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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

First off: HOW ABOUT THOSE ASTROS?! What a wonderful time to live in Houston and be an Astros fan! This is a historic time for the franchise as well as for the city. Houston needed this shot in the arm after the devastation from Harvey.

This week was a productive one at HCDE. I began this week with a meeting regarding the financial perspective associated with Fortis Academy. I am pleased with the comprehensive progress of the project and we are on track with our timeline.

On Tuesday of this week, I attended the North Harris County Education Alliance Council Meeting. This meeting was beneficial to both the northern part of Harris County as well as HCDE. It is always helpful to get into the communities we serve, learn of their respective needs, and see how we can play a role in meeting them.

Yesterday, I participated in another SuperMENTor session as I read to Head Start students. This is a very rewarding opportunity and it brings smiles and intrigue to the faces of the some of our youngest learners.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: ELA EOC Analysis: Examining and Planning with Readiness

Standards; Grants, Partners, Volunteers...Yes You Can!; and finally, Put Some "Stem" in December!

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week with ELT, followed by Leadership Team on Tuesday. I will spend the remainder of the week attending the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) Conference in San Antonio. This will shed even more light as we prepare for the equine therapy facet at Fortis Academy.

Please be reminded that the CASE for Kids Out-of-School Time Conference will be held next weekend at the HESS Club, located at 5430 Westheimer. The conference is tailored to leaders and staff within the afterschool community.

I am pleased to report that this past Friday's Choice Partners Vendor Fair was well-attended by more than 200 professionals, with over 70 businesses represented. Please see scenes from that event in this issue of **The Connector**.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector**. Have a relaxing weekend and last but not least, GO ASTROS!

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Celebrates Therapists During National Physical Therapy Month



Throughout the month of October, HCDE and School-Based Therapy Services celebrated “National Physical Therapy Month.” HCDE’s therapists

serve more than 7,000 students each year who struggle with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, and other challenges.

Working on school campuses throughout Harris County, HCDE’s team of therapy specialists are highly trained and ensure a safe and accessible education environment for both students and staff.

Find out more about HCDE’s School-Based Therapy Services here:

<http://www.hcde-texas.org/who-we-are/divisions-and-leadership/school-based-therapy-services/>

HCDE Provides EDGAR Federal Funds Training to Pharr San Juan Alamo ISD



HCDE PLUS provided EDGAR federal funds training to the Pharr San Juan Alamo ISD at their PSJA Early College High School Facility on October 25 2017. Participants included campus staff, purchasing staff, and business staff during the morning session. Principals and administrators participated in the afternoon.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

OCTOBER 31, 2017

ELA EOC Analysis: Examining and Planning with Readiness Standards

NOVEMBER 2, 2017

Grants, Partners, Volunteers...Yes You Can!

NOVEMBER 3, 2017

Put Some “Stem” in December!



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

The Right Fit: HCDE Principal Academy Grad Katie Bradarich Leads Iconic Houston ISD Lanier Middle School



Middle school principal Katie Bradarich spent 20 years in corporate management and doesn't remember laughing a lot along the way. As the new principal of Lanier Middle School—a Houston ISD school steeped in history and rich with diversity as an international baccalaureate school and fine arts

magnet school—laughter has become the integral part of her school day.

“This isn't a job for me; it's the job for me,” said Bradarich, a 2015 graduate of the Harris County Department of Education's Principal Academy who has found her calling working with students who are growing into adolescence, developmental years she calls “a magical age.”

“Dr. B,” as she is fondly addressed by students, parents, teachers, and staff, decided to become a principal after moving to Houston to work in curriculum and instruction with children with neurological differences. She holds a bachelor's degree, a master's degree in teaching and a Ph.D. in teaching and learning. She was referred to the principal certification program at HCDE by several colleagues.

As she bonded with the members of her small, education cohort at HCDE and her education instructors, she coupled her management skills with her love of teaching to become a “learning leader,” a phrase she uses to describe a principal's leadership role.

