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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

As May is upon us, we look to end-of-year reflections and begin planning for the new year. Budget time is part of that process.

I was joined by the Executive Leadership Team for budget hearings this week. Our division directors had the opportunity to spotlight the work of their teams and present budget proposals for the coming year.

This week we heard from Educator Certification and Professional Advancement, Adult Education, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, Grant Development, Research and Evaluation, Facilities, Choice Partners and CASE for Kids. Each division is integral to the anticipated outcome: presenting a balanced budget to you, and ultimately, to Harris County taxpayers.

Today students participated in the Teen Summit, an event at Highpoint East that focuses on helping our students plan for their futures. Universities, vocational organizations and counselors will engage with our students to let them know the value of moving forward down a positive career path. We know this lineup of career professionals will supply motivation momentum as Principal Marion Cooksey and his staff have been dutifully planning for this event.

Last night my wife, Angie joined me to represent HCDE at a benefit dinner at the Houston Chapter of the American Leadership Forum, a nonprofit whose mission is to join and strengthen diverse leaders to better serve the common good. The organization features a diverse mix of cultures and creative energy, and the amazing collection of abilities

of its members reminds me of our own employees here at HCDE.

Many of those amazing employees were recognized this week during Administrative Professionals Week. Flowers, balloons, sweets and expressions of gratitude were displayed through our halls and on social media. We asked employees to send photos of their amazing admins to feature on the intranet.

In May, we look forward to revealing the Teacher of the Year from our three finalists from Highpoint East, AB East and AB West. Although it will be very difficult to choose from the excellent candidates, we feel it is a worthy tradition as we recognize the valuable jobs these professionals do each day. Look forward to more information as we recognize our nominees and roll out the red carpet for them on May 15.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with your concerns or observations. Thanks for your support for HCDE!

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, May 16, 2018**

- Board Meeting

**Saturday, May 19, 2018**

- Adult Education GED Graduation

**Thursday, May 31, 2018**

- AB West Graduation

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Teacher-in-Training Nataly Trevino Makes Impact at Home through HCDE Teacher Alternative Certification Program



Rookie teacher Nataly Trevino takes pride in the impact she's making in her community. She teaches preschool at Ketelsen Elementary, an ethnically-diverse, urban school located in Near Northside, the historic, downtown neighborhood where she was raised.

Trevino's classroom is a bright hub for learning. The walls are covered in colorful art projects and the room is filled with engaging activity centers. Students are energized as they begin each day with singing and dancing and reviewing expectations before moving into the day's assignments.

The energetic teacher-in-training is enrolled in Harris County Department of Education's teacher alternative certification program. The program provides personalized training for aspiring teachers as qualified college graduates enter the program and spend seven to 10 months in pre-service training taking teacher preparation courses. The next 12 months are spent teaching and taking additional coursework.

"The small class sizes in HCDE's program allow me to have more one-on-one time with teachers and peers," said Trevino. "The program molded me into a highly qualified teacher and gave me the confidence I needed in this profession."

Since 2011, the program has recorded an average 99 percent pass rate for students completing the courses and taking the certification exams, said Lidia Zatopek, director for HCDE's Education Certification and Professional Advancement. Assistance is provided in securing teaching assignments in elementary or secondary education classrooms.

Before Trevino decided to pursue her teaching certification, she was a teaching assistant for four years at Ketelsen. She enjoys working with young children during this crucial stage in their development. In addition to progressing in academics, her preschool students are learning important social skills, cognitive skills and emotional development.

Trevino also focuses on responsibility and problem-solving in the classroom. Students are encouraged to communicate with each other and work together to find solutions to their issues. Trevino's encouraging and energetic teaching style



is one of several reasons she was nominated for the Texas Alternative Certification Association Intern of the Year, an award recognizing outstanding new teachers in alternative certification programs.

In her first year as a teacher, Trevino has seen major growth in her students, from learning their letters and numbers to problem solving to discovering new talents. What makes her job more fulfilling, however, is the fact that she's teaching in her home community.

"I'm blessed and proud to see these positive impacts in the neighborhood where I was raised and continue to live in," said Trevino.

HCDE is recruiting teachers for its Teacher Alternative Certification Program. For more information, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep](http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacherprep), call 713-696-1348 or email [hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org](mailto:hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org).

