



## Of Note...

The summer season is all about employees as a Superintendent, with budget preparation a whirlwind of activities during the peak of hiring season. As we continued with our four-day flex schedule this week, we were knee-deep in employment activities. With your approval of the new AB East principal last week at the board meeting, Ms. Trevino-Jones started with HCDE Monday. We are excited to welcome Ms. Jones to HCDE and I look forward to seeing how AB East flourishes under her leadership. We are also actively recruiting teachers and staff for our special schools and programs, engaging with interested applicants digitally as well as in person.



Last week we held a special job fair for Head Start staff, with our Human Resources employees working diligently to fill teacher, teaching assistant and cook positions at various Head Start centers across the county. Historically, these positions have been tough to fill and as I mentioned, hiring is a fiercely competitive topic in Harris County education circles.



With the recent school finance legislation, we have seen double digit raises for teachers around the county. Thank you for your continued support of our plans to offer competitive salaries and benefits to all HCDE employees so we can be sure to retain the best and brightest minds to serve our students and client districts. I look forward to presenting you with a balanced budget that supports this philosophy at the board meeting next month.

I started the week at the UT/TASA conference in Austin, immersing myself in discussions about how to balance educational leadership with personal wellness. I was fascinated by the different components of corporate wellness programs and I am looking into how we can bring this type of benefit to HCDE for our employees. I am an advocate of every employee finding their personal work/life balance and I support this mindset with not only our leadership team, but our rank and file employees as well. The more we can help our employees to assimilate their work into the balance of their lives, the more productive and effective we will be as an organization. Happy, healthy employees equates to positive outcomes for HCDE!

WEEK OF JUNE 24, 2019

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I returned to HCDE on Wednesday with several internal meetings including a tour of our North Post Oak location and current AB West campus with Trustee Cantu. On Friday, Mr. Parker, Dr. Mays, Dr. Moten and I travel to Boston for the Association of Recovery Schools conference. Here, we will present The Story of Fortis Academy, giving insight into the school and how we support students academically, socially and behaviorally in a sober environment. I am excited to share HCDE's pioneering work with students with rehabilitation and recovery in Harris County as well as learning from our counterparts across the nation.

Next week we return to a regular schedule of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, as we are closed July 4-5 for the Independence Day holiday. **The Connector** will be on hiatus this week as well, and will resume with the summer flex schedule the week of July 8.

I hope your weekend and July 4th holiday are enjoyable and that you are able to spend time with family and friends celebrating our pride in the birth of our nation.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**HCDE Board Meeting—Wednesday, July 17, 2019**

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Trevino-Jones Named Principal at Harris County Department of Education Academic and Behavior School East



Donna Trevino-Jones is the new principal of Academic and Behavior School East (ABS East) at Harris County Department of Education. As mother to two college graduates, the Conroe resident believes in the

power of education in supplying opportunity.

“All students should have choices to pursue their passion, and education provides that access,” she said.

In joining Academic and Behavior School East, Trevino-Jones said she is eager to be part of the school’s progressive, dedicated team. ABS East is a school in southeast Houston for students with emotional and intellectual challenges, including

autism. Students are served through contracts with their school district. Classes are small, with a low, student-to-teacher ratio. A behavior specialist and academic team implement a growth plan for each ABS student, with the goal for students to return to their home school districts to be successful in their school environment.

Trevino-Jones earned a Bachelor of Arts from Southern Methodist University, a Master of Science from Texas A&M-Commerce and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree. Most recently she served as principal of Beth Anderson Elementary in Arlington ISD. Throughout her school leadership career, she has inspired both students and staff through her roles as principal, assistant principal and dean in Spring, Dallas and Pflugerville ISDs.



### KIAH 39 Features Kids’ Day at Hobby Center as Summer Learning Opportunity

Channel 39 KIAH TV came out to Kids’ Day at Hobby Center with CASE for Kids to share some good news about summer learning through fine arts. Students, performing and visual artists and CASE for Kids staff were

interviewed. View the video which aired on “Morning Dose News” June 20. <https://youtu.be/kBIAXK2BGj0>



# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Summer Enrichment with CASE for Kids Prevents Summer Slide



*Brazilian capoeira classes combine martial arts, dance and music.*

In a break from school-year routine, 150 kids enrolled in summer enrichment programs with CASE for Kids are dancing, singing, acting, drumming and creating poetry. Little do they know while they have fun, they are preventing “summer slide” or summer learning loss.

