

The CONNECTOR

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



Harris County
Department of
Education

WEEK OF AUGUST 6, 2018

VOLUME 3/ISSUE 92



In this issue...

- 2 *Student Camden Cotlar Thrives at HCDE's Academic and Behavior School West*
- 3 *HCDE Adult Education Pipefitting Video Provides Insight into Career, Classes*
- 4 *Dos and Don'ts: Bus Safety Rules for Back-to-School*

FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

For all practical purposes, summer is nearly over. Students are preparing to return to school and districts are resuming regular schedules. To that end, this week marks the end of HCDE's Summer Flex schedule for 2018. As of Monday, HCDE will resume its normal business hours of 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

I began this week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team. We are geared up for the new year and look forward to improving the trajectory of public education in Harris County. Later Monday, I traveled to Austin to fulfill my responsibilities as a member of the UIL Board. I attended a UIL Board Meeting all day Tuesday and returned to the office Wednesday and conducted a meeting of the Leadership Team.

Today, as you are aware, I attended the Development Committee Meeting and conducted ongoing meetings with staff. Tomorrow, I will be attending the Good Reason Houston Leadership Council Meeting. This is a group with intentional purpose and I am pleased to represent HCDE within this body.

Also, this week, HCDE welcomed Ms. Melissa Smith, the Board's new executive assistant. We're happy to have her onboard.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted and facilitated the following trainings and workshops: Online Instructors' Training, Part I; TExES Core Subjects EC-6 Exam; Alief ISD's Mahaney Elementary School- 6 Traits Overview; Science of Sport- Soccer Workshop; Katy ISD's Secondary ELAR; Alternative Certification Program for Teachers- Information Session; HCDE's Business Services' Financial Operating Guidelines Training, Sheldon ISD's Secondary

ELAR. Throughout the summer, HCDE has remained a viable force in advancing teaching and learning through our exceptional professional development opportunities.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team. During that meeting, Ecomet Burley will discuss HCDE's Incident Command Structure and Protocol. This meeting of the minds is essential as we embark upon the start of a new year.

I will return to Austin Monday to attend another UIL Meeting, scheduled for Tuesday. I return to Houston Tuesday night, in preparation for Wednesday's regularly-scheduled August Board Meeting. Again, because the Department ends the flex schedule next week, we will be open next Friday.

Also, please be reminded (and as mentioned in previous issues of **The Connector**) that this year's Annual Staff Meeting will be held Thursday, August 23 at the Kingdom Builders Center. Breakfast will be served at 9:30 and the event will commence at 10:00. I invite all Board Members to attend this annual event. HCDE Trustees in attendance will be recognized. I look forward to an exciting event and I hope to see you there. This is always a wonderful opportunity to fellowship with staff and marks the beginning of a new year in the life of HCDE.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

We've Got Your Back! Backpack Safety Tips for Students



Those books in your children's backpacks are important, but practice caution as students take to the hallways and travel home carrying heavy loads.

- Observe the 10 percent rule: A 50-pound student should only carry five pounds.
- Know the rules regarding backpacks at your child's school. Some only allow clear packs for safety reasons.

Carie Crabb, Harris County Department of Education School-Based Therapy Services senior director and physical therapist, urges parents to consider several factors in consideration of their child's back health.

Awareness about the potential strain of backpacks is a back-to-school initiative from Harris County Department of Education's School-Based Therapy Services division in collaboration with the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Backpack safety tips:

- Choose the right size backpack: A small student needs a small backpack.
- The backpack should fit snugly, with the backpack bottom at or slightly below the waistline.
- Load the heaviest items closest to the child's back.

HCDE physical, occupational and music therapists work with children in school settings through partnerships with school districts in greater Harris County. For more information, go to www.hcde-texas.org/therapyservices.

Student Camden Cotlar Thrives at HCDE's Academic and Behavior School West



Camden Cotlar, a student at HCDE's Academic and Behavior School West with a history of

difficult behavior, is now thriving thanks to the school's small class sizes and low student-to-teacher ratio.

His behavior previously included active aggression with both peers and adults and wandering out of classrooms at previous public and charter schools.

Now, thanks to the friendly and capable staff at ABS West, Cotlar's mother feels that her son is finally getting the specialized education suitable to his learning style. She credits the environment at ABS West for helping Camden both in and out of the classroom.

To see more of Camden's story, view the video at <https://bit.ly/2M9ZMq3>.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Adult Education Pipefitting Video Provides Insight into Career, Classes



Communications and Creative Services recently collaborated with Adult Education to produce a video about training for construction, specifically pipefitting. The video features instructors and students who talk about forging new careers through training. Classes are offered in the morning and evenings

and are free through a collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission. More information at www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation or by calling 713-692-6216. View video: <https://youtu.be/muaBdQBqWwE>

TLC Updates to Paperless Surveys/Evaluations for Workshops



The Teaching and Learning Center has launched a new initiative for paperless surveys and evaluations for workshops. Beginning Aug. 1, 2018, educators completing workshops will complete the traditional paper survey electronically through a link or QR code posted on the workshop PowerPoint. The updated survey will be used for onsite and offsite professional learning sessions. View a sample of the survey: https://hcde.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8HcQ976TqEV6u7H

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Dos and Don'ts: Bus Safety Rules for Back-to-School



The first day of school is quickly approaching and buses filled with excited students will soon be back on the roads. Parents are reminded that back-to-school readiness includes reviewing bus safety and etiquette.

