

# 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...

A little boy named Nathan made a big impression this week as longtime community partner Bates Collision Centers gave away its 34th car to a deserving parent. Joined by Trustees Michael Wolfe and Erica Lee Carter, I witnessed the pure joy of the Zuniga family receiving a refurbished vehicle to replace one lost during Hurricane Harvey. But the media crews quickly figured out who the real star was – 4-year-old Nathan, who raced his new bicycle all over the parking lot at the Bates facility in Channelview.

This year's giveaway ceremony was bittersweet as Bates Collision Centers was burglarized the night before, leaving Bates employees and their community partners scrambling to replace the wrapped gifts stolen from the facility. Thankfully, the vehicle was relatively unscathed and the celebration went on as planned. I commend the Bates family for their steadfast commitment to supporting responsible parenting and early education.

One of our own employees from Head Start was the other recipient of a vehicle at the Bates facility in Baytown. Bahiyyah Rashed had been sharing a vehicle with her mother while juggling her teaching job with caring for her two young sons and a niece.

The week began with 28 adult learners being inducted into the National Adult Honor Society, an accolade that will advance their future employment and educational

opportunities. We heard from the director of our Adult Education division, Dr. Eduardo Honold, at our regular meeting of the Board of Trustees on Wednesday. Like you, I'm continuously impressed not just by the scope of work Dr. Honold and his team deftly manages, but the strategic focus on workforce development.

Throughout the week we continued celebrating the work of our campuses and support staff. Joined by several trustees, I thanked employees at both administration buildings for their unwavering focus on service, even as many were affected by Hurricane Harvey. It means a lot to employees when we pause to recognize their passion and commitment to serving Harris County learners.

As we prepare for the holiday season, I am thankful for the dedication of our board, employees, and business partners. Next week is a short week, so look forward to a special edition of **The Connector** featuring the best photos from our schools as they celebrate a successful first semester.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

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

**Tuesday, Dec. 19: 1 p.m.**  
**AB School West Annual Holiday Party, 7800 Westglen**

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Adult Learners Uphold 23-Year Tradition with Inductions into National Adult Education Honor Society



Adult learners who overcome obstacles to learning each day came together for an induction Dec. 11 into the National Adult Education Honor Society at Irvington. Their teachers, friends and family were chosen to “pin them” as a symbol of induction, a ceremony HCDE Adult Education has adopted since 1994.

Teachers must nominate each of the 28 students inducted. The honorees all share a commitment to education and demonstrated leadership in education. Many overcame difficult situations to pursue education. Students receive the pins, certificates and recommendations for college and employment.

The ceremony is available for viewing in its entirety through HCDE’s Facebook account: <https://www.facebook.com/HCDEtx/videos/10155982118769510/>

View the photo album from the event (password is hcde1889): <http://bit.ly/2Bc62rX>

### Adult Education Class Celebrates Cultural Diversity of Students as Session Ends



A beginning ESL class at the Baytown Adult Learning Center at Lee College hosted a cultural celebration as an end-of-session project. Teacher Anamilena Gallego says it is important for her students to share their cultures and life experiences with their fellow classmates. By

talking about their homeland cuisine, music and national symbols, her students also practice English conversation.



### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

**DECEMBER 11, 2017**

Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Career Choice Recruitment Seminar

**DECEMBER 12, 2017**

Capturing Kids Hearts

**DECEMBER 13, 2017**

Test Prep Series for TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291) - ART/MUSIC/THEATRE/PE/HEALTH Sessions ONLY

**DECEMBER 15, 2017**

School Finance Council

**DECEMBER 16, 2017**

The Raising of America: Community Screening & Panel Discussion



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### HCDE Grants Division Receives Award from Bank of Texas



The HCDE Center for Grants Development recently received preliminary notification of a \$7,020 grant award from Bank of Texas for Head Start's Read Excel Achieve Lead (REAL) SuperMENTors Read program. REAL SuperMENTors Read promotes literacy and encourages a love for reading. The grant will provide funds to purchase Scholastic book sets for 195 students.

