

# The CONNECTOR

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



WEEK OF DECEMBER 4, 2017

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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

As we enter the month of December, our schedules show no sign of slowing down as you will see in this week's **The Connector**. It's a time of celebration and reflection on a productive year, but also a time to ensure strong systems are in place to ensure a smooth start when we return in January.

After meeting with my Executive Leadership Team on Monday, I had the honor of meeting with area board members for IMPACT training. As elected officials who receive no compensation, your commitment to continued education amidst extremely busy schedules is admirable. Many of you not only attend these trainings, but you truly embrace the opportunity to share your knowledge with others in the spirit of our mission at HCDE.

On Tuesday, I gathered our Leadership Team for our last meeting of 2017. Our principals may be busy preparing students and staff for STAAR End-of-Course exams and finals, but they understand the importance of celebrating the holidays with their community. Once testing is wrapped up, both AB West and AB East will open their doors for a holiday program featuring students. On a related note: If you've never witnessed the pure joy of our annual Head Start car giveaway, I highly encourage you to attend this year – and bring tissue. Bates Collision, one of our longtime supporters, will present a "new" used car to two of our Head Start families. For many families of the 1,300 children we serve, and even a few HCDE employees, transportation is a major stumbling block that was only made worse by Hurricane Harvey. When I see the excitement and emotion expressed by families receiving the gift of transportation, I'm reminded of the many things we can sometimes take for granted.

I wrapped up the week visiting with staff from our schools at their monthly principals meeting, during which Senior Director

Anthony Mays and Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker reviewed progress on major initiatives to ensure work is aligned with HCDE's vision of student success.

As we enter another busy week, I am thankful for the leadership of HCDE's Board of Education that enables us to serve those less fortunate.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Monday, Dec. 11, 11 a.m.-noon,**  
**National Adult Education Honor Society Induction Ceremony,**  
6300 Irvington, Rooms 502-503

**Tuesday, Dec. 12, 10-11 a.m.:**  
Bates Collision Center **Head Start Car Giveaway** Baytown,  
3219 North Main, Baytown, TX 77521

**Wednesday, Dec. 13, noon-1 p.m.:** **Holiday Employee Reception,**  
6300 Irvington

**Thursday, Dec. 14: 10-11 a.m.:**  
Bates Collision Center **Head Start Car Giveaway** Channelview,  
15532 I-10 East, Channelview, TX 77530

**Thursday, Dec. 14, 2-3 p.m.**  
**Holiday Employee Reception,** NPO at 6005 Westview

**Friday, Dec. 15: 12:30 p.m.**  
**AB School East Annual Holiday Party,** 7703 South Loop East

**Wednesday, Dec. 20: 1 p.m.**  
**AB School West Annual Holiday Party,** 7800 Westglenn

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### 28 Adult Learners Inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society Dec. 11 for Overcoming Hardships, Showing Compassion



Hardships, perseverance and acts of kindness distinguish 28 adult learners ages 18-60 as they are inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society Dec. 11, from 11 a.m.-noon at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington.

All of the students attend classes offered through Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education division in community learning locations throughout the county. Student stories include hardships with cancer, chaotic work schedules and family struggles. Their biggest fans in the audience will include family, teachers and fellow students.

"Our adult honorees come from workforce, GED and English as a second language classes," said Eduardo Honold, Adult Education director. "They are nominated by their teachers who recognize them as leaders who make an impact in their communities and through helping their classmates."



*A student from last year's ceremony is congratulated by HCDE Adult Education staff.*

Induction into the National Adult Honor Society brings notoriety and written recommendations for future employment and education advancement. Each student gains a pin and certificate.

Chhayamba Lama from HCDE's ESL classroom located at the Salvation Army in Spring Branch is one of the 28 students being inducted into the honor society. He is a Buddhist monk who rides his bike to class each day and helps his fellow classmates with homework. He is learning English as his third language after already being fluent in Tibetan and Nepali. He is learning English in hopes of becoming a professional Tibetan-English interpreter and plans to specialize someday in management of nonprofit organizations.

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

#### DECEMBER 4, 2017

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

#### DECEMBER 5, 2017

National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS 400

Harris County ELA Leadership Team

#### DECEMBER 6, 2017

Number Talks: Whole Number Computation K-5 [Includes book and DVD]

Harris County Social Studies Leadership Team

CASE for Kids Learning Community: Connecting the Dots

Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association

Quarterly Member Operations Board Meeting

#### DECEMBER 9, 2017

Texas Style TABE

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### \$550,000 City of Houston Investment in CASE for Kids City Connections Feeds Need for Afterschool Post-Harvey



Citizens in 11 Houston City Council districts benefit for a fourth consecutive year from a \$550,000 program funded by the City of Houston and administered by

Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids called CASE for Kids City Connections.

Nonprofit organizations in each of the council districts receive \$45,000 in funding ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for programs for children in grades K-12. Funding began Oct. 23 and continues through April 27. The city and CASE for Kids allowed school districts, charter schools, faith-based organizations or civic groups to apply through a request for proposal.