Riding the school bus has longtime been considered the safest form of student transportation. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, American students are nearly eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars.

As with all forms of transportation, dangers do exist. According to HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools: The greatest danger is not riding on the bus, but rather getting on or off the bus. Young school children ages 5-7 are the most at risk for bus-related injury.

Parents and children should discuss bus safety together to help ensure a safe start to the new school year. Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools offers the following bus safety tips to help ease the back-to-school transition:

- Talk to your kids about bus safety and respect. Ridership is a privilege. It can be taken away due to bad behavior, so check with your school district about established guidelines. Refer to the policy as "school bus behavior policy" and go over it with your child.
- Dress appropriately for the weather. Many buses are not air-conditioned.
- Be at the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is set to arrive. Tardiness and other mishaps can lead to mistakes in safety measures. Examples might be running in front of the bus; running back to find something left on the bus; or bending over or bending

down to retrieve something dropped while getting off the bus.

- Kids should follow the five giant steps rule: Be five giant steps back from where the bus actually stops until it comes to a complete stop and the driver opens the door.
- Backpacks/bags need to be fully closed and sized appropriately for the child to prevent safety hazards such as dragging straps.
- Always stay seated on the bus. Teach your child to stay in the seat until the bus comes to a complete stop at your child's destination.
- Show appreciation to the bus driver. Remind your kids to say thank you when they get off. Kindness and good manners go a long way.
- Railroad crossings require drivers to stop, to open the door and to make sure the coast is clear. Teach your kids to be extra quiet during these times.
- Go over your child's bus routine. Describe the location and street where your child should get off.
- Don't hang out of the window. Keep body parts inside the bus.
- For younger kids, write down their names, bus number, bus stop and where you may be reached and put that information inside their backpack. Help your children memorize your cell number; putting it to song can help.
- Bullying should never be tolerated. Talk to your child about bullying on the bus. Read your district's school bus behavior policy to understand to whom you should report such behavior. It may be the driver, teacher, principal or someone else.

Each school district has school bus ridership rules and policies in place. Families are encouraged to navigate their school district's website to locate and discuss the school bus rules with their children.

Systemic Achievement

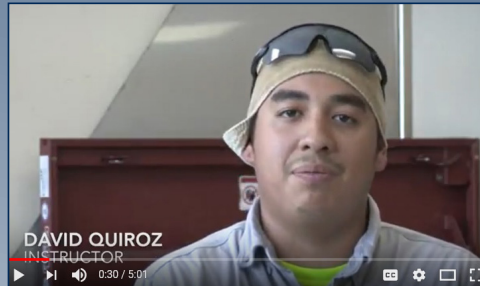
...with purposeful intent

Instructional Management

In an effort to meet the Board's expectations of me as it relates to this element of performance to

- Establish effective mechanisms for communication to and from staff in instructional evaluation, planning, and decision making
- Oversee annual training for increased student learning and conducts periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the planning process
- Ensure that goals and objectives form the basis of curricular decision making and instruction, and communicates expectations for student achievement
- Ensure that appropriate data are used in developing recommendations and making decisions regarding the instructional program and resources
- Establish a system for regular evaluation of instructional programs to meet student instructional needs and to attain desired student achievement

Over the past few years, HCDE's Adult Education division has stepped outside of the traditional comfort zone of similar programs as it relates to career development and enhancement for its students. The division has introduced a variety of trainings for careers that can increase the earning power of our students, including but not limited to welding, construction, pipefitting, and



other industrial support opportunities. In addition, the division is currently collaborating with the Texas Workforce Commission, offering free classes in the mornings and evenings in these areas of training.

The Communications and Creative Services division recently worked with Adult Education to produce a video featuring instructors and students as they discuss entering into these essential careers through comprehensive training through HCDE. View the video at the following URL: <https://youtu.be/muaBdQBqWwE>

By HCDE serving this population of students and consistently evolving to meet the needs of our students, in an effort to improve the quality of life for each student, I am working to meet the Board's expectations for HCDE to identify the learning needs of the students and develop a process that ensures that each student's learning goals are met or exceeded; investigate best practices for student achievement; and utilize effective practices that maximize achievement for student potential.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Louis Evans, III

Position 4, Precinct 3

Vice President

Eric Dick

Position 2, Precinct 4

Erica Lee Carter

Position 6, Precinct 1

George Moore

Position 1, Precinct 2

Don Sumners

Position 7, At Large

Diane Trautman

Position 3, At Large

Michael Wolfe

Position 5, At Large

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

