

THE CONNECTOR

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

WEEK OF April 12, 2021

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 27

PROMOTING GROWTH

TOP STORIES

Second round of
Partners in Education
grants awarded
p.2



Partners in
Education

Second annual
“A Day of Educational
Innovation” conference
draws hundreds
p.3



Foremost authority on
ADHD shares latest
research with educators
p.4



Of Note...



One of the goals I have for HCDE is to position the organization as a leading local voice in educational issues. This type of characterization will lead to school districts and educational organizations seeing HCDE as a valuable resource for high quality information and support regarding traditional and emerging trends in public education.

We saw this idea come to fruition this week as HCDE hosted two national speakers: Ron Clark, who spoke at TLC's Day of Innovation and Russell Barkley who spoke on ADHD to school therapists.

Ron Clark is a nationally renowned speaker with expertise in programs that support educational innovation and student success. He returned to HCDE for second consecutive year last Saturday, providing the keynote speech for a virtual conference on innovative practices in education with nearly 800 attendees.

Russell Barkley is widely known in special education circles as the foremost authority in research and practices regarding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD.) Our Therapy Services division contracted with Mr. Barkley to give local therapists insight and tools for effectively supporting students with ADHD. More than 200 therapists from HCDE and surrounding districts attended the workshop, some in person and others virtually through Zoom. Providing this type of professional development to therapists in our client districts enriches relationships and enhances HCDE's reputation as a leader in school-based therapy.

I am proud of the pioneering work HCDE is doing in supporting local educators with innovative, timely and relevant national resources to support student success in Harris County. We continue to make strides in supporting our districts with expertise in various educational arenas and I look forward to seeing how we can take this support to the next level.

I started the week with my ELT and the last meeting with a board member this quarter. Thank you for your flexibility in meeting with me for these discussions. I have found them extremely beneficial, and hope you did too.

I traveled to Austin Monday to speak with our legislators. On Wednesday I met with ELT to discuss upcoming initiatives before attending the Audit Committee meeting and filming my introduction to the virtual Scholastic Art & Writing Celebration next week. Yesterday I met with staff for standing meetings and today I was at my NPO office with more internal meetings.

Have a great weekend.

PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS

Education Foundation of Harris County awards second round of Partners in Education grants

Twenty-four projects from area school districts have been selected to receive second-round Education Foundation of Harris County Partners in Education Grants.



As a reminder, the Partners in Education grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to assist school districts with needs varying from technology to pandemic health products to school supplies.

The second-round grant distribution of \$234,951 has been awarded to the following projects:

School District	Project Category	Project Title
Aldine ISD	Arts/Literacy	"Arts and Literacy to Encourage Thoughtful Learning"
	Arts/Literacy	"A Book in Each Hand"
	Scholarship/Mentoring	"Scholarships"
Clear Creek ISD	Innovation	"Math Manipulatives for Elementary Campuses Highly Impacted by Covid-19"
	Technology	"Support Online Learning for Students"
Crosby ISD	Technology	"An Apple for All"
	Arts/Literacy	"Educating the Mind and Spirit with ART"
	Health	"Every Second Counts. AED in Cougar Stadium."
Galena Park ISD	Technology	"Technology Exchange Lockers"
Goose Creek ISD	Arts/Literacy	"Pre-K Matters"
Houston ISD	Arts/Literacy	"Visual Art Single-Student Use (SSU) Kits"
	Arts/Literacy	"HISD General Music Kits to Expand Arts Rich Education in Action"
	Arts/Literacy	"HISD Visual Art Kits to Expand Arts Rich Education in Action"
Humble ISD	Technology	"Co-LAB-oration and Innovation for ALL!"
Katy ISD	Innovation	"Inspiring Imagination Teacher Grants - Campus Collaborative II"
La Porte ISD	Technology	"Real World Experiences in the Classroom Using Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) Technology"
Pasadena ISD	Scholarship/Mentoring	"Equity Through Subsidized or Free AP Tests for College Hopefuls"
Pearland ISD	Scholarships/Mentoring	"Innovative Teaching Grants Program"
	Technology	"Power Up! Classroom Charging Stations"
Sheldon ISD	Scholarship/Mentoring	"Personalized Learning / Positive Outcomes Project"
Spring ISD	Technology	"Swivl Robots for Elementary and Middle Schools"
Spring Branch ISD	Supplies	"2021 Project School Supplies"
Stafford MSD	Technology	"STEM Robotics & Carnegie Mellon Training"
Tomball ISD	Health	"Healthy Hands, Healthy Bodies"

