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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

As usual, I started the week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team, followed by my other regularly scheduled Monday meetings. I conducted a meeting with the Leadership Team this past Tuesday. All meetings were informative and productive and focused on forwarding the mission of HCDE.

This past Wednesday, I attended this year's SuperMENTor Meet and Greet kickoff reception for the Head Start mentoring reading program. As mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**, I find this experience to be a very rewarding one. I encourage all of the male members of our Board to participate in this very worthwhile program.

Also on Wednesday of this week, I conducted Agenda Review in preparation for our regularly scheduled October Board Meeting.

As I mentioned in last week's newsletter, I am currently attending the TASA/TASB conference in Dallas through Sunday. I am spending an inordinate amount of time networking with statewide colleagues.

I am scheduled to be featured in a KPRC Channel 2 "Opioid Nation: An American Epidemic" news special airing tonight at 7:00 p.m. During that interview, I discussed the new Fortis Academy with the reporter. My feature will air at the end of the special as the reporter examines solutions. The special

discusses the depth and many facets of the problems posed by opioids as well as solutions within the community.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following workshops: The Autism Summit (a major conference with nationally renowned presenters) and Internet Safety for Afterschool Educators. The Autism Summit served as a hub for expertise for individuals interested in learning more about spectrum disorders related to Autism.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week with my regularly scheduled meetings, including ELT. Later in the day on Monday, I will depart for Austin to attend my UIL meeting to fulfill my commitment as a member of the Board.

I look forward to my first SuperMENTor reading session on Thursday of next week at my assigned Head Start location and I will end the week with a Debrief Reunion event hosted by the American Leadership Forum, as a fellow of one of last year's classes.

In closing, thanks for your continued service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a relaxing weekend.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, October 18, 2017
Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Plans for Lights On Afterschool! and Out-of-School Time Conference



As a member of the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance, CASE for Kids plans for Lights On Afterschool! 2017 at the Children's Museum of Houston on Oct. 26, from 3:30-5 p.m.

The afternoon will focus on children who have been affected by Hurricane Harvey in the hard-hit, flooded neighborhoods and schools. Each alliance member, including CASE for Kids, will bring about 25 children to the Children's Museum of Houston for trick-or-treating and a culminating STEM activity.

The call-to-action at the event focuses on the ongoing need for increasing afterschool programming in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. The alliance also plans to introduce a network called Out 2 Learn, a collaborative funded by the Houston Endowment and facilitated by United Way. The city of Houston and CASE for Kids are a member of the collaborative that promotes quality support resources and

best practices in afterschool.

CASE for Kids will be announcing the Lights On event through an invitation to community stakeholders and elected officials, including HCDE trustees.

The CASE for Kids Out-of-School Time Conference will be held November 10-11 at the HESS Club, 5430 Westheimer Rd., Houston, Texas. The conference theme for 2017 is Keeping Afterschool Cool. The Friday schedule which is designed for afterschool leaders and administrators includes keynote speaker Karen Pittman and breakout sessions from 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.



On Saturday, frontline afterschool staff are invited to a general session with Karen Pittman and for lunch with keynote Saul Paul. The all-day session will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Math Leadership Group Discusses Impact of Harvey on Classrooms, TEA Updates and More



Thirty math teachers from a dozen school districts met September 29 to network and discuss Harvey damages to their communities and schools as well as curriculum and schedule changes caused by the storm. Mind Research Institute provided information for district data comparisons on STAAR data as well as TEKS analysis data.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Groundbreaking Set for Harris County's First Public Recovery High School



Fortis Academy, Harris County's first public recovery high school, breaks ground this month after overcoming flood damages from Hurricane Harvey. Harris County

Department of Education has invited elected officials, educators and leaders in the recovery community to view the renovation of the facility, which previously served as a high school for at-risk students.

The ceremony is scheduled for October 17 at 10 a.m. at the school, located at 11902 Spears Road, and will include a tour of the facility, discussion of the recovery school concept, an introduction to the school's new principal, and reveal of the school logo.

The 20,000-square-foot recovery school, located in the Greenspoint area, will open during the 2017-2018 school year to 30 students from any of the 25 Harris County school districts on a district contract basis. Fortis Academy is designed to help students who have completed a substance abuse or dependency rehabilitation program continue their studies in a sober environment.

In addition to the academic component of the traditional high school, the recovery school combines life coach support and counseling, along with data-driven best practices.

The renovation plans include the addition of a culinary kitchen and dining area to support a culinary arts curriculum. The outdoor design will feature walking trails, a ropes course for personal development and team-building, an outdoor kitchen, and a garden.

Anthony Moten, longtime principal and leader in the West Orange Cove Independent School District, will lead the school.

"Dr. Moten was selected to lead our recovery school because of his commitment and dedication to meeting students' unique needs," said Superintendent James Colbert. "The compassion and expertise that Dr. Moten brings along with him will have a long-lasting impact on students who desperately need our help."

Earning the reputation as an exceptional educator as a seven-year leader of West Orange Middle School, Moten helped transform the school that was failing to meet state standards. Under his leadership, West Orange earned eight Texas Education Agency distinctions.

Moten received his undergraduate degree from Langston University, a master's degree in education administration from Texas A&M University-Commerce and a doctorate from Lamar University. He and his family are currently living in The Woodlands.

Recovery schools are critical to recovering youth as studies show the risk of relapse is higher when students return to their pretreatment schools. HCDE recently became a member of Adolescent Recovery Oriented Systems of Care, or AROSC, a group of agencies in the Houston Recovery Initiative that provides substance abuse treatment, preventative care, after-care and recovery support for adolescents in the Houston area.

