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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

## Of Note...

We are now officially in the throes of our summer schedule, projects, and preparation for next year. We are tweaking systems, refining programs and techniques, acquiring and delivering professional development, and trying to take time to decompress and rejuvenate ourselves.

This week was a productive one. I began with a conference call with officials from the Texas Academic Decathlon (TAD), followed by a meeting with my Executive Leadership Team. I also continued my regularly scheduled quarterly meetings with members of the board throughout the week.

On Tuesday, I had the opportunity to meet with board candidate Danny Norris. The meeting was productive and informative on both sides of the dialogue. Also, on Tuesday, I attended the interview committee for the position of Board Secretary.

Our regularly scheduled June Board Meeting was yesterday. Thanks to all of you who attended and for your ongoing service to HCDE. I know it was a long day given the various committee meetings that accompanied. I appreciate your dedication to the Department.

Today, I will be conducting my standing meetings with staff and I will also be meeting with the new Executive Director of Facilities. Additionally, I will be meeting with the two principal candidates—one of whom will replace Mindy Robertson at Academic and Behavior Campus-East.

This week in teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: TExES Bilingual

Education Supplemental Exam (#164) Test Prep; TExES Principal (068) 4-Day Test Prep Boot Camp; TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam (#291)-SCIENCE Test Prep; and Alternative Certification Program for Teachers-Information Session. The Department continues to lead in professional development for learners throughout Harris County as we equalize education.

Looking ahead, I will be heading to the University of Texas/TASA Summer Conference in Austin this Saturday. The conference runs through Tuesday. It always serves as an ideal opportunity to receive information on innovative changes in pedagogy and executive leadership. I look forward to brain-sharing with my colleagues from all parts of the state. I will return to the office next Wednesday for a half-day and will depart for vacation later Wednesday.

In closing, please be reminded that I return to the office during the second week of July. I will resume **The Connector** during the week of July 9. Please be reminded that the next meeting of the Board will be Wednesday, July 18.

Again, thanks for your service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, July 18, 2018**

- Board Meeting

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Lights, Cameras, Action: Students from 9 schools perform at CASE for Kids' Day at Hobby Center June 21



It's curtain call as students enrolled in summer programs through the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, hit the big stage for Kids' Day at Hobby Center June 21 at 800 Bagby St. The event begins at 2:30 p.m. for the practice dress rehearsal and the performance for families of students starts at 6:30 p.m.

Dancing, singing, drama and drumming instruction are provided to students

through afterschool vendors working for CASE for Kids. The event gives students the chance to learn from local professional artists and perform on the iconic stage in downtown Houston.

Students are enrolled in elementary, middle and high school summer programs through CASE for Kids. CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

The schools include Best and Smith elementary schools and Albright Middle School in Alief; Bammel Middle School in Spring; Garrett Elementary School in Sheldon, Stafford High School in Stafford, Clear Creek Intermediate in Clear Creek, and Francis Elementary in Aldine. Charter school Academy of Accelerated Learning also participates.

Fine arts vendors working with CASE for Kids in the summer program include MECA, Ondi Love, Brazilian Arts, Dinky Drum, Savannah Blue, Artist Boat, Puppet Pizzazz, Houston Healthy Hip Hop and The Ensemble Theatre.

"Hobby Center is a state-of-the art facility, and the staff there allows our students to experience the working theatre and also experience the glitz that accompanies theater and performance," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director. "This long-standing, fine arts, summer program helps bring attention to the importance fine arts plays in shaping a well-rounded individual, giving kids exposure to experiences with music, theatre, art and dance," said Caruthers.

Students participating in Kids' Day at Hobby Center are enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs through the Texas Education Agency's Afterschool Centers on Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center and the Partnership Project. Partnership Project is a collaboration between HCDE, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and awarded sites. HCDE commits local funds to supplement comprehensive afterschool programming.

### **ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER**

**JUNE 19, 2018**

TExES Bilingual Education  
Supplemental Exam (#164)  
Test Prep

TExES Principal (068) 4-Day  
Test Prep Boot Camp

**JUNE 21, 2018**

TExES Core Subjects EC-6  
Exam (#291) - SCIENCE  
Test Prep

Alternative Certification  
Program for Teachers -  
Information Session



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Free Skilled Medical Classes at Harris County Department of Education Supply Building-Block Approach to Medical Careers



*Jennifer Ortiz explains procedures to her patient.*

Before enrolling in free GED and medical classes at Harris County Department of Education, student Deysi Gonzalez admits to watching too much TV in her free time.

“I saw a sign that said free GED classes, so I enrolled,” she said.

Within the month, she earned her GED. Twelve weeks later, she became a certified nursing assistant, or CNA, and began working in a nursing home. In a matter of six months, she will increase her hourly earnings by getting her phlebotomist certification, the profession of drawing and collecting blood samples from patients. She also plans to take the EKG class at HCDE. The resulting hourly salary range will be from \$17-\$21, plus benefits.

Through a series of workforce training classes at HCDE’s Adult Education, Gonzalez is growing her medical skills and earning capabilities. The programs made available through HCDE and the Texas Workforce Commission allow students to gain academic and workforce skills at the same time.

In phlebotomy classes, adult basic education teacher Rochelle Bell supports the academic end, providing help with math and language skills and assisting students with memorization and review methodologies.

Phlebotomy teacher Netta Trahan brings 30 years of drawing blood to the classroom. She provides the clinical expertise to students.

Sticking someone with a needle was a tough go the first time for student Jennifer Ortiz. With no pun intended, Ortiz “stuck with it” and earned the reputation as the no. 1 phlebotomist in her class. Her goal is to work in a hospital setting.

