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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

I trust you had a relaxing Independence Day earlier this week. As mentioned in the last issue of **The Connector**, the Department resumed its regular schedule this week as a result of the holiday. The Department was open from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. this past Monday, and Wednesday through today but was closed Tuesday, July 4.

I began the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team as well as my other regularly-scheduled weekly meetings with staff. Upon our return to the office Wednesday, following the holiday, I held the Leadership Team Meeting where pertinent information was shared among directors, principals, and members of the Executive Leadership Team.

Also, this week, I continued my regular meetings with community representatives as we continue to build partnerships and meaningful relationships with other entities and community organizations. We held Agenda Review yesterday, in preparation for the regularly-scheduled July Board Meeting to be held Tuesday, July 18.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, we hosted the Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting for individuals interested in becoming part of the Principal Certification Academy. The Business Services division also hosted its regular School Finance Council Meeting for school business executives.

I am pleased to share that our CASE for Kids program is celebrating Summer Learning Day on July 13 for children ages

5-13 who are attending Harris County area summer programs. The event will focus on science and numeracy and will be held at the North Post Oak location of HCDE.

Next week, I will be attending both the 8th National Collegiate Recovery Conference and the 16th National Association of Recovery Schools Conference. These events are being held Monday through Thursday. I also spent the day conducting interviews for the Adolescent Recovery Support and Counseling Services RFP with Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker and Recovery High School Principal Dr. Anthony Moten.

To that end, we continue to make progress towards our recovery high school project. We are very excited about the possibilities that lie within this endeavor.

Looking ahead, please be reminded that the regularly-scheduled July Board meeting will take place on July 18. I look forward to seeing you there.

As always, thanks for your service to Harris County Department of Education. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**, and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Makes Summer Learning Day “Out of this World”



Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, celebrates what makes afterschool programs “out of this world” with Summer Learning Day on July 13.

Children ages 5-13 attending Harris County summer afterschool programs will participate in the event focused on science and numeracy from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at HCDE’s North Post Oak Building, 6005 Westview.

Using the theme, “Afterschool is Out of This World,” this event allows students to experience a variety of hands-on, engaging activities that promote learning, exploration, and skill development.

Activities include a portable planetarium from the Houston Museum of Natural Science, a rocket launch and a mock space escape room challenge. Students will also create a special intergalactic substance that they can take home.

Summer Learning Day is an annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe, and healthy every summer.

Learn more about Summer Learning Day by visiting <http://goo.gl/aWslc>.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JULY 5, 2017

HCDE Principal Certification Academy Information Meeting

JULY 6, 2017

School Finance Council



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Announcing Choice Partners Fall 2017 Nutrition Show and Vendor Fair



Two annual events that bring savings to school districts are coming in October, but they're also going back in time. So dig out those parachute pants and shoulder pads and get

ready to have some totally awesome fun. (Decorations for both events will be 80s themed.)

Choice Partners' annual Child Nutrition Show will be held on October 25 at Humble Civic Center. School district nutritional directors and staff, as well as a selection of local culinary arts students, will sample products from food co-

op vendors. Student input will be used for meal planning for the following school year.

On October 27, Choice Partners will host its annual Vendor Exhibit at Norris Events Center. Members from school districts and other governmental entities will have an opportunity to network with facilities, technology, and product and supply vendors.



Choice Partners Live Streams Vendor Orientation for First Time



Choice Partners, HCDE's purchasing cooperative, held a vendor orientation on Thursday, June 29. The event was designed to introduce newly awarded contract-holders to the resources that Choice Partners provides to help Harris County-area companies grow their business.

Approximately 50 vendors representing a variety of industries, including commodities, facilities, food, technology, and pest control came to learn about cooperative purchasing through Choice Partners. Most were new vendors, but long-time contract holders were also in attendance.

"We are subject matter experts on procurement for government entities," said



Jeff Drury, director, Choice Partners.

Communications assisted Choice Partners with live-streaming the presentation for vendors who could not attend in person.



"All our contracts are best-value," said Carol Greb, contract manager. She explained that Choice Partners contract committees look at more than just price when considering which vendors to award.

However, the annual Choice Partners Supply Catalog, which makes it easy for school districts and other entities to purchase art, athletic, office, and medical supplies, features more than 1,100 line items priced at the lowest bid.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE Workshop Cultivates Science Literacy in Problem-Based Approach to Farming



CASE for Kids held a science workshop for out-of-school time service staff to explore ways to introduce scientific concepts to their students.

Participants rotated through open-ended stations that dealt with physical concepts like air resistance, gravity, inertia, and pendula and allowed students to experiment on their own.

Workshop leader Denise Johnson drew on examples from the farming industry as real-world applications. This problem-based approach to farming acted as the central motivation to communicate the scientific ideas to young learners.

