

The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education for the HCDE Board of Trustees

HELPFUL HEARTS

TOP STORIES INSIDE



p. 5

Head Start Moms Thankful for Program this Holiday Season



p. 4

Bates Gift Car to Head Start Mom



p. 3

ESL Class for Foreign Professionals

The CONNECTOR



Of Note...

As we head into the holiday season, HCDE divisions are full steam ahead. The three weeks before the winter break are typically busy and considered a sprint to the end of the year, jam-packed full of activities, holiday cheer and celebration.

Last week, families at the Fifth Ward Head Start commented on how their children's social skills had improved this semester, after participating in a Thanksgiving family luncheon. I take great pride in knowing that our Head Start centers not only prepare our students for success in their academic careers, but provide the necessary social and emotional skills needed to be successful in life. Knowing that our parents see and value these critical skills drives us to provide even more support and services for our families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

In the coming weeks we will be celebrating the holiday season as a department, hosting holiday receptions at both the Irvington and North Post Oak buildings as well as holiday celebrations at our AB campuses. We are also gearing up for our annual Bates Auto Collision holiday car give-away. This 20-year tradition is an exceptional opportunity to see a deserving Head Start family with transportation challenges receive the "Responsible Parenting Award." This award gifts them with a refurbished car from Bates, addressing their transportation challenges and allowing them to help their family. It is rewarding to watch the family jump with excitement when unveiling the car refurbished by Bates employees and filled with presents from Bates and HCDE staff. I love this event and enjoy seeing first-hand how the work of HCDE, our staff and one of our valued community partners personally impacts a family and our community.

I started the week with my Executive Leadership Team on Monday and held a retreat with the entire Leadership Team on Tuesday. On Wednesday, I visited with the new Superintendent of Waller ISD to discuss the services and support HCDE provides the district and county and then met with several ELT staff members. Thursday and Friday were filled with agenda review for the December board meeting and several standing internal meetings.

On Monday, I travel to Region 13 Educational Service Center in Austin to present to their Principal Academy about the challenges and triumphs of education administration. Have a relaxing weekend.



BOARD SHORTS

HCDE Unveils 2019 Christmas Card

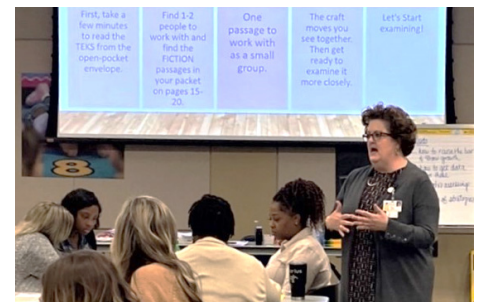
The holiday season is here, and HCDE hopes it's "snow" much fun! Snow is the theme for this year's Christmas card. Students from selected Head Start Centers created Christmas-themed masterpieces with hopes of being chosen as the artist for this year's HCDE Christmas card.

Superintendent James Colbert Jr. judged about 30 designs and chose his favorite - a snowman with felt hat and scarf, pom-pom buttons and wooden stick arms. The artwork was created by 4-year-old Kailyn Samuel-Clark from Fonwood Head Start.



Master It!

English language arts teachers gathered to brainstorm about motivating their students to use higher-level critical thinking skills at the "Master It!" workshop with TLC's Kelly Tummy. Teachers worked in small groups using culturally diverse reading passages in order to engage and motivate students. The texts were gathered from a variety of sources, and the teachers became the students as they examined the prose.



Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training Supplied to Center, TLC, Schools Divisions

Deciding when and what to do when violent behavior poses a threat to schools was the topic of a recent training called Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training. The training offered by the Crisis Prevention Institute provided advanced physical skills training to staff in the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, Schools and the Teaching and Learning Center.

With prevention, de-escalation and communication skills in mind, the workshop gave educators the chance to identify behaviors through various scenarios. The workshop organizers also discussed and demonstrated suitable and acceptable physical interventions to reduce or manage risk behavior.



PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Construction Update: ABS West

Progress at the new ABS West school construction site continues on-schedule in December. The contractor is prepping the drive entry and exit on Medfield for concrete.

Construction progress includes the following:

- Walls in the building are 90 percent covered on both sides, and plaster floating is 75 percent complete.
- Texture and paint are scheduled after the windows are installed.
- Electrical work continues as the contractors prepare the switchgear for permanent power.
- For HVAC, 90 percent of the refrigerant piping has been installed overhead, and the contractor has begun the welding process.
- Windows and window frames were delivered mid-December, and the windows are being installed in classrooms and offices.



ESL Class for Foreign Professionals Provides Immediate Benefits for Newcomers

Immigrant Robert Jordan moved to Katy, Texas from his homeland in Venezuela. With 30 years of chemical engineer experience under his belt, he found his professional options in the U.S. were limited because he didn't speak English. He enrolled in an English as a second language class at HCDE. Six months later, he is moving to Louisiana to work for an oil company.

Teacher Zsa Zsa Caburao has taught the ESL class for foreign professionals for a year. She relishes the rewards her students gain as they learn English and return to practicing their professions or find new ones.

This semester her class of 20 students at Mayde Creek High in Katy had a wide range of job credentials. Professions ranged from engineering to interior design to orthopedic surgeon to accountant to chemical engineer. Many were unemployed or turned to minimum wage jobs to make ends meet while gaining English skills.

"These classes have been highly successful and help accelerate the career process for adult students who are learning to speak, read and write English in a new country," HCDE Adult Education Stephanie Ross said.

New classes in ESL for foreign professionals begin in January. For more information, go to <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>.

(HCDE Adult Education is the largest, no-cost adult education program in Texas, with a variety of health care and construction career training options in Harris and Liberty counties. Students may also take English as a second language classes and high school equivalency degree classes simultaneously in a traditional classroom setting or online.)



PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS

Gifted Rehabbed Car from Bates Collision Rewards HCDE Head Start Parent

Head Start mom Jessica Bouldin is a single parent who juggles three schedules without a car. On Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 10 a.m. that all changes, courtesy of Bates Collision Centers, 15532 I-10 East in Channelview.

Bouldin struggles with transportation on many fronts. Her two boys attend school and must be on time. She needs rides to work. Doctors' appointments are planned well in advance and sometimes must be canceled. Recreation trips to places like the park or pizza parlor are sheer luxury.

In its 21st year, Bates Collision Centers' "Responsible Parenting Award" continues to award keys to brighter futures with restored vehicles. Car number 37 is reconditioned and ready for the Bouldin family as Jessica earns the "Responsible Parenting Award."

"When you're car-less in greater Houston, transportation issues are overwhelming," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "The city spans a 60-mile radius, and public transportation can test your flexibility."

Bates owners Lee and Leila Bates have made the annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents make in order to provide for their children.

"We're giving a helping hand up for responsible parents with a drive to succeed," said Leila Bates, vice president. "Responsible parenting is so important and it's a big job in every family. But it becomes even harder when all the pieces aren't in place, like transportation."

Bouldin, 31, was nominated for the award by the manager at the Head Start Center where her 3-year-old son Jyrie attends. In addition, she wrote an essay which was selected from a group of nominees.

Bates employees donate time to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donate gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

Lee Bates says both he and Leila are proud of their employees who continue to supply time and resources to families they have yet to meet. The Bates call the work their employees do "a labor of love" as they prepare the car inside and out to look like new.

HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock knows that the Bouldin family desperately needs the car to reach its goals. Bouldin wants to further her career by attending college. She would like to volunteer at her sons' schools, including the northside Fonwood Head Start Center where Jyrie attends.

"We continue to be thankful for our partnership with Bates Collision Centers," said Peacock. "These cars make a difference in the lives of families who are already committed to making the world a better place for their children."