Over the summer, students typically lose one month of school-year learning, and declines get worse the higher the grade level, according to “Review of Educational Research.”

Summer learning programs lessen the effects of summer slide and help teachers start the school year off with less reviewing.

CASE for Kids has hosted a program called Kids’ Day at Hobby Center for approximately 10 years. Students in elementary through high school are grouped with performing and visual artists, who are also known as afterschool service providers. The four-week program culminates with a performance at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts.

“Summer learning opportunities are important because it allows students to explore interests they don’t get to pursue during the regular school day, especially fine arts curriculum,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for CASE for Kids.

The service providers who may be professional actors, singers or dancers weave literacy and numeracy inside of their lessons. Step counts in dance provide opportunity for math sequencing. A video artist includes history in her video projects so that young videographers are doing research. Reading, discipline and memorization are interwoven in most of the fine arts projects.

“Our job is to find the providers that can ignite the passion in the kids while providing high-quality content,” Thompson-Caruthers said.

Chris Cortez, founder of Houston Healthy Hip-Hop, found his passion in afterschool as an introvert. When he found his

purpose, his grades began to climb.

“It helped me break out of my shell,” Cortez said.

Thompson-Caruthers said another benefit of summer enrichment and fine arts is the social-emotional learning component. Today’s school schedule provides less time for self-expression, voicing opinion or creating personal relationships to share problems and find solutions.



*Puppeteer Greg Ruhe works with elementary students.*

For Asher Hill, who says he is growing up in a tough neighborhood, participating in a poetry writing class gave him the chance to reflect on who he is and what he can become.

“I use my poetry to explain my identity,” he said.

Hip-hop performer Jackelin Miche from Baker-Ripley Charter School said her summer class in hip-hop has inspired her to take up dance as her new hobby.

“I get to make new friends, hang out with my current friends and have lots of fun,” she said. “I do activities I wouldn’t normally get to do when I might just be sitting around at home.”

Thompson-Caruthers assures skeptics that fine arts teaches kids to focus and pay attention and gets them to think about consequences. Without knowing your lines, you might not land the lead role in the school play. Without practice steps, you can’t build your dance progression.

“The key is to embed the learning into activities kids are passionate about, so they don’t even know they are working on higher-order thinking,” she said.

*(National Summer Learning Week is celebrated July 8-13 to advocate the important of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer and ensuring they return to school in the fall, ready to succeed. CASE for Kids provides resources and activities to promote the week-long awareness campaign at [www.hcde-texas.org/after-school](http://www.hcde-texas.org/after-school).*

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### 5 Tips for Financial Success for Teens: Financial Math Training



Teens get help with financial matters early-on through a math course now being offered through many Texas high schools. “Financial

Mathematics” is a course about personal money management. Students apply critical-thinking skills to analyze personal financial decisions based on current and projected economic factors.

The course was established for students grades 10-12 with a prerequisite requirement of algebra I. Harris County Department of Education Math Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan teamed with curriculum writer, presenter and “Mathematics of Money” co-author Arthur Howard to offer training to Texas high school teachers this June. Shanahan also worked on the curriculum with the Texas Education Agency through the scope-and-sequence committee.

The Texas Financial Education Endowment provided HCDE’s Teaching and Learning Center with a \$19,000 grant to train high school math, social studies and career and technical educators to implement the state’s “Financial Mathematics” course. For more information, email [nshanahan@hcde-texas.org](mailto:nshanahan@hcde-texas.org).

