

# 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...

It's been a productive week at HCDE. As usual, I began the week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team. As mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**, we are in the midst of planning for the next academic year. Our Business Services division is deeply engrossed in its end of fiscal year procedures and working with divisions to ensure efficient closure.

Thanks to all of you who were able to attend Tuesday's regularly scheduled Board Meeting. As always, I am appreciative of your service to Harris County Department of Education.

As you may recall in a previous issue of **The Connector**, I mentioned that I was in the formative stages of planning a Board Retreat. To that end, I met with Dr. Cathy Minberg this week—president and chief executive officer of the Center for Reform of School Systems—regarding serving as the facilitator for the retreat. As a result of her varied experiences in public education, especially having worked at the forefront of public education reform, both as a long-term school board member in the Houston Independent School District and as a community college trustee, she possesses the skill-set to serve as a high quality facilitator for this purpose. In addition to the aforementioned experiences, she has also served as a high-level administrator in two urban school districts. I look forward to speaking with her more about this opportunity.

Also this week, I began the process of selecting new chairs for the Board Room. I am hopeful that they will be in place by the July Board Meeting.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy; ESL Supplemental Exam 2-Day

Test Prep Workshop; Supporting the Bilingual/ESL Student; Online Course: GTech-Challenging Secondary Gifted Learners (6 hours GT credit); Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy; Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion, and Energy; Test Prep Workshop for TExES Bilingual Education Supplemental Exam (#164); Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy; Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space; HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting; Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space; Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments; and Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments. HCDE provides exceptional professional development to educators across Harris County and beyond.

Next week, I will be attending the 69th Annual University of Texas/Texas Association of School Administrators (UT/TASA) Summer Conference on Education in Austin which is being held June 25-27. This is a great opportunity for professional development, especially on the heels of the 85th Texas legislative session. I look forward to learning and networking with my peers in executive education.

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

### Upcoming Events:

**Tuesday, July 18, 2017**

- Board Meeting

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Therapist Charlotte Eccles Competes on NBC's American Ninja Warrior



HCDE School-Based Therapy Services physical therapist Charlotte Eccles competed on American Ninja Warrior, a televised athletic competition that requires contestants to leap, flip, and crawl through a series of obstacles. The episode, which was filmed in San Antonio, aired on KPRC Channel 2 on June 19.

Eccles shared her personal journey on the show. Two and a half years ago, Eccles was diagnosed with a brain tumor condition called acoustic neuroma. Surgery left her with several impairments.

“Six months after surgery, I transitioned from a conventional outpatient physical therapy setting into a ninja gym, with a physical therapist and trainer who happened to be an American Ninja Warrior competitor,” Eccles said. “I remember the first day I walked into the ninja gym. All the obstacles that I saw were so parallel with the obstacles in life I was facing. In that moment, I knew it was going to be the place that I took back everything my tumor had stolen physically from me.”

During Monday night's episode, Eccles handily overcame the first obstacle but was eliminated during the “Tic Toc” challenge, a difficult obstacle designed to resemble the pendulum of a clock. Many contestants, including veteran competitors, fell into the water and were eliminated during this challenge.

Through her position as a physical therapist in School-Based Therapy Services, Eccles works with children with special needs in Spring Branch Independent School District in their school environment. Physical therapy in the school setting may help children with challenges that include: getting on and off the bus, adapting physical education activities, maneuvering through the cafeteria line, and supporting mobility and positioning options to help students be successful in the classroom and school environment.

Visit the following link to view video: <http://www.click2houston.com/houston-life/ninja-mom-competes-on-american-ninja-warrior>

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

*Trainings hosted at HCDE this week*

#### **JUNE 19, 2017**

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy

ESL Supplemental Exam 2-Day Test Prep Workshop

Supporting the Bilingual/ESL Student

Online Course: GTech – Challenging Secondary Gifted Learners (6 Hours GT Credit)

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Matter and Energy

#### **JUNE 20, 2017**

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy

Test Prep Workshop for TExES Bilingual Education Supplemental Exam (#164)

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Force, Motion and Energy

#### **JUNE 21, 2017**

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

#### **JUNE 22, 2017**

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Organisms and Environments

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### CASE for Kids Students Explore Local Colleges, Career Options via METRORail



Students from a dozen schools participated in the “Amazing Race College and Career Exploration” on June 15 to explore local colleges and apply

their problem-solving and teamwork skills. The event was sponsored by HCDE’s CASE for Kids and the University of Houston-Downtown and supported by Houston Community College, Texas Southern University, and University of Houston-Central.

The students who are enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs through the Texas Education Agency’s Afterschool Centers on Education’s 21st Century Learning Center gained valuable information about college through interactive tours on the METRORail System.

The Texas ACE program, which is implemented locally through CASE for Kids, works to promote workforce awareness and college readiness as one of its four core components. CASE for Kids provides afterschool support services, including grant funding, training, and materials which supports over 11,000 children in greater Harris County.

“This interactive field trip initiates a unique learning experience as it introduces students to colleges and

universities as means to encourage the pursuit of higher education,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids.

After touring the three colleges and uncovering clues at each college destination, students returned to the University of Houston-Downtown for lunch where they heard from former at-risk teen and first generation graduate Elias Santibanez.

Aldine ISD sixth grader Kosha Miles was excited to participate in the Amazing Race event and ride the METRORail to collect clues with her team from Marcella Intermediate School.

“I heard about the event and wanted to learn more about local colleges and career options for my future,” said Miles. “I also really enjoyed learning to use the METRORail and get experience traveling downtown.”