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Kids' Day with Science of Sport Reinforces STEM Concepts through Action



Teaching science, technology, math and engineering concepts in afterschool is action-packed through a collaborative between the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for

Kids and afterschool vendor Science of Sport. An end-of-semester event held at Rice University's Reckling Park April 24 allowed for a field of fun, interactive practices of STEM principles.

Approximately 150 students visited sports stations around the stadium to reinforce concepts they learned in their afterschool sessions. STEM concepts were applied to the sport of baseball. School districts included Aldine, Alief, Houston and Sheldon ISDs along with charter schools and nonprofit the Boys' and Girls' Club.

Kids' Day at Science of Sport is a collaboration between CASE for Kids and Science of Sport and funded through the Partnership Project. The CASE for Kids Partnership Project is the result of collaboration between HCDE, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Texas Workforce Commission and awarded sites. HCDE commits local funds to supplement comprehensive afterschool programming.



### HCDE Celebrates Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week

This week, HCDE celebrated CASE for Kids staff for Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week. The annual celebration is a time to recognize and appreciate those who work with youth during out-of-school hours and make a difference in the lives of young people.

Our CASE for Kids professionals have been featured in several recent stories. Read about some of our dedicated staff below:

- CASE for Kids coordinator Chavez volunteers to provide water, hygiene education to children in Guatemala - <https://bit.ly/2Hn01Zl>
- CASE for Kids employee Izaguirre gives back to youth after benefiting from rodeo scholarship - <https://bit.ly/2FaF6XL>
- CASE for Kids coordinator Celestine honored with national afterschool leader award - <https://bit.ly/2qRzrFR>



For more information on Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, visit: <https://naaweb.org/naa-events/afterschool-professionals-appreciation-week>.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



*Honold congratulates a student for her achievements.*

### **Adult Education Teachers, Staff Bid Farewell, Offer Well Wishes to Director Eduardo Honold**

Adult Education staff recognized the contributions of director Eduardo Honold to the Adult Education community of greater Harris County at a celebration of service held this week. After nine years, Honold is moving to El Paso to accept an adult education position there. The ceremony was attended by teachers, staff, administrators and Superintendent James Colbert. As director, Honold has impacted many adult learner lives with his compassion and leadership.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### **HCDE Head Start Celebrates Week of the Young Child with Center Tours**



HCDE Head Start celebrated Week of the Young Child last week by inviting HCDE staff, community members and business partners to participate in two tours at the Sheffield and Fonwood Head Start centers.

Center visits provide community members the opportunity to see high quality early childhood education services in practice and encourage partners to join in on the activities and interact with children.

Staff from Memorial Hermann Nurse Health Line,

NighLight Pediatric Urgent Care, UnitedHealthcare, Molina Healthcare, Care Options for Kids, Houston Health Department and Maximus visited the centers to see daily operations.



Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers and families. View photos from the center tours at <https://bit.ly/2r1ByBZ>.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### 900 Students Blend Robotics with Agriculture at Ecobot Challenge



View photos from the event:  
<http://bit.ly/2HITiTi>  
(download password is hcde1889)

Ninety-six teams gathered for the 10th annual Ecobot Challenge

April 21 and commandeered their Mindstorm robots through a maze of agricultural challenges. This year the challenge included agriculture history questions in a game called “bingerdy.” Trends in agriculture-based technology provided opportunity for teams to test their knowledge from agriculture eras in the mid-1970s to 2018.



The event for 900-plus students in grades 4-8 was hosted by the Education Foundation of Harris County and Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. With a tradition of supporting science, technology, engineering and math,

or STEM studies, the event was supported by CenterPoint Energy, Best Buy Foundation, Quality Feed & Garden Company, Consumer Energy Education Foundation, Houston Independent School District and Women’s Energy Network (WEN) Houston.

Morning session grades 4-5 overall robotics winners include the following:

- 1st place robotics and overall: Park Place Elementary, Houston ISD, team: Geek Famers
- 2nd place robotics and overall: Brick Bots, nonprofit
- 3rd place robotics and overall: Williamson Elementary, Galena Park ISD, team: Williamson Squad 1

Afternoon session grades 6-8 robotics winners include the following:

- 1st place robotics and overall: Mindstormer Robotics, nonprofit
- 2nd place robotics and overall: Cleveland ISD, Illumiverse 2.0

- 3rd place robotics and overall: Landrum Middle School/ KIPP Courage, charter school, team: The Rubik’s Cubes

Afternoon session grades 4-5 overall robotics winners include the following:

- 1st place robotics and overall: Mindstormer Robotics, nonprofit
- 2nd place robotics and overall: DeAnda Elementary, Houston ISD, Tigerbots 3
- 3rd place robotics and overall: DeAnda Elementary, Houston ISD, Tigerbots 2

The first-place morning team from Park Place Elementary and led by bilingual teacher Yasin Puertas Aguilera, a first-year teacher who led his team based on his interest in technology. His bilingual class had the additional challenge of language differences as the robotics programmers who are Vietnamese joined with the engineers who are Spanish speakers.



