

Of Note...

On the heels of Spring Break, it's been a brisk week at HCDE. The Department continues to recognize artists and writers in Harris County through The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. As previously mentioned, HCDE is the regional sponsor of this worthwhile program for aspiring student writers and artists. This year, we are proud to announce the record 96 teens from Harris County who advanced to become national Gold and Silver Medalists. Many will attend ceremonies at Carnegie Hall in New York City this summer.

The Department resumed normal operations this week, in sync with our client school districts. You may recall, in the previous issue of **The Connector**, I mentioned that I would be attending my regularly-scheduled meeting of the UIL. As a member of its board, I traveled to Austin for the board meeting held on Monday, March 11. This platform offers visibility for HCDE and it serves as a great networking mechanism for me on behalf of the Department.

I am pleased to share scenes in this week's issue of our AB-West staff exposing some of our students to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, immediately before Spring Break. The students were introduced to numerous breeds of livestock at the petting zoo and had an opportunity to enjoy a traditional rodeo barbeque lunch.

I began this week with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team, followed by standing meetings with internal staff. I conducted campus visits at the following locations this past Tuesday: Highpoint East, ABS-West, and ABS-East. I attended various meetings on both Wednesday and Thursday. Also, on Thursday, I fulfilled my SuperMENTor commitment at the Humble Head Start Center. Today, I am working from the North Post Oak (NPO) location and will conduct standing meetings from NPO. I am also visiting a client school district superintendent today. As previously mentioned, it is important to me to keep my finger on the pulse of our client districts to ensure that we are meeting, if not exceeding, their needs.

It is important to note that some of our Head Start locations were affected by this week's Deer Park chemical explosion. Both the San Jacinto Community College and La Porte center locations closed, in accordance with both the college and school district, respectively, being forced to close. We took precautionary action with surrounding centers by eliminating all outdoor activities.

Looking ahead into next week, I will continue making campus visits. I have been pleased, however, to find operations running smoothly on all of our campuses. I have a meeting scheduled with a representative from the United Way, and I also have a Northwest Area Ministries Board Meeting to attend. I will end the week visiting another client district superintendent.

Each year, the Head Start division celebrates the Week of the Young Child offering bus tours to Board Members and employees, alike. This annual opportunity celebrates young children, while giving visitors an opportunity to see the world through the eyes of our youngest learners. This year's tours will be held Tuesday, April 16 and Thursday, April 18. Buses will leave at 8:30 a.m. from the Administration Building. You are invited to attend. Please RSVP to the board secretary, accordingly.

Please be reminded that the groundbreaking for ABS-West will take place on Wednesday, April 3 from 11am-1pm. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held Wednesday, April 17, at its regularly-scheduled time.

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



WEEK OF MARCH 18, 2019

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Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE SHORTS

(Capturing snapshots of happenings in HCDE programs/services)

ABS-West Goes Country



Students from ABS-West experienced the sights and sounds of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo on March 8. After being introduced to various breeds of livestock at the petting zoo, they enjoyed carnival games and rides and ate a traditional rodeo barbeque lunch.

Week of the Young Child to Offer Tours of Head Start Centers



Join Harris County Department of Education Head Start and experience being a child again as it offers tours to its centers. Tours will be Tuesday, April 16 and Thursday, April 18 at 8:30 a.m. A bus will leave from 6300 Irvington Blvd. and return by noon. To RSVP, call Linda Hazelip at 713-696-2188 or email lhazelip@hcde-texas.org. Make children a part of your agenda.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

MARCH 20, 2019

Graham Fletcher: Light a Fire for Problem-Based Learning in Grades 3-6 [6 hours G/T update]

Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS): Elephants and their Young/Mother Opossum and Her babies (6 hours G/T update)

MARCH 21, 2019

Rockin' the Review of Proportionality (Grades 6-8)

MARCH 22, 2019

School Finance Council



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Scholastic Art and Writing Highlights



The idea for “Genesis” popped into the head of a Nimitz High School teen artist as the sun shone on her brother’s face.

That defining moment led to dreams of a trip and future career in New York City for Evieh’bi Jan Nia

Braddy from Aldine Independent School District.

Earlier this semester, the Aldine ISD junior was notified by Harris County Department of Education Scholastic Art & Writing Awards coordinator Andrea Segraves that she had won a regional Gold Key for her reduction print, along with \$1,000 scholarship check for the HCDE Trustees’ Incentive Award.

On March 13, the young artist heard about her Gold Medal for her artwork from the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. As part of the award, she may travel to New York City to get her award at Carnegie Hall.