Two Bank of Texas employees currently volunteer as SuperMENTors and visit Head Start classrooms once a month to read a book aloud to the students.

### Harris County Scholastic Art & Writing Entries Climb as Regional Competition Kicks Off



Faith West Academy art teacher Paige Holsapple is one of many teachers who arrived at HCDE this month to register her students' art entries into the HCDE Regional

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Several decades back, she earned two Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Medals as a student at Klein and Aldine ISDs. As a first-year teacher, she is encouraging her own students to enter the Awards and hopes to build their confidence and abilities in the next few years as their art teacher.

Teaching and Learning Center staff and Scholastic volunteers are busy presiding over judging this week as over 6,500 individual art entries were received (including portfolio pieces). Sixty art professionals arrive this week to judge the individual entries and portfolios. About 2,200 writing entries were received. Those will be judged online with 120 writing professionals in the next month.

Winners in the regional Awards will be announced in January through email.



### HCDE Staff Participates in Autism Speaks Walk

On Dec. 3, a few HCDE staff members, along with their family and friends, participated in the 2017 Autism Speaks Walk at the University of Houston Central Campus.

As part of the Educators Stepping Up team, HCDE staff Joyce Akins, Lynnice Hockaday, Amy Thompson, Nancy Argueta, Brenda Mullins and David McGeary raised \$685 to help Autism Speaks address autism spectrum disorders.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



### Kids' Day Entrepreneurship Gathers Students from Harris County Districts, Plus HCDE Volunteers

Kids' Day Entrepreneurship was featured in the Houston Chronicle on Saturday, Dec. 9. Over 150 students attended the event which featured a holiday marketplace. Purchasing staff assisted at the event as bankers. View the photo/cutline in the Chronicle: [http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5090/pages-from-houstonchronicle\\_120817.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5090/pages-from-houstonchronicle_120817.pdf)

*Purchasing staff volunteer as bankers at Kids' Day event.*

### HCDE Hosts Two Employee Holiday Receptions: Irvington and North Post Oak



HCDE hosted two holiday receptions at Irvington on Dec. 13 and North Post Oak on Dec. 14. View the photos from both festive holiday occasions! (password is hcde1889)

<https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/2017-Holiday/G0000GaurNkWTU4/C00000cq75eZ9lcU>

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Harvey-Impacted Families Receive Gift of Transportation from Longtime HCDE Supporter Bates Collision Centers



Harris County Department of Education Head Start employee Bahiyah Rashed and parent Vanessa Zuniga received the gift of transportation and Responsible Parenting

Awards from longtime supporter Bates Collision Centers on Dec. 12 and 14. After losing their vehicles during Hurricane Harvey and enduring months of transportation challenges, Rashed and Zuniga were overwhelmed when receiving their rehabbed cars at the Bates Collision Baytown and Channelview locations.

The giveaway ceremony on Dec. 14 in Channelview looked different this year as Bates Collision Centers was burglarized the night before.



While the rehabbed vehicle was unharmed, the wrapped gifts for the family were stolen from the facility. Owners Lee and Leila Bates, their employees and community partners came together and acted quickly to replace the gifts in time for the ceremony.

This year, more than 30 businesses in the Baytown and Channelview areas contributed to the annual car giveaways. Bates employees donated time to work on the cars and helped fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donated gas, insurance and materials needed the rehab the cars.



The Bates Collision and Head Start staff were joined at the giveaway ceremonies by members of the community, local businesses, elected officials, HCDE

Superintendent James Colbert, Jr. and members of the HCDE Board of Trustees.

“These cars demonstrate true community support and bring normalcy and independence back to these families,” said HCDE Trustee Erica Lee Carter.

In its 19th year, HCDE Head Start’s partnership with Bates Collision Centers gifted cars No. 33 and 34 to the two moms. Recipients of the Responsible Parenting Awards are chosen based on need, dedication to their child’s education and commitment to becoming self-sufficient.



