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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

It's been a busy week at HCDE. As usual, I began the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team followed by a meeting with Leadership Team on Tuesday. Both meetings were productive. To that end, I am pleased to announce that we have concluded our annual budget hearing process with all division directors and principals, and I look forward to presenting you with a balanced budget for consideration and approval.

On Wednesday of this week, Senator Ted Cruz paid our Fifth Ward Head Start Center a visit during a City of Houston event held at the Fifth Ward Multi-purpose Center, where our Head Start Center is housed. During the brief visit, our staff invited the senator to read *The Three Little Pigs* to a class of 5-year-olds. This was an exciting day for the staff and students at this Head Start location.

I spent the day in a training session with the United States Secret Service this past Wednesday. This was an informative, interesting, and educational experience. The event was held at the Stafford Centre in Stafford, Texas.

Yesterday, I convened agenda review for the regularly scheduled May Board Meeting. I also met with one of our client district superintendents.

Today, I conducted my standing meetings with various members of staff and I will also be meeting with officials within the Harris County government system.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings, meetings, and workshops: Harris County ELA Leadership Team; Grant Writing Best Practices; and the 2018 Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference. HCDE remains a force within the professional development community that supports public education.

As mentioned in last week's issue of **The Connector**, we are winding down the 2017-18 academic year. HCDE has experienced another year of success and we are already in gear—planning around best practices for the next year.

Looking ahead into next week, I will meet with ELT next Monday. On Tuesday, I will be attending a meeting with Dan Gilbane, division leader for Gilbane Building Company's Southwest Division regarding UpSkill Houston. Gilbane serves on the board and executive committee of the Greater Houston Partnership and as chair of the organization's UpSkill Houston workforce development program. (UpSkill Houston is an industry-led workforce development program to fill middle skills jobs and build careers in advanced manufacturing, construction, healthcare, oil and gas, petrochemical, ports and maritime and utilities.)

I will be meeting with Greg Lookabough next Wednesday regarding the overall construction plan for Fortis Academy. We will be reviewing and finetuning the timeline for that project. I will be continuing my volunteerism commitment next Thursday, as a SuperMENTor within our Head Start division, followed by a meeting with client district officials in Galena Park ISD.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

### 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

### Acclaimed Arizona State Professor, Author, Reading Instruction Specialist Serafini Presents for ELA Leadership Audience at HCDE



Frank Serafini, acclaimed literacy speaker/professor from Arizona State University, was guest presenter at the HCDE English Language Arts Leadership Group May 1 hosted by HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center ELA Curriculum Director Kelly Tumy.

His session "Talking to Children about Books and Other Texts" was sponsored by Pearson Education and focused on reading instruction.



Specifically, his session supported good reading habits in young readers and helping them to make good book choices.

Several of Serafini's quotes resounded with the 100-plus attendees from Katy, Galena Park, Dayton, Alvin, Lamar Consolidated, Sheldon, Huffman, Crosby, Clear Creek, Spring Branch, Katy, Alief and Cy-Fair:

"Students who read less, know less about what is available to read."

"It's impossible to get kids to read if they don't want to pick up the book."

"How to get kids to talk (about books) is the challenge."

"Comprehending is determined during reading. Comprehension is determined after."

Serafini is the author of the Heinemann title Classroom Reading Assessment. He is a leading voice on the reading workshop through topics ranging from implementation, planning, assessment or comprehension. He has authored Heinemann professional books which include Around the Reading Workshop in 180 Days, Lessons in Comprehension and The Reading Workshop.

### ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

**MAY 1, 2018**

Harris County ELA Leadership Team

**MAY 2, 2018**

Grant Writing Best Practices!

**MAY 4, 2018**

2018 Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Teaching and Learning Center Launches National Speaker Series



HCDE's Teaching and Learning Center recently announced the 2018-2019 lineup of speakers for the Leadership Speaker Series. The series

leaders enhance their skills and explore new ideas.

Some of next year's speakers include Peter DeWitt, a former principal and freelance writer for Vanguard Magazine, and Steve Ventura, a knowledgeable speaker who focuses on supporting effective leadership.

See the full list of workshops in the Leadership Speaker Series: <https://bit.ly/2rdXbjU>

is a national speaker series on trends and issues in education designed to help school administrators and

### 10 Women in Construction Complete Adult Education Workforce Class, Move to Apprenticeships



Students enrolled in the Women in Construction class which is a collaborative between TD Industries, HCDE and several other nonprofits and governmental agencies will graduate this month through a ceremony at the company. Ten women successfully completed the NCCER core construction course, a basic construction introduction course which includes a math test component. They are currently pipefitting apprentices who are employed with the company.

### Fifth Ward Head Start Center Visited by Senator Ted Cruz



Senator Ted Cruz stopped by the Fifth Ward Head Start Center this week while visiting the Fifth Ward Multi-Service Center. Senator Cruz joined in on classroom activities and read "The Three Little Pigs" to a group of excited 5-year-olds.