“I want to know what New York is like,” said Braddy, eyes wide with the possibility. She has applied to attend the Pratt Institute pre-college program in New York City and would like to visit other visual art colleges in the Big Apple.

Like many artists who struggle with their piece to get it just right, Genesis became an old friend to the 17 year old.

“Hardships?” she said, referring to her print project. “I had a good amount.”

Genesis is a reduction print, which includes several hues of red and black with a pearlescent finish. In printmaking, artists must carve away or reduce portions of the printing block of linoleum, imprinting one color at a time at intervals through a baby press. Subject matter is sketched and colors are planned well in advance.

Initially Genesis was smaller and got a perfect score at a visual scholarship competition but didn’t advance to state.

“I made a lot of corrections,” said the wise teen. “I think all these little mistakes added to the charm and makes Genesis more human.”

Quick to acknowledge the support she received for Genesis from her art teacher Jorge Vasquez, she said she learned and benefitted from her teacher who specializes in printmaking as an artist.

“He challenged me and made suggestions that helped,” said the 17 year old.

Aldine ISD Director of Visual Art Michaelann Kelley said she is proud of all the Aldine students and teachers who commit time to Scholastic and all their artistic endeavors.

“It takes a lot of extra work in class and outside of the regular school day,” Kelley said. “Evieh’bi Jan Nia Braddy put in that extra time and creativity to have her voice heard through her artwork.”

Braddy’s dream is to be able to create art and make a living off of doing what she loves.

She challenges other teens to follow in her footsteps.

“When you have the imagination and drive and ideas, there is nothing that you really can’t do,” Braddy said, pointing to her print hanging in an HCDE exhibit at Houston’s Spring Street Studios.

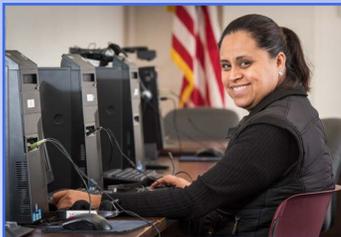
“This came from nothing--and from nothing came this great thing that is my proudest piece so far.”

NOTE: *(Harris County Department of Education is the regional sponsor of The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. This year HCDE is proud to announce the record 96 teens from Harris County, students who advanced to become national Gold and Silver Medalists. Many will attend ceremonies at Carnegie Hall in New York City June 6. View the list of medalists: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/aawuploads/2019/NationalMedalists.3.13.19.pdf>)*

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Adult Learners ‘Learn in Own Space at Own Pace’ through TWC Grant



Native Spanish speaker Liliana Martinez began learning English online six months before she walked into her adult learner classroom at Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) in northeast Houston.

A Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) grant of \$174,798 recently awarded to HCDE Adult Education will give almost 3,000 additional students like her the opportunity and convenience of learning in their own space at their own pace.

The grant expands distance learning opportunities, virtual learning which can be accessed at home, on portable devices or through a public computer connection such as the library. Learning scenarios include using distance learning alone or combining it with traditional face-to-face classes as reinforcement.

Martinez, an immigrant from Michoacán, Mexico, came to America with a green card five years ago. Long work hours kept her from going to school. When she did go to class, she fell asleep due to exhaustion.

“I knew I wanted to study and improve my life, so I needed to learn,” she said.

After her work schedule became less hectic, Martinez contacted HCDE Adult Education and learned about the distance learning program. She decided to try it and committed to studying English online for five hours a week while she was wait-listed to begin free GED classes.

Six months later, Martinez retested for her English comprehension level and was accelerated to the ESL advanced level. Since September, she has been studying for the GED exam and will soon take the high school equivalency tests.

“Distance learning is beneficial because it reduces the obstacles many adults face when going back to school—lack of time, childcare issues, work schedule and no transportation,” said Stephanie Ross, director of HCDE Adult Education. “A great benefit is the study reinforcement

it provides as homework reinforcement for all levels of learning.”

Students use online curricula for multiple levels of ESL, adult basic education for reading and writing, and advanced adult education for GED preparation. Software used includes GED Academy, USA Learns, Burlington English and Sed de Saber.

According to the TWC, students who engage in distance learning along with traditional learning outperform students who solely rely on classroom learning. In 2016-2017, 13,545 adults statewide engaged in distance learning. Of those, 60 percent completed one or more education levels, compared to 40 percent who did not participate.

Despite the favorable statistics, only 15 percent of all adult education students were utilizing distance learning. TWC is working to introduce more adult learners to the benefits of distance learning models.

“We are already seeing the benefit of our students using distance learning,” said Ross. “Our students benefit by using the hybrid model where they learn face-to-face along with distance learning. They also have the option of studying completely online.”

Martinez still likes the option of reinforcing her classroom learning with online learning.