“When they put everything together, they had to use English as the common language,” Aguilera said.

Volunteers from area industries provided demonstrations in the Eco-Genius Lab which supplies real-world examples of STEM labs and career opportunities. Some organizations sponsoring demonstrations include WEN Houston (robot coding) and Quality Feed & Garden Co. (gardening).



School districts sending teams to the competition included Aldine, Alief, Cleveland, Cy-Fair, Galena Park, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Klein, La Porte, New Caney, Pasadena, Pearland, Spring, Spring Branch and Stafford.



For more information about the event, go [www.ecobotchallenge.com](http://www.ecobotchallenge.com).

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference Offers Tools, Resources for Parents and Educators



Harris County Department of Education, in partnership with the Hogg Foundation, hosts the 4th annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference on May 4. The conference

provides participants with tools for working with children with challenging behaviors and increases awareness of mental health issues among children and adults.

This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Jinneh Dyson, an acclaimed author, scholar and mental health advocate. The conference offers more than 15 different sessions

ranging from incorporating yoga and mindfulness into the classroom, to post-Harvey trauma training to identifying traumatic responses in young children.

The conference is open to early childhood educators, families and members of the Head Start community. The cost is only \$10 and includes lunch and free parking through a grant-funded initiative from the Hogg Foundation.

The Hogg Foundation advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research and public education.

To register for the conference, visit <https://bit.ly/2JiP906>.

### Center for Safe and Secure Schools Meets with Texas Tribune



Ecomet Burley, director for the Center for Safe and Secure Schools and Julia Andrews, school culture and climate specialist, recently met with the Texas Tribune for an upcoming story

about Restorative Discipline and its introduction to schools in greater Harris County through the Center. Restorative Discipline is being introduced as an alternative to punitive discipline. Darlene Breaux, Research and Evaluation Institute director, is providing research from Spring ISD's Bammel Middle School which is currently training in Restorative Discipline through the Center. The story is schedule to be published in May in the Tribune.

### End-of-Year Celebration Set for May 2



The CASE for Kids End-of-Year Celebration is set for Wednesday, May 2, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Norris Conference Center, 816 Town & Country Blvd., Houston, Texas. Afterschool staff and leaders throughout Harris County will attend.

Conference emcee is Samica Knight, reporter and anchor for KTRK Channel 13.

The morning is filled with afterschool highlights and a welcome from Knight. After lunch a CASE for Kids video provides reflection on the year. Spirit of Excellence Awards and recognitions follow.

# 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 effective;
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration;
- Work with other community and governmental entities and educational organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way;
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration;
- Model and support responsible risk-taking so that all employees can be innovative and try new ideas; and
- Demonstrate quality management through delegation of authority, team-building, consensus development, leadership development, and self-management.



CASE for Kids and the Education Foundation hosted 900 students this past week at the All Earth Ecobot Challenge. Many people came together to make this event successful.

The challenge provides opportunity for STEM education as students work together to problem-solve



on issues that affect their future. Agriculture was the science component this year, and the competition depended on students' building on their knowledge of agriculture advancements throughout the years.

Teamwork is integral in the Ecobot Challenge. This not only occurs within each student team, but within the entire education community as school districts, charters, nonprofits and home schools come to challenge practices hosted by HCDE.

A large part of this program revolves around working with other community, corporate and governmental organizations to meet the needs of our Harris County students. This fulfills the Board's goals of ensuring the community is benefiting from the Department's services.

As we build our future workforce, we must expand our minds as to the education needs to get us there. I believe Ecobot Challenge works toward that end and accommodates the critical thinking skills and teamwork Houston needs to move into the next century. In doing so, we must step out of our comfort zones and take responsible risks by thinking outside the box.

## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

- Board Meeting

