



Of Note...

Next week is National Learning Week and it comes just in time for staff to flip roles and become the students. Summer is a great time for employees to engage in professional development activities while strengthening skills and broadening horizons in areas that support our client districts, students and staff.

Last week, I traveled to Boston with several administrators to present “The Story of Fortis Academy” at the National Association of Recovery Schools annual conference. This was an outstanding learning opportunity for our team as we engaged with administrators from recovery high schools around the country as well as those involved in higher education recovery efforts.

Our presentation was well attended and participants were intrigued with our model and level of success in the first year. Andrew Burki, Chief Public Policy Officer at the Hanley Foundation Center for Philanthropy in Florida noted that Fortis is one of the first and only well-funded public recovery high schools in the country.

“To describe Fortis Academy as simply impressive would be an understatement,” he said in an email to myself, Mr. Parker and Dr. Moten inviting HCDE to participate in a national recovery school panel at Ohio State University. “What they are doing is truly revolutionary and should be viewed as the groundwork for national model state drug laws surrounding recovery high schools.”

As I discussed the recovery school industry with fellow educators and administrators from around the country, I learned that the average recovery school has between 5 and 10 students and most are privately funded or partner with charter schools. Fortis Academy continues to break the mold and blaze a trail in terms of supporting students from more than two dozen districts in a public school environment. I am proud of the success Fortis has had this year and I look forward to continuing to be pioneers in the educational recovery arena.

The theme of professional development extended beyond the administrative offices this month with probation officers from the Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Program enhancing their knowledge at a training for restorative practices, hosted by HCDE’s Center for Safe and Secure Schools. The culture-based philosophy for transforming a school continues to gain steam and provide a solid foundation for educators to support students and enhance school safety. Next week, science teachers will explore partnerships with science business leaders as a means of supporting relevancy in the classroom at HCDE’s workshop, Science Teachers and Industry: Learning about Chemicals and the Environment.

I started the week with my Executive Leadership Team where we debriefed lessons learned from the Boston conference and discussed our upcoming planning retreat for the new school year. The rest of the week was filled with internal meetings along with extensive work on staff evaluations and planning for the annual convocation in August.

I look forward to seeing you next week for the budget workshop and board meeting. Have a restful weekend.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

HCDE Board Meeting—Wednesday, July 17, 2019

WEEK OF JULY 8, 2019

IN THIS ISSUE

2 *Fortis Team Presents at Association of Recovery Schools Conference*

3 *CSSS Trains Harris County Juvenile Probation Officers in Restorative Justice*

5 *Students Learn About Houston-Area Colleges through Afterschool Program*

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Fortis Team Presentation at Association of Recovery Schools Conference Brings Inquiries, Approval from Recovery Colleagues



A team from Fortis Academy presented at the National Recovery Schools Conference and the National Collegiate

Recovery Conference in Boston last week. The Association of Recovery Schools has hosted the conference for 18 years, and this year's conference gathered educators and recovery professionals from around the nation.

The presentation entitled "A Journey in Public School Recovery" was provided by James Colbert, superintendent; Jonathan Parker, assistant superintendent; Dr. Anthony Mays, senior director; Dr. Anthony Moten, principal; and Beverly Dotson, licensed chemical dependency counselor and program director. Attendees from recovery schools in Nevada, Minnesota, Tennessee and Texas stayed for a discussion following the presentation, inquiring about therapy at Fortis and requesting a visit to tour the school.

Andrew Burki, chief public policy officer for the Hanley Foundation, a nonprofit formed to change the face of addiction, said this about the presentation:



"To describe Fortis Academy as simply impressive would be an understatement. What they are doing is truly revolutionary and should be viewed as the groundwork for national model state drug laws surrounding recovery high schools. It is my opinion that having one of them on this panel and a presence at the conference is of the utmost importance to the recovery high school space."

An average 10-15 attended conference sessions, but the Fortis presentation attracted approximately 25 attendees. Participants were interested in topics ranging from the therapeutic component of Fortis to the school's connections in a urban public school environment. Later, Colbert was invited to serve on the panel of "Academic Continuums of Care" at Ohio State University.

