



Of Note...

The stage just literally expanded globally as our CASE Debates students recently debated with students from Nigeria and Canada and earned top honors. CASE Debates students shared a worldly stage at the 2nd Annual Bluebonnet World Schools International Debate Tournament this month in Spring. In its second year, the debate program continues to amaze me as our students' debate skills grow stealthier and their confidence soars. Our teams also continue to be champions. Thank you for your continued support of the program which grows critical thinking skills and instills confidence for practically any career sector these high school students choose.

This May, calendars are becoming full as our schools, programs and services plan their end-of-year graduations, competitions, awards ceremonies and celebrations. Where should I begin as we count down the remaining school days?

My week included multiple meetings, including Executive Leadership Team (ELT), IMPACT Board Training and numerous internal meetings. At our Tuesday Leadership Team Meeting, we were reminded of end-of-school dates of May 24 for Head Start and June 6 for Special Schools. Flex hours for employees begin June 10, and Convocation 2019-2020 is set for Aug. 23.

I attended the Head Start Community Partner Appreciation Luncheon on May 8 as approximately 26 community partners were honored. On a bitter-sweet note, I also read one last time as SuperMENTor with my graduating class of preschool students at Humble Head Start.

Next week I begin a busy week planning with ELT and attend regular weekly meetings. Monday evening I'm excited to celebrate with Special Schools as we name the Teacher of the Year and Educational Aide of the Year from six finalists from AB School East and West, Fortis Academy and Highpoint School. We hope that you will attend this emotion-charged hour from 6-7 p.m. here at Irvington.

On Friday, May 17 at 12:30 p.m., we celebrate the culmination of afterschool lessons with drones as CASE for Kids and the Education Foundation of Harris County host the Ecobot Drone Competition with middle school students at NASA's Space Center. The following day, we honor Adult Education graduates on Saturday at 11 a.m., which is another inspiring event.

I look forward to seeing you next week at our Wednesday, May 15, 2019 board meeting. By then, I'm sure I will have many inspiring stories to tell from our division events. Safe travels through our forecasted stormy weekend!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

HCDE Board Meeting—Wednesday, May 15, 2019

WEEK OF MAY 6, 2019

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Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Head Start Community Partners Celebrated



HCDE Head Start celebrated its community partners May 8 at the annual Community Partners Luncheon, held at 6300

Irvington Blvd. About 50 people, representing 26 partners, were in attendance. Bank of Texas was honored as the 2018-19 Outstanding Partner Award, and the 2018-19 Outstanding Center Partner Award went to Journey of Faith Church in Humble.

“Head Start is enriched by the numerous and diverse partnerships it has to address the needs of students and families we serve,” HCDE



Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock said. “We celebrate these successful relationships through this event, from private funders to literacy enrichment partners to early childhood partners to SuperMENTor volunteers.”

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

MAY 8, 2019

Health and Fitness Month Yoga (at Irvington)

MAY 9, 2019

HCDE Superintendent Certification Institute Information Webinar

Health and Fitness Month Yoga (at NPO)

Public funds Investment Training - School Finance Council

MAY 10, 2019

Public funds Investment Training - School Finance Council



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Teacher of Year Celebration Planned for May 13



*Kenneth Davis,
AB School East*



*Jeffrey Sam,
AB School West*



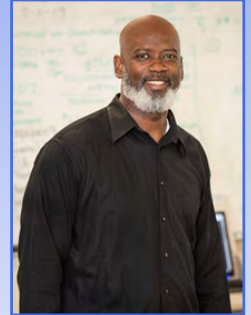
*Zachary Wikstrom,
Fortis Academy*



*Ashley Johnson,
Highpoint School*



*Alejandra Garza,
AB School West*



*Byron Clay,
AB School East*

Finalists for “Teacher of the Year” as well as “Educational Aide of the Year” have been named at Harris County Department of Education’s four Special Schools. The two honorees will be named on May 13 from 6-7 p.m. at HCDE, 6300 Irvington Blvd.

The four HCDE schools provide three specialized education programs and feature individualized learning and small-group instruction in highly structured classes. Programs are for students with intellectual, developmental or behavioral disorders; troubled or adjudicated youth; and recovering youth.

Educator nominations:

Kenneth Davis, *nominee from Academic and Behavior School East*

Jeffrey Sam, *nominee from Academic and Behavior School West*

Zachary Wikstrom, *nominee from Fortis Academy*

Ashley Johnson, *nominee from Highpoint School*

Educational aide nominations:

Alejandra Garza, *nominee from Academic and Behavior School West*

Byron Clay, *nominee from Academic and Behavior School East*

“We’re very proud of all our educators who work extremely hard with our special populations students,” HCDE Superintendent James Colbert said. “We celebrate all their successes, and this event gives us pause to think about all they accomplish on behalf of the children of greater Harris County.”



Fortis Academy Featured on KTRK Channel 13

Fortis Academy is featured in a news story with KTRK Channel 13. The story focuses on the culinary program at the school and provides a link to the Fortis website page. View the story:

<https://abc13.com/education/high-schools-culinary-class-has-special-meaning-for-students/5268794/>

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids End-of-Year Celebration Highlights Successes of Afterschool in 2019



CASE for Kids hosted its end-of-year celebration on May 1 and honored afterschool providers and leaders throughout Houston.

Fox 26 anchor Kaitlin Monte was emcee at the event.

Entertainment was provided by CASE for Kids afterschool vendor Greg Ruhe with Puppet Pizzazz. City of Houston Director of Education Initiatives Juliet Stipeche inspired the crowd by talking about investing in youth.

CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers gave the state of afterschool address. She spoke of progress and the work ahead.

