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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

Let me begin by offering my sentiments to you and your families for a safe weekend for the duration of Hurricane Harvey. As a result of our deteriorating weather, HCDE was closed today to ensure the safety of both the students and staff of HCDE.

You are probably already aware that Houston Independent School District has delayed its first day of school, originally scheduled for Monday, August 28. Like HISD, we will continue to monitor the developing weather situation and make decisions regarding Monday by the close of the weekend.

I began this week with my regularly scheduled meetings as we continue preparing for the start of the academic year and I spent the remainder of the week in preparation of yesterday's Annual Staff Meeting with all HCDE employees. To that end, thank you to the members of the Board of Trustees who were able to attend our annual kick-off event to the academic year.

This year's Annual Staff Meeting was very well attended, and it was a pleasure for me to offer inspiration and motivation to the members of HCDE staff in attendance. Yesterday's overarching theme was **Service is the Key**. As always, HCDE is committed to service through our varied programs and services to the school districts, students, educators, and municipalities within Harris County. (Please see scenes from this year's event in this issue of **The Connector**.)

In the area of teaching and learning, this week HCDE offered the following trainings and workshops to the educators and

other professionals in Harris County and beyond: Online Instructor's Training, Part II; Grant Writing Best Practices; and School Finance Council.

As we do each year, in partnership with the media, several members of our staff served as subject matter experts for various media outlets as parents and students within Harris County prepare for the new school year and seek information. Each year, we provide media outlets with the expertise of our education leaders to impart knowledge to educators, parents, and the community-at-large on helpful topics related to pertinent topics in education.

Again, I trust that you and your families are safe during the effects of the impending Hurricane Harvey. As mentioned, we will make future decisions regarding HCDE's schedule for Monday by close of the weekend.

Thanks again for your service to HCDE. I encourage you to view the photos from yesterday's Annual Staff Meeting event in the subsequent pages.

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

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Former CFISD Communication Director Named HCDE's Director of Client Engagement



Stephanie De Los Santos is the new director of Harris County Department of Education's client engagement division. With more than 20 years of experience in education and communications, she leads the HCDE division which provides marketing support to programs and services that serve over a million Harris County students and educators.

De Los Santos is former director for communication for Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District, where she served for 12 years before joining HCDE. Prior to her years of service in CFISD, she taught in Aldine ISD for nine years. The Houston native earned both her Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media and Spanish and a Master of Education from Houston Baptist University.

"I'm excited to be a part of an organization where the well-being of Harris County students is top priority," she said. "As director of client engagement, I hope to continue the tradition of excellence not only by incorporating the years of experience I have in the field of education and communication, but also connecting with and providing support to local school districts and surrounding communities."

De Los Santos is the mother of two graduates of CFISD's Jersey Village High School who now attend Trinity University and Oral Roberts University.

Back-to-School Topics Debated through Facebook Live on KHOU



Several HCDE educators connected with the public about back-to-school issues through KHOU News in Facebook Live sessions this week at the station. The early risers arrived at 5:30 a.m. to represent HCDE through topics ranging from readying kids for school and Internet safety.



Andrea Segraves and Nicole Shanahan appeared August 18, and David McGeary was live on August 23. Both videos have been viewed about 20,000 times to date. View the videos through our YouTube posts. (Total views are not reflected through these links.)

Back-to-school readiness with Andrea Segraves and Nicole Shanahan: <https://youtu.be/OsNSQgmH-Lc>

Digital safety best practices with David McGeary: <https://youtu.be/nGkTIN2YyXc>



ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

AUGUST 21, 2017

Online Instructor's Training - Part II

AUGUST 23, 2017

Grant Writing Best Practices!

AUGUST 25, 2017

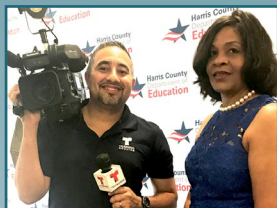
School Finance Council



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Ledet, De Los Santos Represent HCDE for Back-to-School Segments on Telemundo, Univision



Educator Certification and Professional Advancement's Curriculum and Compliance Officer Chaney Ledet talked about digital safety on

Telemundo 47 on August 18. View the story: <https://youtu.be/7R8NDoqpWTQ>

morning news segment which aired throughout the state in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and Houston markets. De Los Santos, new director to the division, talked about back-to-school safety tips. View the story: <https://youtu.be/ChmrlHuCOzU>



Client Development Director Stephanie De Los Santos appeared on Univision 45 on August 23 on a



HCDE Employees Learn to Effectively Tell Stories Via Social Media

The HCDE Communications division held a skill builder session for employees last week that focused on story-telling using social media. Chief Information Officer Helen Spencer led the session as staff from the Teaching and Learning Center, School-Based Therapy Services, Schools and more learned to effectively tell the story of HCDE through multiple social media channels. Communications hosts skill builder sessions focused on a different topic every other Thursday.



