

# The CONNECTOR

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



WEEK OF OCTOBER 3, 2016

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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

It was a productive week at HCDE. I started the week off with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team. Monday evening, Assistant Superintendent Parker and I attended the screening of a film entitled **Generation Found**. The documentary encompasses youth in Houston struggling with substance abuse issues. The documentary offered dynamic insight into the challenges students face as they battle addiction.

On Tuesday, I attended agenda review for the regularly scheduled October Board Meeting. I also had a successful Leadership Team Meeting where all division, program, and campus representatives provided timely updates as we complete the sixth week of the academic year. During that meeting, I unveiled my new organization chart for the 2016-2017 year (which is attached to this email), and I had the opportunity to introduce our new Chief Information Officer, Helen Spencer. The meeting was informative and all in attendance received pertinent updates relevant to Department operations.

The Paradigm of Change, the annual Chief Financial Officer Summit hosted by the Harris County Appraisal District was held at HCDE this past Wednesday. Mayor Sylvester Turner served as the lunch keynote speaker and provided financial insight into the City of Houston. Panelists included representatives from the Harris County Appraisal District, The Greater Houston Partnership, Texas Central Railway, METRO Houston, Port of Houston, and Goose Creek CISD. The event served as an excellent opportunity to bring even more visibility to HCDE.

As mentioned in last week's issue of **The Connector**, I was out of the office yesterday and today. I return to the office Monday and will accompany Mr. Parker to professional development sessions on our various campuses. Monday is Columbus Day and, for

nearly all districts, it is a student holiday. Our campus staff will receive training and information regarding the implementation of the recent legislation regarding cameras on campuses with Special Education students.

Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, Mr. Parker and I will be traveling to McKinney, Texas to visit Serenity High School, another specialized campus for students battling substance abuse addictions. I will keep you apprised of any new information that we may gather from this visit. We continue our exploration into serving this special population of students across Harris County.

On Thursday of next week, I will be attending a breakfast with my American Leadership Forum group. This meeting allows my class a forum with local elected officials. Again, I look forward to HCDE being associated with this platform.

In the area of teaching and learning this week, we hosted a Moodle User Webinar series and also focused on School Discipline and Equity. In the area of science, we hosted Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space for Grades 5 and 8, as well as Digging Deeper: Applying Webb's Depth of Knowledge to the Science Classroom. We delved into social studies with Make Texas History Come Alive for Grades 4 and 7, and with lead4ward's Social Studies Strategies: A Focus on the Process Standards. We also offered educators resources related to Building Conceptual Understanding in Grades 1 and 2 and ended the week with Build your Bookshelf Series: YA & Maps-A Cross-Curricular Journey.

In closing, please be reminded that the next Board Meeting is Tuesday, October 18, 2016. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Student Food Critics Rate Cafeteria Food at HCDE Expo October 6



Young food critics from a dozen school districts gave their opinions about prospective cafeteria food through Choice Partners, Harris County Department of Education's purchasing cooperative.

The 2016 School Nutrition Expo held Oct. 6 at the Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Parkway in Humble, provided taste-testing opportunities for

the students whose school districts are members of Choice Partners purchasing cooperative. The cooperative allows its members to purchase products collectively to have better buying power.

Students from Harris County school districts will taste foods, letting the school district nutrition directors know what they like and don't like. As school nutrition directors evaluate quality, nutritional value and student tastes, Choice Partners gathers info needed to plan for future food contract purchases for school districts. Food is purchased annually by school districts in the Harris County area for more than 85 million student lunches through contracts available through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

The theme "Nutrition Go" encouraged students to gather coins at designated "nutrition stop" booths for prizes at the festive event.

"The student feedback is extremely important to the co-op and child nutrition directors," said Trisha Jensen, food contracts director and assistant director of Choice Partners.

"Ultimately, students are the customers. We want to offer them healthy choices and need to know if they like the

foods--this is how we find out," Jensen said.

Items expected to be popular this year are the Mexican style pizza made with chorizo sausage and whole grain dough; the jalapeno and cheese sliders; and the meatless chili-cheese empanada made from peas, a vegetarian option. "Clean label" items are also trending. Those items like the bean and cheese burrito from Los Cabos are made with natural ingredients.

The USDA recently finalized a rule requiring any food advertised during the school day meet Smart Snacks standards. (This includes midnight of the school day to 30 minutes after closing.) The rule generally eliminates junk food from being sold at school. Some Choice Partners vendors will showcase snacks compliant with these new standards: Trident Beverage, Hardie's Fruit & Vegetable Co., Peterson Farms Fresh, Inc. and Southern Ice Cream—Hershey's Ice Cream.

About Choice Partners: Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org). (Choice Partners is a division of Harris County Department of Education.)