HCDE Adult Education English Language Civics Class Tours Citizenship and Immigration Offices



Students enrolled in the English language civics class at the Baker Ripley community center in Pasadena took a field trip to U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services last month. Community relations officer Rosa Ramirez provided a tour of immigration offices and helped ease students' anxieties by providing an overview of how the interview process works.

Nine of the students attending the tour have pending U.S. citizenship interviews, and one student has a scheduled interview. Teacher Diana Bella accompanied her students on the tour and helped answer questions about the test.

The rigorous English language civics classes at HCDE help prepare students for the U.S. Citizenship Test. Students must learn basic English conversation, plus reading and writing skills while studying the U.S. Constitution and history. The popular, free classes fill quickly. To enroll, students must have a social security card and resident alien status.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

CSSS Trains Harris County Juvenile Probation Officers in Restorative Justice



More than 25 employees from the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program attended a two-day

training with Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools about disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

HCJPD Education Specialist Beverly Nolan said in order to provide optimal resources to their youth based on best practices, they are constantly searching for programs to fit their unique setting.

"The Restorative Practice program based on the Circle Forward Concept is one of those programs," she said. "It will allow us to respond to challenging behavior in a non-invasive, yet redirecting way."

The social-emotional component allows for building perspective and helps the youth understand the problem and its impact by encouraging them to voice their needs.



These county employees will use it as a "community circle" to build foundational relationships; a "responsive circle" when something is happening to respond to the behavior; and a "restorative circle" when harm has been done to someone to repair the harm.

Officials with the HCJPD found the training at HCDE as they researched other juvenile justice departments around the nation which might be using the restorative model. They called the center.



"After meeting with Julia Andrews about the program, we decided to have a customized training for our HCJPD staff," Nolan said.

Later, HCJPD officials found out that a school in New Orleans was using the restorative justice program and after a site visit decided this was a program they needed to implement.

Nolan said she sees numerous benefits coming out of having this program implemented at HCJPD such as creating a positive school climate through the development of community norms and guidelines.

"This will help youth deal with triggers, hurts and anger in a safe space through the social emotional component," she said. "This will also help our staff by building positive working relationships and helping them sustain in a difficult working environment. And finally, the development of youth-led and peer-to-peer circles to help youth focus on a positive vision for their future."

For more information about the Restorative Practice program, visit the Center for Safe and Secure School website at <https://hcde-texas.org/safe-and-secure-schools/> or email Julia Andrews at jandrews@hcde-texas.org.

NEXT WEEK'S EVENTS

JULY 15, 2019

HCDE Superintendent Certification Institute
Information Webinar

JULY 18, 2019

HCDE Superintendent Certification Institute
Information Webinar

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

La Porte Science Teacher Receives \$2,500 Texas Chemical Council Scholarship at Science Teachers and Industry Workshop at HCDE



La Porte ISD teacher Eowyn Johnson is passionate about sharing her knowledge on chemistry and the environment. This month she is recognized by the Texas Chemical Council for her dedication as she receives the \$2,500 Eugene Chiappetta Chemistry and Environment Teaching Award.

The award is presented at the Science Teachers and Industry: Learning about Chemicals and the Environment Workshop at Harris County Department of Education July 15-18.

The 19-year high school science teacher created a 30-minute lesson plan via video as an entry for the competition and will share it at the conference. The video provides a lesson in presenting the pros and cons of the Gulf Coast petrochemical industry. Students compiled research and argued on both sides.

“The lesson Johnson presented illustrates her dedication to making science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, come alive for teens,” said HCDE Science Curriculum Director Lisa Felske.

Johnson, a La Porte High chemistry teacher who now works in an instructional technology support position in

the district, participated in the workshop last year, one of the requirements for the award. She says it increased her knowledge about career opportunities in the petrochemical field and allowed her to share opportunities with her students.

“After attending the workshop, I felt I did a better job introducing some of the topics we covered with less bias,” she said.

Some of those chemistry class topics included hydraulic fracturing, roadways and traffic problems in Houston, the Houston Ship Channel and energy poverty.

“In turn, this helped their (student) research and critical thinking skills, and I think they are more open-minded individuals than when they entered the class,” Johnson said.

HCDE has collaborated with the Texas Chemical Council to host the workshop for area science teachers for 11 years. The council provides the workshop to give teachers a better understanding of the chemical industry and Houston-area chemical plants. The council pays teacher tuition for the classes which include field trips to petrochemical plants and a tour of the Houston Ship Channel.