“This year alone, we have a combined half-million hours of connecting kids to caring adults this year,” Caruthers said. “The work is not over. Here’s to 20 more years.”

Monte, who spent her childhood in afterschool programs, congratulated afterschool front-line staff for the work they had completed throughout the year.



“This is the village that we are looking at that will help raise the children that will continue to make Houston and Harris County a wonderful place,” Monte said.

CASE for Kids’ Caruthers presented the Director’s Award to Toni Candis for her successful work with coordinating CASE Debates. The award also recognized Houston Urban Debate League staff for their tireless work in helping coordinate the program.

The following Spirit of Excellence Afterschool Awards were given out during the celebration:

Director’s Award: Toni Candis, CASE for Kids, CASE Debates coordinator in collaboration with Houston Urban Debate League

Outstanding Leadership by an Afterschool Site Coordinator: Barbara Shelby Roberts, Madison High School, Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Cycle 10

Outstanding Achievement by an Afterschool Frontline Staff Member: Bradley Deanda, South Houston Intermediate, Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers Cycle 9

Outstanding Leadership by an Afterschool Provider Supervisor: Amanda Rhinehart, Artist Boat

Outstanding Achievement by an Afterschool Provider Frontline Staff Member: Priya Klein of Urban Harvest

Outstanding Achievement by an Afterschool Provider Frontline Staff Member: Vickie Jennings with Houston Tennis Association

Community Connection Champion: CollegeCommunityCareer

Innovation Practices Champion: Jason Hammond, Children’s Museum of Houston - A’STEAM

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

World Debate Gets Worldlier as CASE Debates Students Vie for Titles at 2nd Annual Bluebonnet World Tourney



World Debate just got worldlier as CASE Debates students participated in the 2nd Annual Bluebonnet World Schools International Debate

Tournament in April at Grand Oaks High School, in Spring, Texas. Teens debated with youth from countries of afar such as Nigeria and Canada.

World Debate is a dynamic format combining “prepared” topics with “impromptu” topics, encouraging debaters to focus on specific issues rather than debate theory or procedural arguments. This highly interactive style of debate allows debaters to engage each other, even

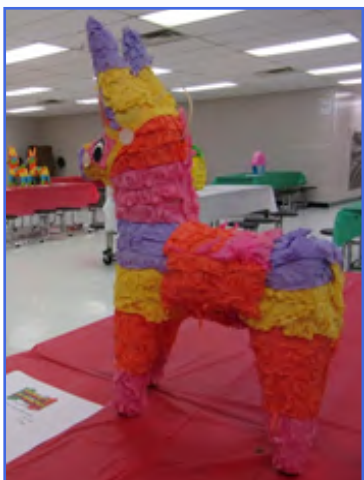
during speeches. This challenging format requires good teamwork and in-depth quality argumentation.

Participating in the debate tournament were CASE Debates students from Kerr High School, Alief High School, Alief ISD. Kerr students won third place in the contest.



Spring Early College Academy from Spring ISD also participated, and student Ahmad Howard brought home 4th place for “best speaker.”

ABS West Commemorates Cinco de Mayo



Academic and Behavior School West students and staff recognized Cinco de Mayo at an assembly this month and discussed the origins of the holiday. Students learned that the holiday commemorates the date of the Mexican army’s 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War.

The May 5 holiday is also known as Battle of Puebla Day. While it is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico, in the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a commemoration of Mexican culture and heritage, particularly in areas with large Mexican-American populations. The history, music, food and culture were shared with students, family and staff during the AB School West celebratory event.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Hosting Cybersecurity Career Connection Conference for Students, Educators May 15



The cybersecurity profession is growing as technology evolves and becomes a fabric of society,

especially with the younger generation. Harris County Department of Education is hosting the 2019 Cybersecurity Career Connection Conference for local educators and students May 15.

“When it comes to students and what’s available, we want to bring in colleges and professionals in the field so they can learn more specific skills to be successful,” Colina Poullard, HCDE Director of Digital Education and Innovation, said.

She said this field is new to the career and technical education classes in schools.

“This is a new pathway being offered in high school and teachers need additional ways to focus on in this new subject,” Poullard said.

Students will get the chance to meet with industry professionals such as an FBI agent and IT professional, colleges and universities including Houston Baptist University and University of

Houston. Teachers will learn how to sharpen their craft and give their students better insight and instruction on becoming a cybersecurity professional.

Attendees will have the chance to ask questions to four industry professionals such as what is needed to get into the profession and what pathway they took in school.

The conference will be at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, TX 77022, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with registration beginning at 8 a.m.

Cost to attend is \$25 for teachers and \$10 for students. Teachers who bring 25 students are free. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Make sure to register by Tuesday, May 14. Payments will be taken at the door on Wednesday, May 15. Register online at <https://bit.ly/2KV499f>.

For more information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Colina Poullard at cpoullard@hcde-texas.org.

View promo videos: <https://youtu.be/gf-Nif9nyhs> and <https://youtu.be/xmhiK4Ceifl>

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



media outlets. This year the program is expanded to include a teaching assistant category.

The event celebrates excellence and allows us to express how much we treasure our teachers. As you know, our teachers work extremely hard to make a difference in our students' lives.

When the Teacher of the Year and Education Aide of the Year are announced, we will share their innovative practices and unique perspectives on the profession with other employees. This allows for shared resources and positive interactions.

By supporting 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 personal contact with many of the teachers I might not otherwise meet.



I support all our HCDE employees, but I think it's particularly important to let our teachers know how much we value them during Teacher Appreciation Month.

Our 2nd annual Teacher of the Year celebration celebrates the accomplishments of nominees from each of our four schools. We invite staff to the big reveal on May 13 and broadcast the results through social

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Josh Flynn

Vice President

George Moore

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

May Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