“I’ve attended this event a number of times, and every year it’s great to see these parents’ lives significantly improved by the gift of a car,” said HCDE Trustee Michael Wolfe.

Superintendent Colbert believes the partnership between HCDE Head Start and Bates Collision Centers is particularly important this year as much of the county faces transportation issues post-Harvey.

“Hurricane Harvey has dramatically changed what some people’s holiday looks like this year,” said Colbert. “It’s touching and impactful that, through our partnership with Bates, we’re able to give cars back to families that lost them.”



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### ECPA's Proposal Selected for Presentation at State Conference



Educator Certification and Professional Advancement staff members Dr. Deirdre Williams and Dr. Chaney Ledet have been chosen to present at the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators 2018 Conference in February with a presentation entitled: "From Fixing the Kid to Transforming the Adult." The state conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Houston.

### ECWC Teacher Tip: Use Music and Transitions to Teach Difficult Concepts



The R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference is Saturday, Jan. 27. Get a glimpse of the valuable resources you'll receive by attending through our series of featured teacher tips from our superb presenters. This year, we supplement our grades

pre-k through 2 curricula with optional sessions for educators who teach children ages birth-3. #ECWC18

Maria Mercedes Champion, an early childhood educator in Alamo Heights ISD, teaches meaningful language development through practical activities, transitions and music.

Lesson: Well-planned songs and smooth transitions throughout the day will enhance teaching and save

teachers time. Students will be able to learn difficult concepts through music and have fun while doing it.

To learn more, attend Champion's session "All Day, Every Day FUN: Meaningful Language Development Activities and Transition" at the Early Childhood Winter Conference Saturday, Jan. 27 at the Kingdom Builder's Center, 6011 West Orem.

Session description: Learn it today, apply it on Monday! Learn fun language development songs, activities and transitions in English and Spanish to increase phonological awareness throughout a preschooler's day.

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



### Kids' Day Entrepreneurship Featured through Houston Chronicle

CASE for Kids' Day Entrepreneurship was featured in the Houston Chronicle Dec. 9. View the photo and cutline: [http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5090/pages-from-houstonchronicle\\_120817.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5090/pages-from-houstonchronicle_120817.pdf)

# 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**



Bates Collision Centers provides two rehabbed cars each year to our Head Start moms in need of transportation. This year, Hurricane Harvey created a greater need for vehicles, and Lee and Leila Bates and their Baytown and Channelview communities made two families very happy.

As we enter into our 19th year of partnering with Bates, we realize how important these strong community ties really are.

Car 33 was first delivered to mom and Head Start employee Bahiyah Rashed, a single mother of two boys who most recently adopted her niece to make it a family of four. Rashed works very hard to be a role model for her children and teaches them each day that actions have consequences. Mother Vanessa Zuniga received car number 34, and she volunteers at Pugh with son Nathan but must often wait for extended periods for transportation to work, his school and community commitments.

Coordinating these two events takes countless hours and commitment. I publicly thank the Bates, their staff and community for continuing to value our partnership. Also, we are grateful for our own Head Start employees who help “fuel” this partnership.

I could not encapsulate the whole experience any better than the Bates did this year on their annual postcard invite:



“We believe that children benefit greatly when parents take an active role in their child’s education and development, and the community benefits from healthier, well-balanced children and families. These parents have been actively involved in their child’s education and have shown a sincere commitment and determination to become self-sufficient. We are confident that their lives will be significantly improved by the gift of a car this holiday season.”

The Responsible Parenting Awards are an excellent vehicle for promoting our Head Start services as we tell the stories of parents who are transformed by Head Start and the program’s principles and core values.

**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

### *Board President*

Louis Evans, III

*Position 4, Precinct 3*

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George Moore

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Don Sumners

*Position 7, At Large*

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*Position 3, At Large*

Michael Wolfe

*Position 5, At Large*

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, January 24, 2017**

- Board Meeting

