

# The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education  
for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

It's been a busy week at HCDE. This week, I met with the superintendents of several of our client school districts. The meetings were productive and informative. Meetings such as these allow me to keep my finger on the pulse of our clients, allowing HCDE to better meet their needs. I also maintained my regularly scheduled meetings with HCDE staff.

As you know, the November Board Meeting was held this past Wednesday, in addition to the Policy Committee Meeting that preceded the Board Meeting.

Yesterday, I conducted Agenda Review for the upcoming December Board Meeting. Please be reminded that the December Meeting will be held Wednesday, December 13, 2017.

This week, in teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: Online Instructors' Training, Part III; STAAR Academy Grade 8: A Closer Look at STAAR Reporting Categories; Music Therapy Leadership Group; Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291)-SCIENCE Sessions ONLY; Argumentation Strategies for Elementary Science; CPR/First Aid/AED; They Just Don't Understand; Attendance Officers' Share Session; Make them THINK! Successful Readers and Writers in Elementary; Inquiring Minds Want to Know: Engaging the Middle School

Learner; HCDE Math Leadership Meeting; and Get Dramatic-Incorporating Readers Theater in your Afterschool Program.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week with my regularly scheduled Executive Leadership Team Meeting, followed by the IMPACT Meeting which includes Board Presidents and trustees from surrounding Harris County School Districts. I will be fulfilling my duties with the UIL Tuesday and Wednesday, as a member of their Board. Upon my return, Thursday, I will be joining the principals and Schools division staff for their regularly scheduled meetings.

Please be reminded that the upcoming annual Holiday Receptions at both the Irvington and NPO locations will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, December 13 and 14, respectively. The Irvington location reception will take place immediately before the HCDE Board Meeting. That reception will be held from 12:00 noon until 1 p.m. The NPO Holiday Reception will be held Thursday, December 13, from 2-3 p.m. Board Members are invited to attend.

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

**Wednesday, December 13, 2017**

- Board Meeting

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### CASE for Kids News:

#### City Connections Council Member Photo Shoot

CASE for Kids invites council members on Dec. 5 and 6 to meet the City Connections grant recipients from their respective council district at a photo shoot on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2017 or Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2017. The photo shoot will take place at the Houston City Hall in the Legacy Room located on the first floor. A representative from each nonprofit will participate in the photo shoot. The event allows council members to speak with all of the City Connections organizations at once.

#### Kids' Day - Entrepreneurship

Kids' Day Entrepreneurship is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 8 (best time to attend from 10 a.m.-noon) and will take place at HCDE's North Post Oak Building. The event will give students the opportunity to experience first-hand the challenges and opportunities associated with entrepreneurship, marketing and money management. Students participating in this event will open "stores" in the Kids' Day Market and will use their knowledge of buying, selling, spending and saving to operate their businesses.

#### City Connections Project Grant 2017-2018 Request for Proposal (RFP)

CASE for Kids announces the City Connections Project Grant 2017-2018 Request for Proposal (RFP) Second Release for Houston City Council District B or E only. City Connections is an initiative funded directly by the City of Houston to support nonprofit organizations that address the need for youth services outside the school day. RFPs must be received by Dec. 12, 2017.

Projects funded by the CASE for Kids City Connections program will take place in each Houston city council district in a variety of locations, including schools, community centers and churches.

Apply at [www.hcde-texas.org/CASE](http://www.hcde-texas.org/CASE)

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

#### NOVEMBER 27, 2017

Online Instructor's Training - Part III

STAAR Academy Grade 8: A Closer Look at STAAR Reporting Categories

#### NOVEMBER 28, 2017

Music Therapy Leadership Group (MTLGP)

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291) - SCIENCE Sessions ONLY

#### NOVEMBER 30, 2017

Argumentation Strategies for Elementary Science

CPR/1st Aid/AED

They Just Don't Understand

Attendance Officer's Share Session

#### DECEMBER 1, 2017

Make them THINK! Successful Readers and Writers in Elementary

Inquiring Minds Want to Know: Engaging the Middle School Learner

HCDE Math Leadership Meeting

Get Dramatic- Incorporating Readers Theater in your Afterschool Program

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Department of Education CASE for Kids Coordinator Celestine Honored with National Afterschool Leader Award



As Chasidy Celestine accepts the 2018 Next Generation of Afterschool award given by the National Afterschool Association, she reflects on her own teenage afterschool experiences and how they helped shape the confident professional she is today.

The afterschool dance group she joined gave her a sense of belonging, built her self-esteem, reinforced the importance of physical health and helped her build relationships. At 27, she is confident about impacting the next generation through her work in afterschool as one of the national “30 awardees under age 30.” Celestine earned the award amid a field of more than 100 young afterschool leaders throughout the nation.