View photos from the “Amazing Race College and Career Exploration” at <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/CASE/Kids-Day-Amazing-Race/>.



### Human Resources Hosts Summer Social for Employees

Human Resources hosted a summer social for employees, complete with nachos and Cheetos with cheese! This social is one of a few events scheduled during the summer months to encourage networking and fellowship between divisions.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Certified Nursing Assistant Graduates Celebrated

About 75 adult learners were celebrated as HCDE's certified nursing assistant graduates attended a ceremony in June recognizing their accomplishments in gaining information and experience needed to become a nurse assistant.

The 10-week program provides academics and hands-on training so that nurse assistants may care for clients in long-term care facilities, hospitals, home health care, and hospice settings.

To be eligible for the program, adult learners must be at an intermediate level in reading, math, and language classes and be eligible to work in the United States. HCDE offers the classes in several geographic areas of Houston.

Certified nursing assistants earn approximately \$9.50 to \$11 an hour.

The state's competency test evaluates nurse aide-related knowledge, skills, and abilities. As a student successfully completes the HCDE Adult Education class, they are eligible to take the state test to become a certified nurse assistant. The course prepares students to seek employment in various health care settings, including skilled nursing facilities, hospice care, retirement facilities, rehab hospitals, and day care facilities for the elderly. More information about training is available at [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation).

### CASE for Kids National Summer Learning Day Stresses Importance of Year-Round Learning



CASE for Kids presents Summer Learning Day on July 13 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at 6005 Westview,

Houston, Texas. The event focuses on science and numeracy with the theme: "Afterschool is Out of This World."

The event provides free, hands-on, engaging activities for youth ages 5-13 that promote learning, exploration, and skill development. About 150 youth and their chaperones will be invited to the event from schools throughout Harris County.

National Summer Learning Day is an advocacy day aimed at elevating the importance of keeping kids learning in the

summer. The day also focuses on summer health for children and making sure they return to the school ready to succeed.

View the flier for details about the local CASE for Kids event for call 713-696-0782:

<http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4668/summer-learning-day-flyer-2017-event-flyer.pdf>



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Area Teachers Attend HCDE, IPSI Workshop to Support Bilingual Students



Teachers from Pasadena and Houston independent school districts attended this week's "Supporting the Bilingual/ESL Student" workshop with Diana Madrid of the Institute for Public School Initiatives. During the workshop, teachers engaged in activities designed to support English learner achievement and determined ways to integrate the activities into different content areas.

### 25 Harris County Students Travel to New York City's Carnegie Hall to Accept National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals



Twenty-five of the best artists and writers from Harris County traveled to New York City this month to be honored with National Scholastic Art & Writing Gold

Key Medals at Carnegie Hall. In total, Harris County teens received 59 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for 2017. The Awards are sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education.

During the National Ceremony on June 8, hundreds of teens from across the U.S. were honored by actress and comedian Amy Schumer, CEO and President of Scholastic Richard Robinson, actress Ellie Kemper, artist Paul Chan and more.

"For more than 90 years, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards has recognized the vision, ingenuity and talent of our students and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated," said Andrea Segraves, Harris County Department of Education coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing. "With more than 330,000 entries nationally, we are proud of our Harris County medalists."



The Harris County students who traveled to New York City for the ceremony included:

#### National Gold Key Writers

Jacob DuPont, Klein ISD - Vivian Tsao, Village School  
Taylor Gleason, Deer Park ISD  
Peyton Vasquez, Deer Park ISD  
Mary Ann Hurtado, Klein ISD  
Elizabeth Willms, Deer Park ISD  
Shania Hurtado, Klein ISD  
Julia Smith, St. John's School  
Tyler King, St. John's School  
Urvashi Deshpande, Village High School

#### National Gold Key Artists

Alexis Cazares, Pasadena ISD  
Asma Mashal, Katy ISD  
Alexus Castillo, River Oaks Baptist  
Melissa Sosa, Pasadena ISD  
Alliemarie Crochet, Katy ISD  
Akhil Thadani, Aldine ISD  
Fatemeh Ebrahimi, Katy ISD  
Bryce Williams, Cy-Fair ISD  
Nallely Garza, Clear Creek ISD  
Wendy Xie, Pearland ISD  
Connie Lau, Katy ISD  
Juwon Yoo, Spring Branch ISD  
Mackenzie Lopez, Klein ISD  
Saranna Zhang, Spring Branch ISD  
Alec Martinez, Cy-Fair ISD

To view photos from the event, visit <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/Scholastic-Art-Writing/Scholastic-Nationals-NYC-June-2017/Scholastic-NYC-Carnegie-Hall-2017/>.

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

Work with other community and governmental entities and educational organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinate way



CASE for Kids recently took students on an excursion to explore local colleges and career options via METRORail. The students, who are enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs through the Texas Education Agency's Afterschool Centers on Education's 21st Century Learning Center, gained valuable information about college through interactive tours on the METRORail System.

The event, dubbed The Amazing Race: College and Career Exploration, allowed the employment of problem-solving and teamwork skills. Sponsored by HCDE's CASE for Kids and the University of Houston-Downtown, and



supported by Houston Community College, Texas Southern University, and the University of Houston-Central, this event was worthwhile and offered the students great perspective on the possibilities that exist for them once they have completed high school.

**By ensuring that events such as these are facilitated by HCDE divisions, campuses, programs and services, I am working to meet the Board's goal to communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department in a variety of formats through communication with the media, community, school districts, and other forums.**

## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Tuesday, July 18, 2017**

- Board Meeting

