good judgment to discern the best decision and action for the Department.

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

September Board Meeting
September 20, 2016

1:00 p.m.
Room 400