We look forward to issuing another report on the foundation in May 2021. ■

PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS



Second annual “A Day of Educational Innovation” conference draws hundreds of local educators for high-energy, high-impact professional development

Last Saturday, nearly 800 educators from across Harris County tuned in to the second annual “A Day of Educational Innovation” virtual conference featuring famed teacher Ron Clark.

The high-energy, daylong event offered teachers the opportunity to learn innovative educational practices they can implement to successfully maneuver between in-person and virtual instruction.

During his keynote address, Clark shared tips and strategies to keep kids engaged while acknowledging the challenges.

“This year, I have not been the same teacher I have normally been,” said Clark. “First, I was all virtual, then I was hybrid, then I felt like, ‘Ron, you’re not as good as you normally are.’ I was excited to get to spend some time with you

today to focus on seeing what’s right [about virtual instruction], being positive, and uplifting each other.”

Attendees had the opportunity to participate in 25 different workshops; each focused on out-the-box classroom strategies and positive campus culture. Of those, leaders from six schools recognized as Culture Cultivator Campuses explained their approach to maintaining a positive environment for students and staff during the pandemic.

Culture Cultivator Campuses have high student and teacher retention rates, utilize campus-wide Social and Emotional Learning strategies, maintain high morale, and foster good community/parent-teacher relationships.

The six campuses given this distinction are Alcott Elementary

School (Houston ISD), Hoffman Middle School (Aldine ISD), Hearne Elementary School (Alief ISD), Exley Elementary School (Katy ISD), Malala Elementary School (Fort Bend ISD), and Hobby Elementary School (Houston ISD).

“Initially, I thought I was just going to stay for one session and my presentation, but I stayed for the whole day,” said Hoffman MS Principal Jeana Morrison Adams. “I was blown away with the empowerment sessions and the hands-on [tools] I was able to bring back to my campus the following Monday. The biggest takeaway for my team is that [this conference has] encouraged us to think outside the box and ask for help when we don’t have the answers.” ■

PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS

Foremost authority on ADHD shares latest evidence-based research with educators in hybrid event

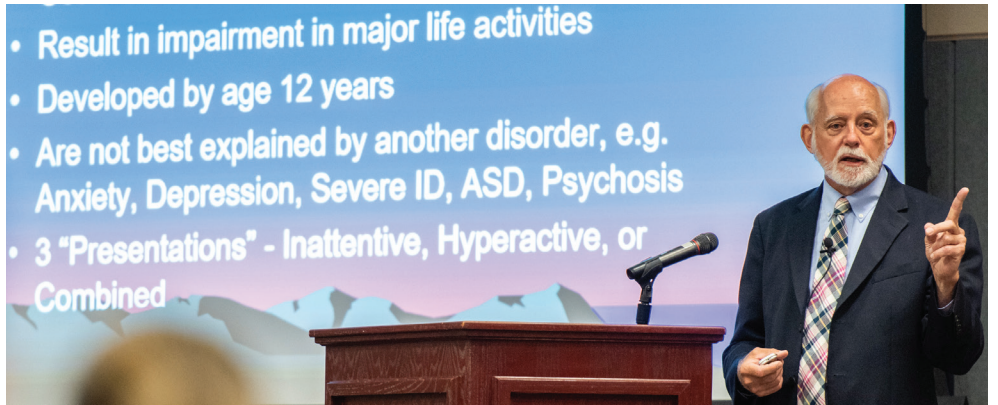
Internationally recognized expert on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D., led educators, diagnosticians, and therapists in a hybrid workshop on Wednesday to discuss the most recent science-based research about ADHD.

A total of 202 educators from Harris County Department of Education and surrounding school districts participated in the workshop, including 160 HCDE occupational, physical, and music therapists. As a hybrid event, a select group of 39 individuals were allowed to attend the seminar in person while observing social distancing protocols. Barkley's presentation also drew virtual attendees from as far away as Plainview ISD and Round Rock ISD.