"Through our membership in AROSC, we are able to benefit from a credible knowledge base of best practices and pooled resources from the recovery community," Colbert said. "The recovery school will help students heal, grow and ultimately discover how to live their very best lives while continuing their education."

Upcoming Skill Builder Workshops: Marketing Your Division

Communications and Creative Services and Client Engagement are hosting several free skill builder workshops in October for HCDE employees and guests:

Thursday, Oct. 12, 3 - 4 p.m.: Marketing your Division: NPO, rooms 1010-1011 (Stephanie De Los Santos)

Thursday, Oct. 26, 3 - 4 p.m.: Marketing your Division: Irvington, 400A (Stephanie De Los Santos)

RSVP to attend workshops: Vicky Cortinas, vcortinas@hcde-texas.org or call ext. 2106 or 1751

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

HCDE Autism Summit 2017 Provides Tools, Insight for Autism Spectrum Disorder



Fifty-four educators in the Greater Houston area attended Autism Summit 2017 on October 4-5 at Harris County Department of Education. The conference provided breakout

sessions with autism experts that focused on autism legislation, transition services and testimonials from young adults with autism spectrum disorder.

The summit also featured two keynote speakers, Carol Gray on Oct. 4 and Dorothea Lerman on Oct. 5. Gray provided a workshop on using “Social Stories™” to help students with autism dealing with the impact of Hurricane Harvey.



Social Stories™ is a tool that supports safe, meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals and people with autism. Lerman provided important

insight for participants as the director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.



“This Autism Summit was very informative and engaging,” said Leslie Willis-White with Gulf Coast Community Services Association. “The Social Stories™ piece provided a different perspective for working with students with autism.”

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. To view photos from the summit, visit <https://goo.gl/FMkYVD>.

Communications and Creative Services Surprises Area Journalists with Media Honor Roll Awards



Communications and Creative Services surprised several journalists this week by presenting them with the Media Honor Roll 2017 award at their offices. Journalist Danica Smithwick with Community Impact News was surprised October 2 while assignments editor Fabian Gutierrez of Telemundo 47 was surprised at the news station October 4. Both exchanges were captured on HCDE Facebook Live, and Telemundo included coverage on a news broadcast. A third awardee, Christine Dobbyn, a KTRK reporter who is currently on leave, will gain her award later this month.

The Media Honor Roll awards are sponsored by the Texas Association of School Boards and HCDE.

Facebook Live video URLs: <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx/videos/10155798216214510/> and <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx/videos/10155793218144510/>

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Head Start Students Receive New School Uniforms Through Operation School Bell



The Assistance League of Houston is setting up two shopping days for Head Start families as part of their signature philanthropic program Operation School Bell. Approximately 250 students at the Dogan, Fonwood and Pugh Head Start centers will receive a \$75 voucher to cash in at the Uniform Superstore in Greenspoint Mall on October 7 at 10 a.m. or October 12 at 4:30 p.m.

The U.S. Coast Guard will join the Assistance League of Houston at both events.

“We want to do everything we can to help children succeed in school,” said Stella Evensen, Operation School Bell committee member. “When they start the school year off

with new clothing it gives them self-confidence and boosts their self-esteem.”

The school uniforms will also fill a need for many Head Start families affected by Hurricane Harvey. A recent survey conducted by the HCDE Head Start division showed more than 60 families at the three participating centers experienced direct damage to their homes or cars and many others saw an impact on their financial situation.



For more information on Operation School Bell, visit www.assistanceleague.org.

HCDE Hosts Free Editorial Cartoon Workshop for Students



Harris County Department of Education will host a free editorial cartoon workshop for students in 7-12 grade on October 19 from 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd.

The free workshop, presented by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and sponsored by The Herb Block Foundation, will feature a professional cartoonist who will share their personal experience developing their artistic career. Students will also participate in hands-on instruction

exploring the unique art of editorial cartooning and the various ways to make commentary on contemporary issues that matter to them.

Students can submit their original work to the prestigious Scholastic Art & Writing Awards to receive potential recognition, exhibition, publication and scholarships. For more information or to register for the free editorial cartoon workshop, visit <https://goo.gl/VQrEWb>.



Superintendent Colbert to be Featured in Opioid Nation News Special on KPRC October 6



Superintendent James Colbert will be featured in news special airing Friday, October 6 at 7 p.m. on KPRC Channel 2 called Opioid Nation: An American Epidemic. The special discusses the depth and many facets of the problems posed by opioids and solutions in the community. Colbert will discuss the new Fortis Academy which is the county’s first public recovery high school in Harris County. His interview airs at the end of the special as the reporter examines solutions.

Systemic Achievement

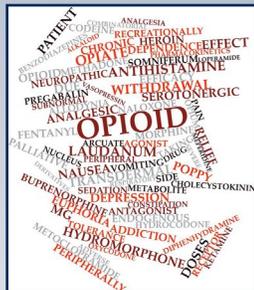
...with purposeful intent

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 coordinated way**

Tonight, October 6 at 7 p.m., I will be featured in a KPRC Channel 2 News Special called Opioid Nation: An American Epidemic.



This news special discusses the depth and many facets of the problems posed by opioids and solutions in the community. I will discuss the new Fortis Academy which is the county's first public recovery high school in all of Harris County.



My portion of the special will air towards the end as the reporter examines solutions within the community-at-large.

This interview offers great exposure and visibility to both HCDE and our newest endeavor to meet the unique needs of many students within Harris County-Fortis Academy.



By being a part of this news special, I am increasing the visibility of HCDE and, in doing so, I am working to meet the Board's goal for me 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. It is essential that HCDE continues such efforts through good and challenging times within the community.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

- Board Meeting