The hybrid principal training program at HCDE is both onsite and online as principal candidates meet once a month on weekends. Meetings are combined with self-paced, online assignments. Guests who are tenured education leaders act as panelists to share rich experiences with candidates. The program holds a 100 percent principal certification exam pass rate.

“Leadership advancement coaches at HCDE work one-on-one with our principal candidates in a structured

curriculum,” said Lidia Zatopek, director of the program. “But we also model effective leadership strategies such as team-building.”

Bradarich supports and advises six assistant principals at Lanier along with her teachers and administrative staff. She is also responsible for helping build a strong parent-teacher organization and networks within the community.

“You cannot find a more complex and dynamic job,” she said. “For me, part of being comfortable is challenge,” she said.

The two-time cancer survivor said while she's not afraid of challenge, self-care is important. She reminds her staff to take time for family and themselves, especially in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

Within the HCDE Principal Academy, Bradarich cited collaboration as being central to the learning framework.

“The HCDE team built relationships with us and encouraged us to connect to each other,” she said. “We learned a great deal from each other, as our experiences were richly diverse.”

Bradarich wants to be remembered for her compassion and authenticity as she applies her skills sets as principal and leader at Lanier this year.

“All of my studies, degrees, and previous work experience have been preparing me to lead at this school,” she said.

For more information about the Principal Academy through the Educator Certification and Academic Advancement division at HCDE, go to www.hcde-texas.org/leadnow. Consider attending the Leadership Matters Series for education leadership topics, including the upcoming “Principal's Role in Transforming School Culture” on Nov. 11. For more information, call 713-696-1348.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Financial Mathematics Grant Awarded to HCDE Brings Personal Money Management Training to Harris County Educators, Teens



Harris County teachers will be equipped to teach a new high school course called “financial mathematics” through a \$19,000 grant provided to Harris County Department of Education’s Teaching and Learning Center through the Texas

Financial Education Endowment.

The teacher’s training project provides assistance to 70 high school math and career and technical education educators in all 25 Harris County districts. The training program implemented by HCDE’s Learning Center is called “New Course, New Challenges: Tackling Texas Financial Literacy through Financial Mathematics Professional Development.”

The new personal money management course fulfills a third-year math credit for students in grades 11-12. The course may be taken instead of algebra 2. Math competencies related to real-world experiences include some of the following: net pay, income taxes, mortgage payment calculation, property taxes, mortgage insurance, closing costs and interest costs.

“We will be helping Harris County high schools to offer this course to their students,” said Nicole Shanahan, HCDE math curriculum director who will lead the project.

“Through the course, students apply critical thinking skills to analyze personal financial decisions based upon the current and project economic factors,” she said.



HCDE will collaborate with a financial industry expert to design six lessons of the financial mathematics. The six-module content includes employment earnings, federal taxes, financial institutions and accounts, types of credit, investment options and retirement plans, and types of insurance. Teachers gain the six lessons to teach the course through a one-day, six-hour workshop offered through HCDE.

The financial mathematics grant was written through HCDE’s Center for Grants Development. It will be implemented beginning Jan. 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2019. Teachers interested in the training may email Nicole Shanahan, nshanahan@hcde-texas.org.

HCDE Therapist Leah Alba Receives Tom Waugh Fellowship Pin



HCDE Physical Therapist Leah Alba recently received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Alba also received her Tom Waugh Fellowship pin last week at the Texas Physical Therapy Association (TPTA) Annual Conference in Corpus Christi.

The Tom Waugh Leadership Development Program aims to help foster and develop professional leadership skills in members of the TPTA who show potential and desire

to become more active in the organization. The program includes two phases and takes two years to complete.

Alba has been a therapist with HCDE for 16 years and is currently assigned to work in Houston ISD.