"City Connections promotes crime prevention, child safety, career exploration, enrichment activities and social and emotional learning for Houston children during a time of great need in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. "A recent survey shows a significant number of afterschool programs were affected by Harvey, yet many kept their doors open in those Houston communities."

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.



According to HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., CASE for Kids City Connections is critically needed as Houston families continue to rebuild from Harvey.

"We are thankful the city continues to invest in our children and their families, especially as afterschool funding is being cut from other state and federal budgets," Colbert said. "Afterschool programs are important as they keep children in our county safe and provide enrichment."

Council members were invited on Dec. 5 and 6 to meet the recipients of the funding which is awarded through a request for proposal via CASE for Kids. CASE for Kids provided photos and networking between the council members and the nonprofit organizations.

Several council districts are opting to increase funding for City Connections from their own council district service funds. Many are located in areas hard-hit by Harvey.

To find programs funded in each of the council districts, access <http://goo.gl/YfuAUw> or learn more about City Connections at [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Kids' Day Entrepreneurship Delivers Holiday Marketplace with Lessons on Money Management



Hands-on lessons in entrepreneurship evolve into a marketplace filled with tutus, bow ties, homemade

slime, bath balm, soap bars and more at Kids' Day Entrepreneurship, Friday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to noon, 6005 Westview, Houston, Texas. Hosted by Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, the event brings together about 150 students from 10 area schools.

Afterschool students from Alief, Aldine, Houston, Stafford, Spring, Clear Creek, Galena Park, Humble and Southwest Schools Charter are studying entrepreneurship, marketing and money management during their afterschool programs. The curriculum created by CASE for Kids prepares students for this culminating event.

"Our afterschool students have been busy designing



businesses, conducting market research, setting profit points, investigating advertising techniques and analyzing differences between spending and saving money," said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. "With this curriculum we create, students experience the first-hand challenges and opportunities of operating a business in a free market economy."

Kids' Day at Entrepreneurship gives Houston-area students real-life, hands-on experience in business practices, economics and marketing. Guest bankers will assist the students with opening mock checking accounts and completing mock loan applications.



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### Head Start Division Hiring Multiple Positions



Head Start is now hiring energetic and nurturing professionals to work with infants to 5-year-olds in the Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Positions include teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks. To reach a wider candidate pool, Head Start is utilizing social media and has boosted a Facebook ad for the next month. View the flyer for more information: <https://goo.gl/qDFLgB>.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Through Out2Learn Network, CASE for Kids Hosts Planning with Data Workshop for 80 YMCA staff



Through a partnership called the Out2Learn Network, CASE for Kids hosted a training called Planning with Data at HCDE on Nov. 29 for 80 YMCA staff members whose training space was compromised by Hurricane Harvey.

The Out2Learn Network is led by United Way of Greater Houston, CASE for Kids, Houston Endowment and the City of Houston, and its mission is to expand access to high-quality out-of-school time services. This is done through a coordinated, youth-centered approach to professional development, community investment and community

awareness about the importance of quality services and youth voice.

As a partner in the Out2Learn Network, CASE for Kids is involved in the Youth Program Quality Intervention, a comprehensive system for improving program quality. The system is built around a research-validated assessment tool. The workshop focused on understanding assessment data and turning it into an action plan to raise scores and increase youth engagement.

Additional workshops for CASE for Kids and United Way program coordinators have taken place at HCDE and United Way.

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### AB School West Hosts Parent Workshop in November



AB School West held its annual parent workshop on Nov. 29, 2017. The event covered a range of topics which included Medicaid waiver programs, credit ratings, insurance protection, gang awareness, human trafficking and various aspects of the law. Many parents took time out of their busy day to take advantage of the resources and network with AB School staff. Speakers, organizations and topics included the Houston Police Department, a Katy ISD social worker, Progressive Insurance, as well as representatives with identity theft prevention.



### AB School West Recognizes Honor Roll and Perfect Attendance Students

AB School West celebrated honor roll and perfect attendance students for the fall semester through an assembly. Students were awarded certificates for their individual achievements.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Rehabbed Cars from Bates Collision Centers ‘Fuel Smiles’ for HCDE Head Start Parent, Employee Post Harvey



After losing their cars during Hurricane Harvey and overcoming daily transportation challenges, Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga receive rehabbed cars from Bates Collision Centers for their responsible parenting.

In its 19th year, HCDE Head Start’s partnership with Bates Collision Centers is gifting cars number 33 and 34 to two deserving parents. Owners Lee and Leila Bates have been dedicated to the cause because they know about the sacrifices of being responsible parents.

The year, model and make of the two cars remain a surprise, which will be revealed through the unveiling and gifting of the cars. Bates employees donate time to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts. Community businesses/members donate gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

Bahiyyah Rashed receives her car on Dec. 12 from 10-11 a.m. at Bates Collision Center Baytown location, 3219 N. Main, in Baytown, Texas. Vanessa Zuniga receives her car

on Dec. 14 from 10-11 a.m. at the Bates Collision Center North Channel location, 15532 I-10 East, in Channelview, Texas.