“For me, online is good for learning grammar,” she said. “I need to listen and speak too, so classroom is better for that.”

At 37, Martinez is glad she decided to take advantage of online learning before entering the classroom

“You ask me why now?” she said. “I say, why not.”

HCDE Adult Education provides academic and workforce learning opportunities for adults at more than 50 community locations throughout greater Houston from highly qualified teachers, including classes in ESL, adult basic education and GED test preparation. Workforce classes include study areas such as medical assistant, pipefitting and construction. Classes are free on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

96 HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Teens Earn National Bragging Rights at Carnegie Hall 2 Artists Gain Top Honors with \$10,000 Scholarships



Harris County teen artists and writers in grades 7-12 received a record-breaking 96 national Scholastic Art & Writing Medals and two of the 16 top, national

\$10,000 scholarship honors from the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artist & Writers. View the list: <https://bit.ly/2TOhoMj>.

“As the regional sponsor of Scholastic Art & Writing, Harris County Department of Education is proud of the students and teachers who share their talent and passion through this national platform,” said Andrea Segraves, HCDE’s Scholastic Art & Writing Regional Affiliate coordinator. “It’s an incredible level of talent and dedication as we report a 57 percent increase in national Medals this year and two, \$10,000 high school senior scholarship recipients.”

The two seniors named by the Alliance to each receive \$10,000 scholarships are artist Taylor Powers of Cypress Woods High School in Cy-Fair Independent



Taylor Powers



Divjot Walla

School District and writer Divjot Walla of Glenda Dawson High School in Pearland Independent School District. The Gold Medal Portfolio is the Alliance’s highest honor. Powers’ sponsoring teacher is Tina Fox and Walla’s sponsoring teacher is Susan Henson.

Two students gained American Visions and Voices awards, two best of class, Gold Medal distinctions for the region. They are student Axel Maldonado (sponsoring teacher Victor Raygoza), American Visions awardee from Sam Rayburn High School in Pasadena Independent School District, and student Kahani Malhotra (sponsoring teacher Diane Fanning), American Voices Medalist from the Village School.

This year, 2,700 teens received national recognition from the Alliance and earned the opportunity to attend the national ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City on June 6. In 2019, 340,000 art and writing entries in 29 categories were judged which were submitted by students through their teachers in every state in the nation.

“We celebrate the creativity of our Harris County students and the dedication of their mentoring teachers,” said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert, Jr.

Since 1923, the Awards have recognized the creative promise of artists like Andy Warhol, Kay WalkingStick, Sylvia Plath, Stephen King, Richard Avedon and Zac Posen.

Sharing the national limelight are students from Houston, Tomball, Klein, Katy, Alief, Galena Park, Pearland, Spring, Spring Branch, Cy-Fair, Pasadena and Aldine independent school districts. Private school recipients are from St. John’s School, the Village School, Episcopal High School, Duchesne Academy, River Oaks Baptist, St. Francis Episcopal Day School, Awty International, Kinkaid School, St. Agnes Academy and Emery Weiner School.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

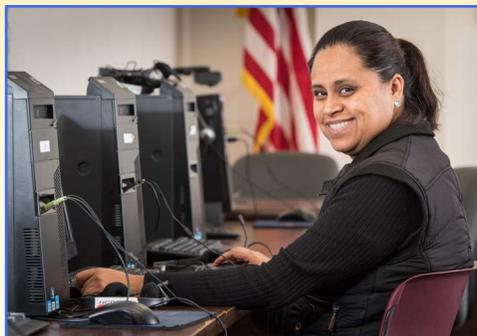
Instructional Management

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; and

I am pleased to report that our HCDE Adult Learners are 'learning in own space at own pace' through a Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) grant. This worthwhile endeavor will allow our adult learners to improve their quality of life at their own pace.

The TWC grant of \$174,798 was recently awarded to HCDE's Adult



Education division and makes allowances for 3,000 additional students.

Expanding distance learning opportunities and virtual learning can be accessed at home, from mobile devices, or through public computer access like in a library.

According to the TWC, students who engage in distance learning along with traditional learning outperform students who solely rely on classroom learning. In 2016-2017, 13,545 adults statewide engaged in distance learning. Of those, 60 percent completed one or more education levels, compared to 40 percent who did not participate.

Through this grant, I am striving to meet your expectation of me to identify learning needs of students and develop a process that ensures that each student's learning goals are met or exceeded and investigate best practices for student achievement and utilize effective practices that maximize achievement of student potential within HCDE schools.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Josh Flynn

Vice President

George Moore

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

ABS-West Groundbreaking

Wednesday, April 3, 2019
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

April Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