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### September Internal Newsletter Now Available: Read the Hub for HCDE Employee News

View the latest edition of The Hub, our internal news source. This month's edition includes photo albums of past events, a story about School-Based Therapy Services, two Adult Education teachers and more. Read the latest edition: [http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4269/thehub\\_issue-7\\_sep29\\_final.pdf](http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/4269/thehub_issue-7_sep29_final.pdf)



### Crisis Communications Training Hosted by HCDE on Behalf of Texas School Public Relations Association



Media and Crisis Communications Training was held at HCDE through Spoken Word Communication on September 28. The training, hosted by Harris County Department of Education on behalf of the Texas School Public Relations Association, trained two dozen school leaders on procedures for press briefings during times of crisis. The training included preparation for press conferences and interviews. Trainers were Dave Scallan, Spoken Word founder and longtime corporate communicator Beth Archer. On-camera exercises helped participants with roleplaying through various crisis scenarios.

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

#### OCTOBER 3, 2016

Moodle User Webinar Series

School Discipline and Equity Conference

#### OCTOBER 4, 2016

Grade 5 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

Building Conceptual Understanding in Grades 1 and 2

Grade 8 Science STAAR: A Closer Look at Earth and Space

#### OCTOBER 5, 2016

Make Texas History Come Alive: Grades 4 and 7

Digging Deeper: Applying Webb's Depth of Knowledge to the Science Classroom

CFO Summit - The Paradigm of Change

#### OCTOBER 6, 2016

Integers and Algebraic Reasoning in Grades 6-8

Biology EOC: A Closer Look at Evolution and Classification

lead4ward: Social Studies Strategies: A Focus on the Process Standards (4-EOC)

#### OCTOBER 7, 2016

Build Your Bookshelf Series: YA & Maps: A Cross-Curricular Journey

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Head Start Sponsors Parent Committee Training



Team-building and problem-solving exercises, communication strategies and meeting etiquette were all part of a training provided by the 15 Head Start Center site-based management teams for parent leaders on September 29.

The meeting of 100 participants focused on how to create a positive community center and how to communicate needs and act on them.



Parents were involved with hands-on activities throughout the evening. Meanwhile, in a room adjacent to the meeting, children had their own agenda as they worked on arts-and-crafts projects and played games.

### Williams-Ledet Named New Curriculum and Compliance Director at HCDE



Chaney Williams-Ledet is the new curriculum and compliance officer for Harris County Department of Education's Educator Certification and Professional Advancement division. The division trains and prepares teacher and principal candidates for state of Texas certification through classroom and online settings.

Williams-Ledet has 29 years of experience in education. She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education and Spanish from the University of Houston and gained her master's and doctorate degrees in education administration from Texas Southern University.

Her expertise in language immersion led her to serve as elementary principal of a language immersion charter school, which she helped found. Prior to opening the school, she was a 27-year employee for Houston Independent School

District where she served as assistant principal, principal, bilingual supervisor, teacher development specialist, and bilingual teacher.

She and her husband Marvin have two sons and reside in Houston's Museum District.

"I am committed to focusing on providing high-quality preparation for teachers and administrators as they gain their certifications and prepare for leadership positions," Williams-Ledet said. "I am particularly focused on providing training sessions that link learning theory and practice in a practical way to benefit today's education leaders."

For more information about HCDE's Educator Certification and Professional Advancement, go to [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org), email [hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org](mailto:hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org) or call 713-696-1348.



### Leader's Choice News Features Story on New Vendor Buckeye Cleaning, New Contracts and Vendors

The latest issue of Leader's Choice, news for Choice Partners members and contact partners, publishes news about new vendor Buckeye Cleaning Center-Houston. New awarded contracts and new members are also featured. Readers also gain insight on best practices for procurement. Read issue no. 5: <https://goo.gl/ldU04H>

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### School Leaders Meet to Strategize for Alternatives to Punitive Student Discipline



School leaders from both the academic and school safety sectors met to discuss alternatives to punitive student discipline through the School Discipline and Equity Conference October 3.

Judge Steven C. Teske, famed Georgia truancy judge, served as keynote speaker and also provided a breakout session called the School-Justice Partnership Toolkit, tools to build a partnership to reduce arrests and suspension,

and to promote graduation rates. Other presenters included Amy Blackwell, Anita Wadhwa, Charles Rotramel, Michael Holt, and Gloria Cooper.

View the video created to promote the event: <https://youtu.be/DsbwmZbaSul> . The event was covered through Telemundo 47 reporter Carlos De Pavia. View the Telemundo 47 story:

### Educators Study 'Patterns in the Sky' through Hands-on Workshop

Area educators created models of the Sun, Earth, and Moon systems during the Patterns in the Sky workshop led by Christine Shupla last week. Through hands-on activities, the educators explored and predicted changing patterns in the day, seasons, phases, and more. To view upcoming science workshops, visit <https://goo.gl/3009LI>.