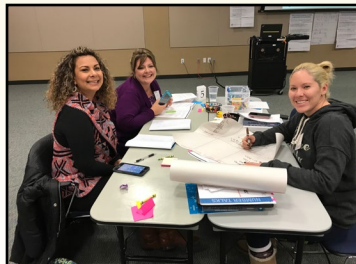
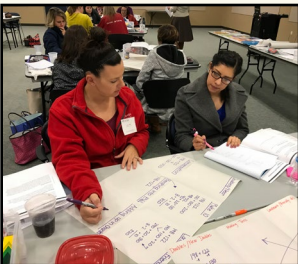
**About Bahiyyah Rashed**, HCDE Head Start Tidwell Center, recipient of the 33rd rehabbed car: Bahiyyah Rashed is a valued teacher at Tidwell Head Start, single mother of two sons Deon, 10 and Daveon, 9, and guardian to niece Kelsi, 7. Since losing her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey, Rashed has been sharing a vehicle with her mother. While the car has been a blessing, it has occasional mechanical issues and can be unreliable while trying to attend school, work and many extracurricular activities.

**About Vanessa Zuniga**, HCDE Head Start Pugh Center, recipient of the 34th rehabbed car: Vanessa Zuniga is the single parent of Nathan, 4, and employed full-time. Zuniga lost her vehicle during Hurricane Harvey and shares rides with friends and family. She begins her day early and waits for extended times to be picked up from work. She also relies on family members for Nathan’s school rides.



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### Educators from Across Texas Learn Theory of ‘Number Talks’ at HCDE Workshop



Educators from area districts and Harmony Public Schools from across Texas attended the “Number Talks” workshop this week held at HCDE. The one-day course introduced teachers, math coaches and curriculum specialists to the theory, structure and focus of number talks. Throughout the day, participants reflected on their current practices and targeted essential understandings about numbers and operations called for in their state standards.



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Balint Charities Donates 1,300 New Books to Head Start Students



Last week, Balint Charities donated 1,300 new books to Harris County Department of Education Head Start students to help them build their home libraries.

“We are pleased to partner with the HCDE Head Start programs by providing books to the children,” said Greg Balint, one of the founders. “Balint Charities was created to

provide books and musical instruments to young children growing up in families who may lack the resources to provide these items in the home. We believe all children deserve to know the joy of reading books and playing music from a young age!”

Balint Charities is a nonprofit organization that seeks to strengthen school success by enriching young lives with reading and music. Find more information on how Balint Charities supports our earliest learners at [www.balintcharities.org](http://www.balintcharities.org).

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### Compton Head Start Students Benefit from JetBlue’s Soar with Reading Initiative



Harris County Department of Education Compton Head Start students, located in the Northeast Multi-Service Center, will benefit from a free book vending machine throughout the month of December as

part of JetBlue’s Soar with Reading Initiative.

JetBlue, along with the Houston Mayor’s Office, the City of Houston Health Department and the Houston Public Library, unveiled the book vending machine at an event on Nov. 28, 2017. During the event, JetBlue volunteers also visited each Head Start classroom and read to students to get them excited about reading.

Seven total branches of the Houston Public Library system remain shut down from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, leaving hundreds of children without access to their local

libraries and the services they offer. The book vending machine will dispense 25,000 brand-new, free books for kids ages 0-14 in the community throughout the month of December.

“Excitement for literacy begins at an early age,” said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. “We’re thankful to JetBlue and our other community partners for giving our youngest learners access to books.”

JetBlue’s Soar with Reading initiative encourages kids’ imaginations to take flight through reading. The event held on Nov. 28 concluded the second annual JetBlue For Good Month, a month-long celebration of kindness and good deeds. For more information, visit <https://www.jetblue.com/corporate-social-responsibility/youth-education/>.



HCDE operates 15 Head Start centers in northeast Houston. For information about enrollment or employment in Head Start, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart](http://www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart) or call 713-672-9343.

# 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**



On Monday, 28 adult learners will gather to be honored for their commitment to education through the Adult Education National Honor Society. You will hear stories of courage, sacrifice and dedication.

These students are nominated by their teachers as being exemplary role models to fellow students, their families and communities. Many have suffered abuse and have lived through addiction and poverty. All recognize that education paves the way to bettering their lives.

Through these students, we celebrate our commitment to educating all learners. Media will be invited to hear and share these student stories. Regardless of coverage, these student stories will be spread throughout the community through social media, video and press releases as we share our commitment to education in our 50 community sites throughout Harris and Liberty counties.



**One of the most effective ways to communicate the benefits of our services and programs is through the success stories of our students and their teachers. We continue to increase our collaborations with communities, school districts and through media communication.**

## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, December 13, 2017**

- Board Meeting