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### CASE End-of-Year Celebration Provides Reflections, Celebrations with Emcee KTRK Anchor Samica Knight



The CASE End-of-Year Celebration provided a review of the 2017-2018 out-of-

school time year as CASE celebrated the spirit of excellence in its afterschool programs. The program recognized outstanding programs, site coordinators and community partners that work diligently to serve youth.

CASE Debates was cheered on as a new innovative collaboration with the Houston Urban Debate League. CASE Debates student Rahawa Ghebrelul of Alief's Kerr High School testified to the leadership experience debate provided to her this school year.

"In the past I was shy," said the sophomore. CASE Debates has given me tools like the ability to research and effectively convey my arguments. My mom taught me that beautiful ideas mean nothing if you can't share them. Through debate, I learned skills that helped me get over my fear of public speaking, and I'm able to share my ideas."

Lisa Thompson-Caruthers reflected on the trials and heroic efforts of afterschool organizations during Hurricane Harvey and acknowledged CASE for Kids for providing meals to youth and families after Harvey through Brighter Bites and the Houston Foodbank.

KTRK anchor Samica Knight acted as emcee for the event, voicing her admiration for those who work with youth in the out-of-school time field.

Knight also provided names of award winning afterschool staff in seven categories:

- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Outstanding Leadership by an Afterschool Site Coordinator: Belita Brown-Young, Francis Elementary, Aldine ISD, Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers Cycle 8
- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Afterschool Frontline Staff Member: Carmen Villanueva, Sharpstown International, Houston ISD, Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers Cycle 8
- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Outstanding Leadership by an Afterschool Provider Supervisor: Mila Sengupta, Fort Bend ISD Extended Learning Department
- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Afterschool Provider Frontline Staff Member: Monica Lewis, Monica Lewis School of Etiquette
- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Outstanding Leadership by an Afterschool Administrator: Chernequa Dawson with Rising Star Collaborative
- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Community Connection Champion: Cedric Johnson, Harris County Precinct 1, Lincoln Park Community Center
- Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Award for Innovation Practices Champion: Literacy Through Photography, a program of Fotofest International

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### CASE Debates Students from Seven Area Schools Attend UH Debates Field Trip



CASE Debates students from Spring, Alief, Spring Branch, Yes Prep, KIPP and Harmony attended a field trip at University of Houston Central facilitated by the university's debate team. CASE for Kids staff coordinated the field trip held on April 27.

After orientation, the high school students attended lecture events on campus following either the Policy or World Debates format.

Classes included instruction in flowing, a method of learning to take notes while listening to other debaters. Additional class offerings included research skills on how to access academic

learning sites and use contextualized research and an ethics course which helps students learn to break down philosophy text and form ideas from that text.

"These are skills that will assist our students in college and their future careers," said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers.

Students also toured the campus and benefited from mock debates with the UH College team members. Many of the students will attend summer seminars to prepare for CASE Debates in the next school year.



# Opportunity

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

### Highpoint East Students Hear from DEA Agent During Red Ribbon Week



More than 100 students at Highpoint East participated in the school's annual Teen Summit last week. The summit focused on providing future opportunities for students, and included presentations from local universities, vocational

organizations and businesses. Students also heard an inspiring message from retired NFL player Cory Redding.

As he pointed out in his message, Redding was once in the same situation as many students at Highpoint East. He is now retired from a successful athletic career, owns multiple businesses and is active in his community and in charitable activities through The Cory Redding Foundation. He encouraged the teens to make decisions every day that will put them on the path to success.



"We all get two precious gifts every day – time and opportunity," said Redding. "I encourage you to resist quick gratification. So many things right now are instant, but life doesn't work that way."

Students also received valuable information from representatives with Sam Houston State University, Work Force Solutions, the Navy and Army National Guard. Juniors and seniors were guided through the process of applying for scholarships and financial aid.



New this year, local businesses and entrepreneurs provided hands-on activities for students and insight into starting their own businesses. During their session with Ouindetta Thomas of Chef Win, the teens learned to decorate cupcakes with icing and fondant. Students also learned about the music and film industries from Lonnie Mitchell with Track World Productions, a local recording studio, and Courtney Glaude with Green Eyed Theater.

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of 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 the community; and
- Work with other community and governmental entities and educational organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way



This week, Senator Ted Cruz visited our Fifth Ward Head



Start Center location during a City of Houston event at the location where that Head Start Center location is housed. While there, center staff seized the opportunity for Senator Cruz to read to some of HCDE's youngest learners.

**By ensuring that HCDE is prepared when such visits arise for the betterment of our future learners, I am working to meet the expectations of the board for HCDE to maintain positive visibility and involvement in the community.**

## HCDE BOARD

### *Board President*

Louis Evans, III

*Position 4, Precinct 3*

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*Position 3, At Large*

Michael Wolfe

*Position 5, At Large*

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, May 16, 2018**

- Board Meeting