HCDE Head Start and Early Head Start are no-cost, federally funded programs that prepare children from 6 weeks to 5 years old for success in school. Programs support and promote parent participation in order to build stronger families. Low-income families or families of children with special needs benefit from services. HCDE Head Start serves families residing in east Harris County, providing 15 area centers for 1,250 children and their families.



PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS

Head Start Moms Thankful for Program this Holiday Season

Many parents of first-year Head Start students are thankful this holiday season for how their children have improved with learning and verbal skills in just a few short months.

Fifth Ward Head Start parent Justice Pugh is pleased that her 3-year-old son Justin has developed well with his writing and reciting the alphabet.

"I have noticed his words the most and he loves to talk plus he's very adventurous," she said.

Pugh was at the school to enjoy a turkey lunch with her son before the holiday and commented that he enjoys eating at the table and using his manners.

"He tells me that he wants to have lunch every day because he does while at school," Pugh said.

She found out about HCDE's Head Start program while researching online and liked the reviews she saw, so she knew it would be a good fit for her son.

Miracle Valdez also has a 3-year-old son who is in his first year at Fifth Ward.

"I wanted to put him in the Head Start program because I thought it would help him more in his development," she said. In the last three months, Valdez has noticed that he is talking more and understanding conversations.

"He now gives me books to read to him and likes to sit at the table to eat and wants me to sit with him," she said.



HCDE DECEMBER EVENTS

VIEW THE LIST:

Dec. 12

12-1 p.m.

NPO Holiday Reception

Rooms 1010-1012

6005 Westview, Houston, Texas

Dec. 14

9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Ecobot-Challenge Elementary Reveal Day

(plus Drone Training for Middle School teachers)

6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas

Dec. 17

10 a.m.

Bates Collision Center Car Giveaway

(Head Start mom gains car)

Channelview location

15532 I-10 East, Channelview, Texas

Dec. 18

10 a.m.

Holiday Celebration at ABS West

7800 Westglen Dr., Houston, Texas

Dec. 18

12-1 p.m.

Irvington Holiday Reception

Rooms 100A-C

6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas

Dec. 19

1 - 3:15 p.m.

Christmas Family Event at Fortis Academy

11902 Spears Rd, Houston, Texas

Dec. 19

10 a.m.

Holiday Celebration at ABS East

7703 S Loop E, Houston, Texas

Dec. 19

9:30 a.m.

Santa Visits Compton Head Start

9720 Spaulding St., Houston, Texas



Instructional Management and Community Relations

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

Establish effective mechanisms for communication to and from staff in instructional evaluation, planning and decision making;

Ensure that goals and objectives form the basis of curricular decision-making and instruction and communicates expectations for student achievement;

Ensuring 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;

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 relationships between the Department and community; and

Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.

Getting positive feedback from parents is one of many barometers we use to evaluate meaningful learning. This past month we visited with parents at Fifth Ward Head Start and learned about their children's achievement milestones in their pre-k program.

In our Adult Education program, we received success stories from our English as a second language program for foreign professionals.

Gaining fluency in English is often the only thing holding these older learners back from continuing their professional careers in America.

On the holiday front, we're spreading good cheer as we showcase the talents of our Head Start students through our annual HCDE holiday card.

Finally, the Bates Collision Centers car giveaway to our Head Start mom is a heartwarming holiday event which rallies the community to support families. This collaborative gives us the opportunity to show the public the benefits of Head Start to families and the greater community as we build a foundation for school success.



By supporting exceptional instruction for all learners, I am adhering to the Board's expectations for me to investigate best practices for student achievement and utilize effective practices that maximize achievement of student potential within HCDE schools. By representing HCDE services through collaboratives such as Bates Custom and Collision Centers' Responsible Parenting Award, I am functioning as the primary ambassador for the Department and presenting a positive, professional image of myself and the Department in all venues—community, political, educational, business and board.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Josh Flynn

Vice President

George Moore

Board Members

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Harris County ELA Leadership Team
December 11, 2019

Ready, Set, Drone!
December 13, 2019

School Finance Council
December 13, 2019

Board Meeting
December 18, 2019