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### CASE for Kids News, Lights On Afterschool Event

#### **Claudia Magallan Leads Session as Expert Presenter:**

Claudia Magallan, CASE for Kids Texas Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) family engagement specialist, was the featured keynote speaker at Galena Park ISD's "Title I Parent Involvement Districtwide Parent Meeting." Magallan presented to 100 parents and 25 counselors on the importance of family engagement, a parent's role in their child's education, and the school's role in providing opportunities for parents to be involved. This annual meeting shares information with parents on Title I, the Every Student Succeeds Act, PTO/PTA, and family engagement at the district and campus levels. Parents and administrators were in attendance from CASE for Kids afterschool sites located in the district's MacArthur Elementary and Northshore 9th Grade Center.

#### **Save the Date! Lights On Afterschool:**

CASE for Kids announces the Lights On Afterschool event set for October 20 at 1:30 p.m. at the Houston Texans YMCA, 5202 Griggs Road. The celebration will be led by Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. As part of the celebration,



participants will show solidarity by creating a human light bulb. Lights On Afterschool is the nationwide, annual event which calls attention to celebrating afterschool and its role in keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn, and helping working families.

In Houston, Lights On is celebrated through an alliance of organizations which includes CASE for Kids, the City of Houston, Houston ISD, the South East Texas After-School Association, United Way of Greater Houston, Harris County Precinct 2, and the After-School Achievement Program.

### Harris County Department of Education Participates in National Bullying Prevention Month



October is National Bullying Prevention Month and Harris County Department of Education will join schools and communities across the

nation to raise awareness and support bullying prevention. Celebrating its 10-year anniversary, Bullying Prevention Month was initiated by PACER's National Bullying Center in 2006 and has since grown to an entire month of education and awareness activities recognized by schools and communities throughout the world.

"Every child has the right to feel safe and supported in school," said Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley. "National Bullying Prevention Month is a time when educators, students, parents, and community members can come together to support bullying prevention and make schools safer for our children."

There are many ways schools and community members can get involved this October for the 10-year anniversary of National Bullying Prevention Month:

- Celebrate Unity Day: Students, teachers, and community members will wear orange and send a united message of support on Unity Day, Wednesday, Oct. 19.
- Hold events and activities: Schools and communities around the country recognize National Bullying Prevention Month through creative events and initiatives. There are many resources available at [www.PACER.org/Bullying](http://www.PACER.org/Bullying).
- Participate in the You're Not Alone campaign: This new campaign provides resources and education on ways communities can show they care and are united against bullying, including classroom and event toolkits.

For more information and resources on National Bullying Prevention Month, visit [www.PACER.org/Bullying](http://www.PACER.org/Bullying).

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### AKA Sorority Builds New Garden Block for J.D. Walker Head Start



Members from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated installed an above-ground garden block at J.D. Walker Head Start in Baytown on October 1. The 16-member crew installed the block and filled it with new soil so that Head Start families could plant fall vegetables. Home Depot donated the resources to the sorority. Norma Starr, J.D. Walker Center manager thanks the sorority that has been a community partner since last year.

“We truly appreciate all their hard work and donations,” Starr said.

### Five Scholastic Art & Writing Award Winners Travel to Washington D.C. for Art.Write.Now. DC Exhibit



Scholastic Art & Writing Regional Coordinator Andrea Segraves and five of six Harris County teen award winners traveled to Washington D.C. in September to see their art and writing showcased at the Art.Write.Now.DC exhibit at the U.S. Department of Education and President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities.

The students honored include teen writers Amy Dong (St. John’s Upper School), Peyton Vasquez (Deer Park ISD), and Melanie Menkiti (The Village School). The artists honored were Andrea Conley (Houston ISD), Erin Del Paggio (Klein ISD), and Judy Labib (Cypress-Fairbanks ISD).

For information on entering, judging or supporting the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit [www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic](http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic).

# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### AB School West Hosts Open House 2016



Academic and Behavior School West held its annual Open House on September 28, 2016. Staff met parents and shared student progress reports and class work. In addition, families received information about all the services AB School West provides. Besides parents and staff, representatives were present from “Be An Angel” organization, Spring Branch ISD, and Houston ISD. A community meal was shared by those who attended.



# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### In accordance with the Board's goals for me to

- Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and community; and
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community

Yesterday, Choice Partners hosted its annual HCDE Food Expo at the Humble Civic Center. The event was well attended and offered students from a dozen school districts the opportunity to offer their opinions about food that might be served in their school cafeterias.



Because HCDE sells enough food to school districts through Choice Partners to serve more than 85 million school lunches each year, this is a valuable experience for both students, nutrition directors, and business leaders within school districts. By HCDE hosting this event, it helps prevent waste in school districts by allowing students to advise nutrition directors as to what food selections they like and don't like.

### By hosting this event, I am working towards achieving the Board's expectations of me to

- Maintain HCDE's visibility and involvement in the community with ISDs; and to
- Be open to their ideas and needs, and listen and accept criticism.

## HCDE BOARD

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## UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS:

**October Board Meeting**

**October 18, 2016**

1:00 p.m.

Room 400