The Memorial City resident is program coordinator for Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. Through her job, she coaches other out-of-school time professionals throughout Harris County via workshops she leads. She is proudest of her customized science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workshops which use everyday household items. All her workshops encourage student voice, engagement and planning-and-reflection time.

As an afterschool intermediary, CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades

pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement. “Chasidy is very passionate about being a resource to youth and her community,” said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. “We are so proud that she is being recognized for the work she contributes to the afterschool field through her job as resource coordinator. She connects Harris County organizations and service providers so that we can provide high quality out-of-school time opportunities for kids.”

Celestine grew up in Alief, earned a bachelor’s in journalism at Stephen F. Austin University and gained a master’s in public administration from Texas Southern University. While in college, she volunteered in afterschool programs and gained a job as youth involvement coach. She has worked for HCDE’s CASE for Kids three-plus years.

“Afterschool gives youth a sense of belonging, teamwork, communication, responsibility, critical thinking and enhanced academic and enrichment skills,” she said. “Afterschool gave me exposure to places, people and activities I would not have otherwise received.”

Celestine will be featured in an upcoming issue of the National Afterschool Association’s AfterSchool Today magazine and will be recognized at the NAA national conference.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Department of Education December Events Line-Up

#### Events for December, 2017:

HCDE divisions are hosting numerous events throughout the month of December. Here are a few options to consider when planning your December calendar: HCDE divisions are hosting numerous events throughout the month of December. Here are a few options to consider when planning your December calendar:



#### **DEC. 5, 10 A.M.-NOON**

CASE for Kids City Connections photos with Houston City Council members at City Hall Legacy Room

#### **DEC. 6, 1-3 P.M.**

CASE for Kids City Connections photos with Houston City Council members at City Hall Legacy Room

#### **DEC. 8, 10 A.M.-NOON**

CASE for Kid's Day Entrepreneurship at NPO. Afterschool students craft items or services which are showcased in holiday marketplace as they learn best practices in business and banking.

#### **DEC. 11, 11 A.M.-NOON**

National Adult Education Honor Society Induction Ceremony, 6300 Irvington, rooms 502-503.

#### **DEC. 12, 10-11 A.M.**

Bates Collision Center Head Start Car Giveaway Baytown, 3219 North Main, Baytown, TX 77521 (staff person from Tidwell affected by Harvey receives car)

#### **DEC. 13, NOON-1 P.M.**

Holiday Employee Reception, 6300 Irvington (appetizers served)

#### **DEC. 14: 10-11 A.M.**

Bates Collision Center Head Start Car Giveaway Channelview, 15532 I-10 East, Channelview, TX 77530 (Pugh Head Start Center parent receives car)

#### **DEC. 14, 2-3 P.M.**

Holiday Employee Reception, NPO (appetizers served)

#### **DEC. 15: 12:30 P.M.**

AB School East Annual Holiday Party

#### **DEC. 20: 1 P.M.**

AB School West Annual Holiday Party



### Music Therapists Attend Leadership Workshop at HCDE

Music therapists from across Harris County attended the Music Therapy Leadership Group workshop held by HCDE's School-Based Therapy Services this week. The workshop focused on networking and presenting strategies that can be used in the classroom.

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Thanksgiving Delivers Celebrations, Cause for Reflection



Thanksgiving celebrations were held at AB East and West this week. Students shared a traditional lunch with their teachers and learned about the origins of the holiday. At AB West, families of students were invited to participate, and many former students showed

up to share in the festivities. At AB East, classroom doors were decorated for the occasion.

Throughout HCDE, divisions gave thanks. Many reflected over the help they received from co-workers and friends during Hurricane Harvey.



### Vision Boards Help Students Discuss Futures



Shantel Rayford, AB School West counselor, held a vision board learning session with students and staff on Nov. 15. The purpose of the event was to show students that visualizing aspirations and goals on paper helps in achieving those goals as it makes them more definitive. Students cut and pasted what was important to them by looking through various magazines/newspapers and putting together collages on poster board. A share session between students provided further experience with public speaking.

# Value

## BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Awarded 9th Consecutive Meritorious Budget Award by Association of School Business Officials International



Harris County Department of Education was awarded the Association of School Business Officials International Meritorious Budget Award for excellence in budget presentation. The award promotes and recognizes excellence in school budget presentation. It is awarded to school districts whose budgets have undergone a rigorous review by financial professionals.

“HCDE has applied for and gained this award for nine consecutive years as a part of our commitment for fiscal responsibility to Harris County taxpayers,” said Jesus Amezcua, HCDE’s assistant superintendent of Business Services.

In applying for the award, school business officials gain budget presentation practices and enhance their skills in developing and presenting a school system budget.

