

The CONNECTOR

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for the HCDE Board of Trustees



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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

It's been an exciting week at HCDE! I began the week with a meeting of the Executive Leadership Team. It was productive and informative as always. The team is focused on ensuring that all programs have been tweaked and are up and running for the new year.

Tuesday, I delivered remarks at the School-Based Therapy Services Returning Staff Orientation at the North Post Oak location. It was very well-attended, as always. This division employees hundreds of therapy staff who meet the needs of over 7,000 students across Harris County. I enjoy greeting all staff as we rejuvenate ourselves for the new academic year.

I conducted regularly-scheduled meetings with staff Wednesday, and focused on the finishing touches for yesterday's Annual Staff Meeting.

To that end, I am pleased to share that we had a remarkable convocation event! Annual Staff Meeting 2018 is in the books. With nearly 1,000 employees in attendance, the message was motivating, the energy was high, staff is ready to return to their respective classrooms, programs, and centers, and reach for even higher heights this year. Thanks to our trustees who attended. I appreciate your support. I am excited about, and look forward to, ongoing successes during the 2018-2019 academic year. (See pages 2 and 3 for Annual Staff Meeting highlights.)

Today, I will be facilitating professional development at Fortis Academy, along with my brother Andre Chapelle and his wife Gwen. This will culminate their visit to Houston, after attending yesterday's Annual Staff Meeting. As individuals in ongoing recovery, they have a lot of insight to extend which will help improve our service delivery to this unique population. I look forward to this opportunity of leading—while my brother and his

wife share their experiences, and our faculty and staff learn from them.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE conducted the following trainings and workshops: Online Instructor's Training, Part II; Alternative Certification Program for Teachers-Information Session; 5th Annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference; Quest for Grants Training Series: Team Approach to Proposal Writing; and School Finance Council.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin with my usual ELT meeting, followed by a meeting with one of my mentees, Mr. C.J. Rodgers. Tuesday, I have a lunch meeting scheduled with Dr. Juan Munoz from the University of Houston-Downtown, followed by internal meetings over the next two days.

Friday will be a bittersweet day for HCDE. We will celebrate the retirement of Ginger Thomas. Ginger has been with HCDE for 23 years. She has become a fixture at HCDE and probably the most recognizable face within our Facilities division, especially when it comes to event planning and logistics. Ginger has always made great things happen, is the expert in last minute logistical fixes, has a creative mind, and a willing and giving heart. Aside from that, she helps to ensure that our main building is in order and that visitors and employees, alike, feel welcome once they enter the building. She will truly be missed.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

September Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 18, 2018

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Employees Get Syced for School Year at Annual Staff 2018



Annual Staff 2018-2019 launched the school year with a new mantra introduced by Superintendent James Colbert.

“Get syced” is a term Colbert used from his East Coast roots to explain the exhilaration experienced by various life situations.

“Syced is an adjective. It describes one’s state of mind, one’s commitment to beating the odds, or the exhilaration associated with success that can hardly be described,” he said.



By introducing inspiring stories from his youth, Colbert gave examples of getting “syced,” including experiences from track-and-field events and the challenges from his childhood. He called upon employees to get inspired, get fueled and get elevated about their school year.

Cheers and chants were shared by service divisions Adult Education, Head Start, Schools, CASE for Kids and Therapy Services.



Back by popular demand was the comeback story from Colbert’s brother André Chapelle, who continues to recover and move forward from addiction. Andre made a surprise appearance at Annual Staff and received a standing ovation from the 1,000-plus employees in attendance.



Years of service certificates were met by applause from employees. Two employees—Gloria Beckham of Schools and Ann Petty of School-Based Therapy Services—celebrated 25 years of service to HCDE.

Annual Staff brings about a reunion for employees, an opportunity for all of us to come together in the same house and “get syced.”



Colbert described HCDE employees as a talented team of caring educators who are also a force to be reckoned with.

“I am syced for the new school year,” he said. “I hope you are too.”



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Scenes from Annual Staff Meeting



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Healthy Minds, Healthy Families Conference 2018 Provides Fuel for New School Year for Head Start Staff



Healthy Minds, Healthy Families Conference 2018 attracted approximately 275 Head Start staff and other community members. Keynote speaker was motivation presenter Shana Lewis, who spoke about women's issues and provided positive reinforcement for the new year with her speech "Transform Your Life."

The conference hosted by Harris County Department of Education Head Start and sponsored by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health provided three professional counselors to discuss mental health issues ranging from motivation for caregivers to understanding countertransference to helping post-partum parents with anxiety and mood disorders.



"These sessions provide valuable information and fuel for our Head Start staff as they prepare to serve families during the new school year," said Venetia Peacock, Head Start senior director.

Vendors supplied services ranging from exercise tips to free massages to relaxation with essential oils.

The 6th Annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference is set for Friday, Sept. 27, 2019.

HCDE Releases 2018-2019 Editorial Calendar of Events



HCDE releases its 2018-2019 editorial calendar created by Communications and Creative Services to keep employees in the know. Please take advantage of the calendar to plan your year. Some dates may be helpful in creating items such as social media posts.

View the calendar: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5429/hcde-editorial-calendar-2019_082018_final.pdf

Have a great year!

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

AUGUST 20, 2018

Online Instructor's Training - Part II

Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Session

AUGUST 21, 2018

5th Annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference

AUGUST 22, 2018

Quest for Grants Training Series: Team Approach to Proposal Writing!