Barkley, who has dedicated his career to researching this disorder and is widely considered the foremost authority on the subject, explained that ADHD jeopardizes cognitive functions that control behavior like time management, organization, and initiating and completing tasks.

"ADHD is much more than an attention disorder and has a much more pervasive impact on people's

- Result in impairment in major life activities
- Developed by age 12 years
- Are not best explained by another disorder, e.g. Anxiety, Depression, Severe ID, ASD, Psychosis
- 3 "Presentations" - Inattentive, Hyperactive, or Combined



mental ability, especially when it comes to self-control," said Barkley. "It's important to re-frame the disorder from something trivial like, 'Oh, I can't concentrate, I need some Starbucks, or I need to get some sleep' to something absolutely essential for adult functioning and well-being."

He also emphasized the need to dispel the idea that ADHD is a behavioral problem and is instead rooted in biology.

"ADHD is largely biological. We should stop blaming [ADHD on] families, schools, divorces, and so on," he said. "ADHD doesn't arise from social causes. It is chiefly the result of genetics and difficulties with brain development."

Lastly, he emphasized that while there is no cure yet for ADHD, there are compensatory strategies that can be put into effect to cope.

"We have lots of interventions that allow you to cope with ADHD," said Barkley. "They are like prosthetic devices – wheelchairs, ramps into buildings, mechanical limbs, and hearing aids. It doesn't cure the problem, but it allows you to function."

During the day-long lecture, Barkley shared proven tips and strategies that educators could implement with their students the following day. ■

PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS



Students from various HCDE Head Start locations celebrated the Week of the Young Child

At the Fifth Ward Head Start, students created and played their tambourines during the Music Monday activity. Barrett Station students danced and made arts and crafts. Coolwood Head Start teachers read to students and distributed a copy of “Mr. Tootles and Those Oodles of Noodles” by author Marycelestee Clement. The Tootle Time Publishing Company donated copies of the book to all Head Start and Early Head Start Childcare Partners so that students could take a book home for their home library collection. ■



Do you want to learn English or obtain your high school diploma?

The Harris County Department of Education is accepting applications for its free English (ESL) and GED classes. Guillermo Medina, spokesman for the department, explains the requirements to apply and when classes start.

<https://www.univision.com/local/houston-kxln/quieres-aprender-ingles-o-prepararte-para-obtener-tu-diploma-de-preparatoria-esto-te-puede-interesar-video> ■

SYSTEMIC

ACHIEVEMENT...*WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT*

This week, the following Board expectations were met:

Superintendent Objective G: Professional Growth and Development

- Ensures that appropriate staff development is available and monitors staff development for effectiveness.
- Stays abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration.



Comprehensive and innovative professional development is key to the growth and success of both HCDE and the educators we serve.

Last weekend we held the second annual “A Day of Educational Innovation” conference that was attended by nearly 800 educators from across the county. Nationally recognized teacher Ron Clark and leaders from area Culture Cultivator Campuses shared outside-the-lines strategies to help attendees be their best in the challenging hybrid environment.

This week more than 200 educators, including 160 occupational, physical and music therapists from HCDE and special education teachers from as far away as Round Rock ISD and Plainview ISD attended a day-long immersive series of lectures from Russell A. Barkley, PhD., widely considered the foremost authority on ADHD. Barkley dispelled many myths about ADHD and emphasized effective strategies for coping with the condition that allow those diagnosed to better function in society.

By continuing to provide high-impact professional development opportunities led by nationally recognized experts I am meeting the expectation to stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and ensure appropriate professional growth is available to HCDE staff and the educators we serve across Harris County and Texas.

HCDE BOARD

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Eric Dick

Vice President

Danny Norris

Board Members

David W. Brown

Richard Cantu

Erica Davis

Andrea Duhon

Amy Hinojosa

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 21

Board Meeting
1 p.m.

April 21 & 22

Autism Workshops
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
HCDE Conference
Center and Zoom

April 22

Scholastic Art
& Writing Awards
6:30 p.m.
Live Stream