The class provides techniques to blood drawing, equipment preparation and instruction on customer service techniques that help make patients comfortable. During the first day of class, students get hands-on experience by drawing blood from one another.



*Deysi Gonzalez prepares to receive a “stick.”*

“If you face fear and get it out of the way, you can be a beast,” said Trahan of allaying her students’ fears.

Bell believes the building-block approach to gaining medical skills like drawing blood or performing an EKG makes sense.

“In today’s world, everybody is not made for college, so it gives students a chance to test out things,” she said. “You get hands-on training, and it’s paid for.”

For information about phlebotomy or other medical workforce, GED or English as a second language classes at Harris County Department of Education, go to [www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation](http://www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation) or call 713-692-6216.



# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Benefiting Head Start Interview Fair Attracts 131 Applicants



More than 131 prospective employees attended the Harris County Department of Education Head Start Interview Fair on June 14. Human Resources and Head Start held the fair to recruit and hire Early Head

Start/Head Start teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks for its 15 locations across northeast Harris County.

“We’re seeking applicants who really have a heart for young children because this work can be challenging,” said Venetia Peacock, HCDE Head Start senior director. “We were excited to see people have a desire to work for HCDE Head Start and interviewed many qualified applicants who love working with children.”

Applicant Risa Richards is the adoptive mother of three children, one who has already graduated from the Head Start program and two enrolling at the La Porte center this fall. Richards applied for a teaching position

because she has seen the program in action and loves the partnership between teachers, parents and the community to help children succeed.

“I decided to apply because I want to be a part of that greatness, that excellence,” said Richards.



HCDE Head Start provides services to facilities in Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Fifth Ward, Fonwood, Humble, J.D. Walker, La Porte, Pugh, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell. Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families.

Interested candidates can still apply for available positions online at [www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org) or call 713-696-8287 for information.

### Three Communications and Creative Services Staff Earn Awards through 2018 Lone Star Awards



Three Communications and Creative Services employees gained awards in the 2018 Lone Star Awards through the Houston Press Club. Daniel Villarreal was named first-place winner in Public Relations Corporate Video category for his video: “HCDE Tax Rate.” Villarreal also earned third place for a video entry called “Mayor GoPublic Message.”

Lindsey Sanders, Communications and Creative Services coordinator, gained a second-place award in the

category “Print Photography” for her photo at the Academic and Behavior Schools Chess Tournament entitled: Focus. Carol Vaughn, Communications and Creative Services manager,



earned a third-place award in the “Public Relations Feature” category for a feature story about a Highpoint East student. View the full list of winners: <http://houstonpressclubonline.org/here-are-the-winners-of-the-2018-lone-star-awards/>

# Service

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Harris County Art Teachers Get Creative During You Gotta Have Art Workshop



Harris County art teachers got creative during the 13th annual You Gotta Have Art workshop

June 13-14. This two-day workshop hosted by Teaching and Learning Center Curriculum Director Kelly Tummy allows teachers to create art projects they can recreate with their students in the classroom, complete with lesson plans.

On day one of the workshop, Humble ISD elementary art teacher Julie Gallow led teachers through a series of art projects that tied directly to the TEKS. From jelly printing and homemade wood block prints to painted art books, teachers gained new strategies they can easily replicate in the classroom.

On the second day, representatives from Crayola presented creatED, a new program that uses practical, art-infused teaching strategies to deepen creative thinking in schools. The day focused on science, technology, engineering, art and technology (STEAM) education and creating cross-curricular games. Teachers left with an art journal, creative supplies and a sketchbook, along with a variety of interactive and interdisciplinary games.

One of several activities was Magic Crayola Movement, where teachers used visual patterns and coding to instruct other teams to move a crayon from one location in the room to another. Along with art and coding elements, the exercise activates learning by physically engaging students.

Teachers also created their own cross-curricular board games complete with playing cards and game pieces. They planned objectives, characters and strategy of their games and decided whether the games would be collaborative or competitive for students.



First time participant Tina Pequeno from Goose Creek CISD enjoyed the hands-on activities she can now take back to her students.

"I will definitely incorporate these projects into my lessons," said Pequeno, an elementary art teacher. "All of the activities were engaging and relevant and will allow my students to connect art with language arts, science and math."

# Systemic Achievement

*...with purposeful intent*

## Personnel Management

In keeping with the Board's expectations of me to

- **Ensure that the system for recruiting and selection results in personnel recommendations based on defined needs, goals, priorities, and candidate credentials and qualifications**



The Human Resources division has actively engaged in the recruitment process to meet the needs of the Head Start division to hire competent staff to ensure appropriate staffing levels within program.

Last Thursday, the Human Resources division held a job fair—specifically for Head



Start—that attracted more than 130 candidates. Its specific purpose was to hire Early Head Start/Head Start teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers, and cooks for its 15

locations across northeast Harris County.

Both divisions are confident that many of the applicants are eligible candidates to fill vacant positions as they currently process the applications through the screening process. In addition to these candidates, other candidates have also been recruited.

To that end, by executing a comprehensive recruitment process, this helps ensure that I achieve the overall Board's goals of me related to personnel management to

- **Establish a culture among the staff so that all strive to achieve excellence and do not accept mediocre performance;**
- **Ensure all supervisory staff administers personnel practices with consistency and fairness with respect for the individual;**
- **Monitor the salary grid to ensure equity in the compensation program;**
- **Ensure an effective backup plan is in place for all functional areas in the event of absence of personnel; and**
- **Conduct a review of jobs vs. performance plans to ensure parity.**



## HCDE BOARD

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Erica Lee Carter

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**Position 3, At Large**

Michael Wolfe

**Position 5, At Large**

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Wednesday, July 18, 2018**

- **Board Meeting**