For more information on the prestigious Tom Waugh Leadership Development Program, visit <http://www.tpta.org/?page=TWLDP>.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Lights On Afterschool Recognizes Children Affected by Harvey through Celebration at Children's Museum



Children affected by Hurricane Harvey were delivered the ultimate Halloween experience through the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance, a collection of local organizations supporting afterschool on Oct. 26. The event held at the Children's Museum Houston allowed 150 kids enrolled in alliance programs

to enjoy the museum, trick-or-treat, and participate in a fun science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) experiment.

"Harvey was a traumatic experience for children and our afterschool staff, and we recognized the need today for those children to have fun while the adults talk about meaningful issues surrounding the national Lights On Afterschool initiative and our local concerns," said director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

A recent study completed by Harris County Department of Education's Research and Evaluation Institute circulated to local afterschool communities



reported 80 percent of afterschool sites said they expect to see changes in enrollment because of Hurricane Harvey. Over half of the respondents provided afterschool programs and services in Harvey's aftermath, and many depleted resources and exhausted personnel during the weeks following the storm. Harvey afterschool relief kits will be distributed to many of the affected sites at the event.

National statistics show that 11.3 million children are alone and unsupervised from 3-6 p.m., and one in five children still don't have afterschool caregivers. Even though more

youth than ever before are in afterschool—10.2 million—for every child in a program, two are waiting to get in.

At the celebration, an initiative called Out 2 Learn network, funded through the Houston Endowment and led by United Way of Greater Houston, announced its launch. Out 2 Learn will work strategically with HCDE's CASE for Kids and the City of Houston to implement Out 2 Learn key strategies. The network is aimed at expanding access to high-quality, out of school time services to all families in the greater Houston region through a coordinated, youth-centered approach to professional development, community investment, and community awareness of the importance of quality services and youth voice.

Event highlights included remarks by the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time; an afterschool rally; post-Harvey: Afterschool in Houston discussion; and a STEM interactive science experience called "air blaster" provided by museum staff to demonstrate the power of air mass.



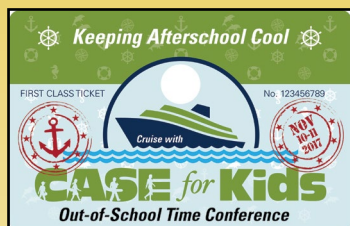
The alliance is comprised of the following organizations: CASE for Kids, Education Foundation of Harris County, Harris County Department of Education, YMCA of Greater Houston, Houston ISD, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department After-School Achievement Program (A.S.A.P.), The Mayor's Office of Education Initiatives, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston, Harris County Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Jack Morman, United Way of Greater Houston, Children's Museum of Houston, and East Texas After-School Association (SETAA).

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Out-of-School Time Conference November 10-Tailored to Afterschool Leaders, Staff

Conference is headlined by sociologist/author Karen Pittman and entertainer SaulPaul



The CASE for Kids Out-of-School Time Conference on Nov. 10-11 at the HESS Club, located at 5430 Westheimer, Houston,

Texas, gives afterschool leaders and staff professional learning opportunities focused on out-of-school time programming. The event is hosted by Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. The theme "keeping afterschool cool" provides refueling opportunities for professional development, resources, networking, and inspiration.

Friday's session from 11:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. is tailored to administrators and leaders and includes learning sessions and networking opportunities. Headlining the event is Karen Pittman, co-founder and president of the Forum on Youth Investment. Pittman is a sociologist and recognized leader in youth development who formerly served the Clinton administration as director of the President's Crime Prevention Council. She later joined ret. Gen. Colin Powell to collaborate through America's Promise. She has authored three books and several dozen articles on youth issues. Snacks, lunch, and an afternoon social hour are included, and cost is \$60. Register at www.hcde-texas.org/register and enter workshop number 11689.

Saturday's session from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. is for front-line and site-based staff who work with youth in

afterschool programs. Pittman and other area trauma experts return for a panel discussion on Hurricane Harvey students. Possible health and behavior challenges are discussed, with best practices and behavioral strategies applied. In addition, area afterschool providers share their expertise and offerings for out-of-school time programming. CASE for Kids showcases items from its SMART Zone, a free, comprehensive collection of resource materials available to all Harris County out-of-school time programs.