After each station, Ms. Johnson led a group reflection, using language and explanations to encourage early scientific literacy. The stations allowed for modification for students with IEPs or other obstacles and ease of translation into afterschool programs, school-age child care centers, and summer camps.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Save the Date for 2018 Early Childhood Winter Conference



Save the date for Harris County Department of Education's 2018 R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference on January 27, 2018 at the Kingdom Builder's Center, 6011 West Orem.

The 32nd annual conference features keynote speakers Dr. Becky Bailey, author and national presenter, Dr. Gilberto Soto, professor of Music Education/Guitar at Texas A&M International, and more than 100 breakout

sessions from in-demand presenters.

As an internationally-renowned expert in childhood education and founder of Loving Guidance, Inc., Dr. Bailey focuses on Conscious Discipline, a whole-school solution for social-emotional learning and self-regulation. Additionally, participants will sing, dance, and move with Dr. Soto's presentation centered around music and movement to enhance learning.

View the event flyer: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4676/ecwc_mailer_2018.pdf

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Harris County Students Receive Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards



Two Harris County students were recently honored with National Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards at the June 8 ceremony in New York City. Urvashi Deshpande from Village High School received the award for 9th Grade and Alec Martinez with Cypress-Fairbanks ISD received the award for 10th grade.

In addition to being honored at the national ceremony, Deshpande and Martinez will receive \$500.

Deshpande, who won for her writing piece, said the Best-in-Grade Award gave her confidence in her abilities as a writer.

“This has really motivated me to keep writing and keep sharing my writing with others,” said Deshpande.

To find more information about the Scholastic Art & Writing Best-in-Grade Awards, visit <http://www.artandwriting.org/scholarships/sponsoredawards/best-in-grade/>.

Each year, a special panel of national jurors selects two students from each grade for this prestigious award. In

HCDE Releases Harris County School Districts Calendar 2017-2018 for 25 Area Districts

District	Classes Begin	Thanksgiving	Winter Break	Spring Break	Easter	Other Holidays	Classes End	District
Alford	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 21 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Alford
Alief	Aug 16	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 20	Alief
Championsville	Aug 16	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 20	Championsville
Clear Creek	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Clear Creek
Conroe	Aug 17	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Conroe
CyFair	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 4	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	June 1	CyFair
DeWitt	Aug 17	Nov 20-24	Dec 21 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 20	DeWitt
Deer Park	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Deer Park
Elgin	Aug 22	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Elgin
Flower Creek	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 21 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Flower Creek
Houston	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 20 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	June 1	Houston
Huffman	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	June 1	Huffman
Humble	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	June 1	Humble
Irvin	Aug 16	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 24	Irvin
Klein	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Klein
LaPorte	Aug 22	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 24	LaPorte
League City	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 20 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	June 1	League City
Northwest	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 20 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 20	Northwest
Presidents	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Presidents
Spring Branch	Aug 22	Nov 20-24	Dec 20 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Spring Branch
Spring	Aug 17	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Spring
Spring Branch	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	June 1	Spring Branch
Stafford	Aug 21	Nov 20-24	Dec 18 - Jan 1	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 20	Stafford
Udall	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 20 - Jan 3	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	Udall
West	Aug 20	Nov 20-24	Dec 22 - Jan 5	March 12-16	March 20	Sept 4 - Oct 17, Oct 20, Jan 18-19, Jan 20, Feb 19, Mar 12, Mar 20	May 21	West

Harris County Department of Education’s annual Harris County School Districts 2017-2018 Calendar is now available online. HCDE has produced the calendar for the past 15 years. It features the school year’s start and end dates, spring and winter breaks, and student and staff holidays of all 25 Harris County districts that HCDE serves, as approved by the district boards.

State law mandates that schools begin no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, which lands on Aug. 28 this year. However, some Harris County districts have “district of innovation” status that allows them to waive this state regulation and opt for an earlier start date. A Texas school district must have an acceptable performance rating and create a comprehensive plan of innovation for a five-year term in order to become a district of innovation.

Students across all 25 districts have matching, week-long Thanksgiving breaks November 20-24 and week-long spring breaks March 12-16. All 25 districts are also closed on Friday, March 30 for Easter. Summer vacation starts up once again in 2018 between May 24 and June 1 for all Harris County districts.

Access the consolidated calendar here: <http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4680/schooldistrictcalendar2017-18.pdf>.

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**



Choice Partners live streamed its vendor orientation for the first time last Thursday. The event was designed to introduce newly-awarded contract holders to the resources offered by Choice Partners. Approximately 50 vendors represented a variety of industries, including commodities, facilities, food, technology, and pest control. Although many of the vendors were



new, many were long-time contract holders.

It is important to note that the annual Choice Partners Supply Catalog makes it easy for school districts and other entities to purchase art, athletic, office, and medical supplies, featuring more than 1,100 line items priced at the lowest bid.

By ensuring that events and products 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