HCDE Business Services submitted the 2017-2018 budget to a rigorous team review based on stringent criteria, according to ASBO International Executive Director John Musso.

“The Meritorious Budget Award program helps applicants create an accessible, accurate budget that builds trust with their community,” Musso said.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### CASE Debates Seminar I

The first CASE Debates seminar kicked off on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2017. Houston Urban Debate League President Heather Hatfield gave the opening statements and Team USA representatives Leila Saklov and Emily Grantham spoke to students about debate and the World Schools Debate style, a three-on-three format that assigns topics on domestic and international affairs in a more impromptu fashion. Students took part in interactive games like “I Couldn’t Disagree More” led by Americorps VISTA Javier Lopez. Finally, the University of Texas Debate Team spoke to students about policy debate and how it changed their lives.



### HISD Speech Therapists at HCDE

Approximately 350 speech therapists from Houston ISD visited Irvington Nov. 17 to attend professional development offered by their district. HCDE provided the venue for the event.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Teacher Tip: Dr. Mike Says Play Hand-Clapping Games to Promote Language Skills



The Early Childhood Winter Conference is being promoted through our HCDE News Blog and through social media accounts. Teacher tips provide free lessons and tips for teachers while also promoting the conference. This is the first in our series.

(The R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference is Jan. 27, right around the corner. Get a glimpse of the valuable resources you'll receive by attending, with our series of featured teacher tips from our superb presenters!) #ECWC18

Dr. Mike, or Mike Longoria, promotes movement to help children acquire language skills. Clapping patterns can help children conquer complex language patterns.

Lesson: Have kids get in groups of two (and later larger groups) and play hand-clapping games like "Patty Cake"

while chanting to popular nursery rhymes. These might include "One, Two Buckle My Shoe," "Five Little Monkeys," etc. Change clapping patterns to more difficult patterns once students are able to keep the steady beat with traditional hand clapping. (Lesson from [www.funclapping.com](http://www.funclapping.com).)

Attend Dr. Mike's "Music, Movement and Learning" session at the Early Childhood Winter Conference Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Kingdom Builder's Center, 6011 West Orem.

Session description: Music and movement make learning fun. More importantly, experiencing it during the early years is necessary for wiring developing brains. Singing, chanting, gestures, signing and physical movement develop school readiness skills that lead to early school success. Furthermore, this approach meets the needs of all children, regardless of their linguistic, physical, emotional, cognitive or social challenges.

Learn more about the conference and register at [www.hcde-texas.org/ECWC](http://www.hcde-texas.org/ECWC).

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### HCDE Head Start Presents Free Community Screening of 'The Raising of America' Dec. 16



Harris County Department of Education Head Start, in partnership with Harris County Public Health and the YMCA of Greater Houston, hosts a free community screening and panel discussion of the acclaimed documentary "The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation" on Dec. 16, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the HCDE Conference Center, 6300 Irvington Blvd. The screening was originally scheduled for August, but was rescheduled due to Hurricane Harvey.

Nearly 24 percent of American children are born into poverty today, facing multiple adversities with potential life-long consequences for their physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development. The purpose of this screening is to

bring together a diverse audience to promote meaningful conversation and local action to improve conditions for families with young children in Harris County.

"It's vital for communities to support programs that build healthy and caring communities for our children at an early age," said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. "This screening is a way to connect families, organizations and community, and promote early child health and well-being."

A light breakfast will be provided at the event and parking is free. Participants will also receive a certificate for two hours of professional development for attending.

RSVP for the community screening at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/13470968289>. Find more information on this series at <http://www.raisingofamerica.org/>.

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

- **Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness;**
- **Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration; and**
- **Work with other community and governmental entities and educational organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinate way**



On December 16, HCDE's Head Start division will present a free community screening of *The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation*, in partnership with Harris County Public Health and the YMCA of Greater Houston. This free screening and panel discussion



of the acclaimed documentary will be held from 8:30-11:00 a.m. Originally scheduled for August, it had to be rescheduled due to Hurricane Harvey.

Because nearly 24 percent of American children are born into poverty today, facing multiple adversities with life-long consequences for their physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive development, it is essential that we bring together a diverse audience to promote meaningful conversation and local action to improve conditions for families with young children.

**By ensuring that HCDE continues to offer these kinds of opportunities to the community for the betterment of our future learners, I am working to meet the expectations of the board to identify the learning needs of students and develop a process that ensures each student's learning goals are met or exceeded.**

**I am also ensuring that staff investigate best practices for student achievement and utilize effective practices that maximize achievement of student potential within HCDE schools. Further, I am ensuring that HCDE maintains visibility and involvement in the community and by representing HCDE at attendance at such events.**

## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

- Board Meeting