"Musician with a Message" SaulPaul entertains on Saturday during the lunch hour. The musician from Houston has performed two TED talks and tours multiple music festivals throughout the year, including the famed South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. Best known for his ability to improvise through freestyle, he has performed for the NFL and at the Kennedy Center. Part rapper and part singer songwriter, SaulPaul entertains and blends his message with guitar.

Cost for Saturday is \$50 and includes 4.5 training hours along with continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Register at www.hcde-texas.org/register and enter workshop number 11690.

For more information about the CASE for Kids Out-of-School Time Conference, as well as specific professional development sessions offered each day, go to www.afterschoolzone.org . View the schedule at a glance: <https://goo.gl/9V7g9j> .

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Purchasing Professionals Connect with More Than 70 Businesses at Choice Partners Vendor Fair



More than 200 purchasing and facilities professionals attended the Choice Partners Annual Vendor Exhibit on Friday, Oct. 27, at CityCentre in Houston. As members of Choice Partners, HCDE's purchasing

cooperative, these professionals had a chance to learn about important legislative updates and meet with more than 70 facilities, technology, supplies, and services vendors.

The event kicked off with a presentation from Sarah Langlois, an attorney with Rogers, Morris and Grover. Langlois provided attendees with updates to laws affecting purchasing professionals, particularly those who work in school districts.

For example, Texas recently passed legislation that makes it illegal to enter into contracts with companies that boycott Israel. This means that school districts and other governmental entities need to add new language to their vendor registration packets verifying the status of their contract-holders.

After Langlois' presentation, the Vendor Exhibit opened up. It featured 80s-themed décor and costume, as well as many wearing orange and blue in support of the Houston Astros' World Series games.



Members spoke of the value of learning about new products, while vendors said they enjoy coming every year to put faces with names and to get the word out about their business.



Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Academic and Behavior School East Receives Oliver Foundation Check for School Garden



Academic and Behavior School (ABS) East recently received a \$3,000 Healthy Choices Grant from the Oliver Foundation to enhance their school garden program. On Wednesday,

Nov. 1, representatives from the Oliver Foundation presented the check to staff at the campus.

With childhood obesity on the rise in Houston, the garden program at ABS East will use nutrition and physical activity education to teach the importance of healthy lifestyles to 75 students with disabilities.

The garden will serve as a central point for individual and collective learning about the source of food and natural elements that form the basis of healthy eating. Students will share garden responsibilities, plant fruits

and vegetables, and make daily visits to the garden to water, weed, touch, and taste the food they're growing.

In addition to gaining positive food attitudes, students will also increase fine and gross motor skills and learn science concepts such as photosynthesis through the garden program.

Through previous grants from the Whole Kids Foundation in partnership with Unilever and Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, ABS East students participated in a garden groundbreaking event in May 2017. View more information on the groundbreaking event here: <https://goo.gl/3aTkH2>.

The Oliver Foundation Healthy Choices Grant aims to improve healthy eating and physical activity in children, families and communities in Texas. To learn more about the Oliver Foundation, visit www.oliverfoundation.com.

AB East Students Enjoy Treat Day



Students at ABS-East participated in "treat" day to celebrate Halloween. Students dressed as characters and enjoyed treat stations throughout the school.

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**



Last Friday, Choice Partners held its annual Vendor Fair. There were over 200 marketing and sales representatives in attendance, with over 70 business represented. HCDE's Purchasing division also took advantage of an opportunity to learn about important legislative updates and meet with more than 70 facilities, technology, supplies, and service vendors.

The event began with a presentation from board counsel Sarah Langlois

who offered updates to laws affecting purchasing professionals, particularly those who work in school districts.



Members spoke of the value of learning about new products, while vendors said they enjoy coming every year to put faces with names, and to get the word out about their businesses.

By HCDE engaging the community in this way, we are continuing to meet the needs of entities, municipalities, school districts, and other institutions by offering them value, opportunity, and service.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

- Board Meeting