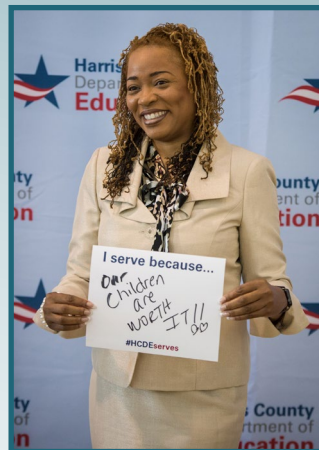
HCDE Employees Get a Glimpse of 2017 Solar Eclipse

HCDE employees joined millions across the country on August 21 in viewing the 2017 Solar Eclipse. The eclipse stretched across the U.S. from Oregon to South Carolina. The last time the contiguous U.S. saw a total eclipse was in 1979. Employees used protective glasses to view the eclipse, and some in the Teaching and Learning Center even made their own pinhole cameras.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

SCENES FROM ANNUAL STAFF MEETING 2017



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

SCENES FROM ANNUAL STAFF MEETING 2016



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



Adult Education Featured in Houston Chronicle Neighborhood Editions

Adult Education was recently featured in a news feature in several Houston Chronicle neighborhood editions. Director Eduardo Honold explained about the new diploma equivalency exams which are being introduced throughout the state. The interview gave HCDE the opportunity to promote our Adult Education classes.

View the article: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4835/houstonchronicle_081517.pdf

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Avery Presents Association of Fundraising Professionals Youth in Philanthropy Awards



1st Place Winners (\$3,000) - Quest Early College High School (ECHS)- Dual Credit Social Studies students with their preservation of the Negro Cemetery (Pipe Yard), the segregated area of Tetter Cemetery and the cultural history of the Bordersville community in Humble program.

Dr. Vida L. Avery, Resource Development specialist for the Center for Grants Development, presented the Association of Fundraising Professionals – Greater Houston Chapter 6th Annual Youth in Philanthropy Awards this month. Avery is board chair for diversity and community outreach for the association. The awards recognize students in the greater Houston area who have been compassionate and innovative in their community through volunteerism and fundraising activities. Throughout the

Houston area, students are performing countless, selfless acts and inspirational community service projects. Learn more about the chapter's efforts:

<http://www.afphouston.org/news/357904/2017-AFP-GHC-Youth-in-Philanthropy-Award-Winners.htm>



(Picture L-R: Jason Lee, JD, Interim AFP IHQ President, Dawn Koenning, AFP-GHC President, Vida L. Avery, PhD, Lauren Elie with her parents Mario Elie and Gina Gaston.)



(Picture L-R: Dawn Koenning, AFP-GHC President, Vida L. Avery, PhD, Dr. Daphne Henderson-sponsor with representatives and Jason Lee, JD, Interim AFP HQ President.)



(Picture L-R: Jason Lee, JD, Interim AFP IHQ President, Dawn Koenning, AFP-GHC President, Vida L. Avery, PhD, Klein Oaks representatives.)

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Spencer, Adams Selected to Serve in Leadership ISD



Two Harris County Department of Education employees will serve in

Leadership ISD fellowships during the 2017-2018 school year. Leadership ISD is a highly selective, 10-month program that provides civic leaders with information and insight to effectively influence systemic transformation.

Helen Spencer, HCDE's chief information officer and Winford Adams, public information and policy manager will begin internships in the 2017-2018 school year. Professionals selected for the program are entrepreneurs, lawyers, bankers, managers, nonprofit leaders, community volunteers, educators, parents and non-parents. Individuals are united by

a deep belief that all students deserve access to an excellent education and the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

Throughout the fellowship, fellows will hear from influential keynotes, review current events and best practices through research, engage with those affected by public education issues and explore the intersections of race, opportunity and equity in education.

View photos of our two HCDE fellows and other inductees: <https://leadershipisd.org/harris-county-fellows/>

Head Start Students Receive Backpacks, School Supplies from Plantgistix



Head Start students at the Fifth Ward, Pugh, Dogan, Coolwood, San Jacinto and Sheffield centers will receive backpacks full of school supplies donated by local business Plantgistix.

The Plantgistix Charity Committee, consisting of Darryl Dastous, Felesia Taylor, Tiffani Speller and Scott Skrabanek, will deliver the backpacks to the Sheffield center on September 8, 2017. Plantgistix is also donating funds for classroom supplies and materials for the centers.

Taylor and Speller, both products of Head Start, understand the importance of early learning and the

impact these supplies can make in the classroom. They also hope to demonstrate the impact of community service.



"What children see is what they'll be," said Speller. "Hopefully they'll grow up and want to give back to their community."

The 500 donated backpacks will include essential classroom items such as colored markers, crayons, glue sticks, folders and more.

For more information about Plantgistix, visit www.plantgistix.com.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to

- Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;
- Seek systematically to improve the climate by obtaining and utilizing feedback from employees of the Department;
- Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence; and
- Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team-building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management



Yesterday, I facilitated our Annual Staff Meeting at the Kingdom Builders' Center before the vast majority of Department employees. Staff participated in an icebreaker activity and enjoyed a continental breakfast in the run-up to the event. I had the pleasure of presenting Years of Service Awards to employees celebrating 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of service with the Department.

I also provided the keynote address centered around our service to the students and educators of Harris County, especially as we embark upon our newest endeavor: Fortis Academy.

It was an honor for me to motivate and inspire our staff at the start of yet another new academic year. I extend sincere thanks to the members of the Board who were able to attend yesterday's festivities.



Through events such as the Annual Staff Meeting, I am working to ensure the Board's goals of me to ensure that every person is treated with respect and dignity, and that I am implementing effective management practices while ensuring that all policies are supported by effective procedures.

In addition, I direct administrators to accomplish the mission, goals, and objectives of the Department, monitor progress, evaluate staff performance, and hold staff accountable as appropriate. I also effectively delegate authority with responsibility and I monitor staff to ensure that support programs and services are cost effective and of high quality.

HCDE BOARD

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Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe

Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

- Board Meeting