For information about future workshops to be held at HCDE, email lfelske@hcde-texas.org.



Food Trucks Boost Morale, Provide Convenience and Novelty

Employees enjoyed a variety of food trucks choices as vendors visited staff at 6300 Irvington this week for Head Start staff training in the conference center. The trucks are a timesaver to employees and management and offer convenience and novelty. Employees also enjoy networking with coworkers, a practice which

builds organizational morale. Trucks are ordered through a trusted app, and cuisine selections included seafood, sandwiches and creole food.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Highpoint Staff Gain Training in Creating ‘Love and Logic’ Classrooms for Positive Behavior Management Techniques



Classroom and Home: Real Life Solutions for Real Life Problems" Conference.

The conference held in Colorado in June was led by Charles Fay, Ph.D. and Jim Fay, co-founders of Love and Logic and focused on providing loving discipline that builds mutual respect and self-control. The sessions specifically “hone in” on applying Love and Logic concepts to youth with serious trauma, as well as developmental challenges.

Principal Marion Cooksey and Schools Senior Director Dr. Anthony Mays called the conference life changing. Students at Highpoint are troubled youth, and Love and Logic teaches building mutual respect and self-control. The attending staff said the practices they learned can be used on day one as they begin the new school year.

Staff members from Highpoint gained skills in behavior management and building positive relationships with students at the “Love and Logic for the

The Love and Logic co-founders said they focused on trauma in children because more educators requested training on dealing with kids with extreme trauma and the associated behaviors.

Several concepts included:

- How to build the types of relationships and routines that save kids and save your sanity.
- Steps for creating a discipline plan that empowers students to solve problems and exercise self-control.
- How to avoid getting pulled into exhausting battles over work completion.

“Love and Logic concepts are common-sense ideas which are easy to use,” said Cooksey.



Staff attending this year’s conference included Mays, Cooksey, assistant principal Courtney Water, assistant principal Mercedes Love, transition specialist Cynthia Horn and teacher Remika Bowie.

Students Learn About Houston-Area Colleges through Afterschool Program



Who was the first African-American female to serve in the Texas Senate and has a building named after her on the Texas Southern University campus? What is Hofheinz Pavilion now named?

These are some of the questions students from the Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning

Center had to answer during The Amazing Race: College and Career Exploration June 27. This event was designed as a culminating activity for students from Aldine, Humble, Sheldon and Spring ISDs to see and learn more about local colleges and universities. Students engaged in an interactive and fun experience by taking virtual and actual college tours.

Despite the heat, the students said they enjoyed the chance to visit many colleges and riding the METRORail.

“I enjoyed being able to visit many of the colleges in Houston and see what they have to offer,” said Cryshelle Johnson, a student from Bammel Middle School.

The event is a collaboration between CASE for Kids, Houston Community College, Texas Southern University, University of Houston Main Campus and University of Houston-Downtown.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development

In an effort to ensure that I meet the Board's expectations of me as it relates to the following elements of performance:

- **Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness; and**
- **Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration.**

So much professional development is accomplished during the summer months. This past week was no exception.

Probation officers throughout Harris County joined the Center for



Safe and Secure Schools for training in Restorative Practices to deter the school to prison pipeline. This is a huge step as officers move towards meaningful dialogue to deter criminal behavior.

Science teachers meet next week as part of a



free training provided by the chemical industry so that teachers and students

have a better understanding of career opportunities along the Houston Ship Channel. The workshop also examines environmental issues.

A third initiative involves our English language learners through Adult Education. They were provided a tour of Citizenship and Immigration Services. The tour helped ease anxieties and assist students in understanding the process, which includes orally answering some of the 100 interview questions about the constitution.

In addition, Head Start staff attended training this week to begin the new school year. We continue to seek quality materials and methods to train our staff to serve Head Start students and their families. We also adhere to federal mandates and guidelines required by our grant to serve students in our 15 centers.

By ensuring that HCDE continues to offer these type of opportunities to both our staff and the community for betterment of our future learners, I am working to meet the expectations of the board to identify the learning needs of students/educators and develop a process that ensures each learner's goals are met or exceeded. We also 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:

July Board Meeting

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