AUGUST 24, 2018

School Finance Council

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Harris County Department of Education School-Based Therapists Celebrate 40 Years of Success with 25 School Districts



School-Based Therapy Services celebrates 40 years of service this year in greater Harris County. Harris County Department of Education's

occupational, physical and music therapists work with students and collaborate with educators to provide school-based solutions for students with special needs.

HCDE School-Based Therapy Services provides 53 percent of special education therapy services provided to students in the 25 Harris County school districts. As the therapists met Aug. 21 for back-to-school planning, Carie Crabb, senior director, reflected on the role her therapists play helping students and teachers be successful in the school setting.

"Our charge in special education is to provide therapies that are needed so that children can benefit from and make progress in their special education program," she said. "We help students participate in their school settings alongside their non-disabled peers.

"For physical therapists, that means helping students with positioning and mobility needs like getting on and off the school bus and accessing the playground. For occupational therapy, this might have to do with helping to improve handwriting and fine motor skills to assist the student with completing written assignments. Also, we assist them with organizational skills and working with teachers to help

adapt the learning environment to facilitate successful participation in school. Music therapists can help students retain knowledge through patterns and song or provide solutions to learning anxiety."

With an average 10-year retention rate for therapists, Crabb thinks an excellent work environment coupled with management support and a flexible work schedule attracts therapists to HCDE and the school-based therapy career.

HCDE therapists assisted 7,070 students in the 2017-2018 school year, along with 8,000 educators. Crabb says serving educators completes a big part of her division's mission.

"We're not only serving students directly and providing them services, we're helping support teachers and other educators on campus," she said. "When I provide therapy for a student, I'm helping that one student, but when I help educators, they use that knowledge for all their students. The help I provide grows exponentially when I teach a teacher."

Crabb believes there is a greater purpose in helping students with curricular and extracurricular tasks like taking a test or being able to be a part of the debate team or join the band or choir.

"Our mission is to help all learners in Harris County," she said. "But our belief is that by helping students succeed and participate in their school setting, they will go on to succeed and participate in their community and life after school."



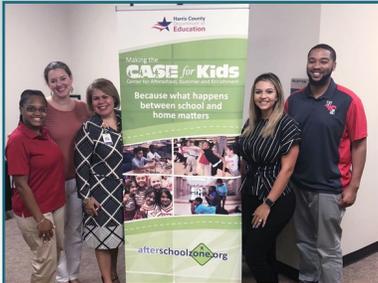
Amezcuca Presents at National Procurement Conference

Dr. Jesus Amezcuca presented to a group of 150 procurement professionals at the National Institute of Government Professionals in Nashville, Tennessee. He also led a roundtable best practices discussion on implementing CFO 200 federal requirements. There were over 1400 participants in attendance at the conference from across the country.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids Hosts Bootcamp for Federally Funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers



CASE for Kids hosted the annual Bootcamp Training for 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) site coordinators on

Aug. 15-16. Returning Cycle 9 and newly granted Cycle 10 site coordinators went through a two-day intensive training covering the ins-and-outs of

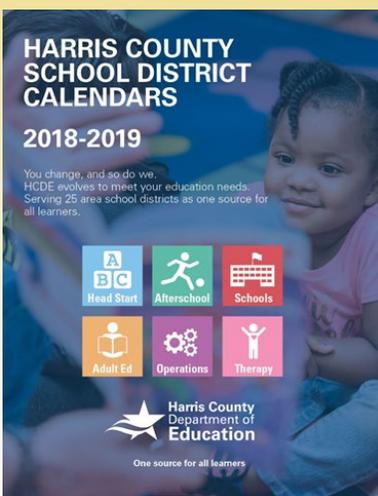
running a successful afterschool program under 21st CCLC federal standards. The CASE for Kids team collaborated to give site coordinators information on curriculum, data collection, program management and more.



Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Harris County Department of Education Releases 2018-19 Calendar for 25 School Districts



Key dates for the 2018-2019 school year for all 25 school districts in Harris County are available through the Harris County Department of Education comprehensive school district calendar.

Some districts begin school as early as Aug. 16, and many start on Aug. 27.

All 25 districts are off for Thanksgiving from Nov. 19-23.

Winter break begins as early as Dec. 20 at several districts, but most return to school by Jan. 4. Spring Break is March 11-15 for all districts, and Easter break varies throughout district calendars. Staff work days and other holidays differ. Districts begin wrapping up the year from May 23-31.

View the calendar for the 25 school districts through the following link: http://www.hcde-texas.org/media/5432/schooldistrictcalendar2018-19_pg2.pdf

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Organizational Morale

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

- Create an open and positive environment for sharing resources and exchanging ideas to improve organizational climate;
- Seek systemically to improve the climate by obtaining and utilizing feedback from employees of the Department; and
- Celebrate accomplishments and acknowledge excellence



As always, it was an excellent opportunity for most employees within the Department to convene. This happens only once a year and it was certainly a memorable experience. The feedback from staff has served as great affirmation to that end.

By my facilitating this annual event, I continue to work towards the Board's goal to ensure that every person is treated with respect and dignity and that all administrators are motivated to accomplish the mission, goals, and objectives of the Department. It further allows me to make a personal connection with many of the employees I might not otherwise meet.



I facilitated the Annual Staff Meeting for the 2018-2019 academic year. The theme was a motivating one that culminated with a sequel based on a reflection of the story I shared about him last year. It was inspiring and emotional, and it rejuvenated staff across all divisions within the Department.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

September Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