### 5 Tips for a Healthy Financial Future:

- 1. Train for success:** Get a part-time job. If you plan to go to college, apply for scholarships and grants and get an associate degree and transfer. Get an education that gets you a job.
- 2. Be the employee everybody wants:** Be willing to take an internship. Show up early every day and be willing to stay late. Three requests from employers—take time to study how your company works; learn to work well with others; and be a pioneer.
- 3. Live within your means:** Don’t finance your lifestyle on credit. Buy what you need, not what you want. Build up an emergency fund. Start saving now for your home down-payment.
- 4. Spend like this “is” a tomorrow.** Budget, making savings a priority. Pay as little withholding as you can. Use IRAs and take advantage of employer matching.
- 5. Protect your love ones:** Buy a burial policy when young, and term-life later. Save to replace you. Plan for your children’s education.

*(Financial tips provided by financial expert and author Arthur Howard.)*

**NO WORKSHOPS OR EVENTS WILL BE HELD  
NEXT WEEK DUE TO THE JULY 4TH HOLIDAY**

# Opportunity

## PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

### Bomb Threat Management Planning Workshop Held June 25



Bomb Threat Management Planning was provided to several dozen school leaders and school safety experts through the Department

of Homeland Security June 25 in collaboration with the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. Attendees came from public schools, nonprofits, colleges, sports organizations, law enforcement agencies and the entertainment industry.

In the event of a bomb threat, safety experts from the FBI urged participants to use collaborative planning before law enforcement or bomb squad teams arrive on

school property. A checklist/procedure tool was provided to attendees with steps to take if the threat came by phone or email. The list includes notations for time the threat was received via phone and when the caller hung up. Other details to be chronicled could be the known location of the bomb; type of bomb; and time caller said it would be detonated. Officials urged school leaders to note as many details as possible while awaiting the arrival of the bomb squad.

The bomb threat checklist will be an important and effective tool for a bomb threat management plan which each school district should have in place, said FBI officials. Another bomb threat workshop will be offered July 23 which examines types of improvised explosive devices.

To register, go to <https://bit.ly/2ZRwzmX>.

### Over 100 Applicants Show Up for Head Start Job Fair, Including Cooks



With a new school year fast approaching, the Harris County Head Start staff is busy searching for

individuals who have a passion for working with young children.

Head Start held a job interview fair Thursday, June 20 with 118 applicants showing up to interview for positions such as teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks.

Desire Robinson, who is a cook applicant, was searching online and came across the job posting

for the cook position on the Indeed website. After she filled out her application, she received a call about an interview.

“My family owned a catering company when I was growing up, so I was always around cooking,” she said. “I have been a cook before applying here with KIPP Public Schools, so I love working with kids and cooking for them.”

If hired, her goals would be to make everyone happy and have the chance to advance in her cooking career.

# Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

## Instructional Management, Personnel Management and Community Relations

In relation to the Board's expectations of me to:

- **Ensure the goals and objectives form the basis of curricular decision-making and instruction and communicates expectations for student achievement.**
- **Ensure that the system for recruiting and selection results in personnel recommendations based on defined needs, goals, priorities and candidate credentials/ qualifications.**
- **Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and community.**
- **Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.**



Last week more than 100 students enrolled in CASE for Kids summer enrichment programs came together to show off their artistic endeavors. By applying higher-order learning through established lessons which integrate numeracy and literacy, summer learning enhances school-year progress.

In addition, community performing and visual art nonprofits shared a wealth of

knowledge as disadvantaged students were introduced to the fine arts.

Through our public relations efforts with Channel 39, the public became aware of this 10-year program run by the Department which pairs artists with students to promote summer learning.



Head Start recruited teachers, administrative staff and cooks last week through the efforts of Human Resources and our Communications teams. Approximately 118 candidates attended the job fair. In fact, we had a record number of cook applicants apply, a position which has been traditionally difficult to fill.



**By remaining engaged in the instructional management process with programs like Kids' Days with CASE for Kids, I am working to meet your goal to identify the learning needs of students and develop a process that ensures that students' learning goals are met or exceeded. This program also helped the Department maintain visibility in the community through public relations efforts. Finally, by actively recruiting many qualified candidates for Head Start positions, I am helping the division meet and exceed federal standards for recruiting candidates to carry out the Head Start mission.**

## HCDE BOARD

### **Board President**

Josh Flynn

### **Vice President**

George Moore

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### **July Board Meeting**

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

