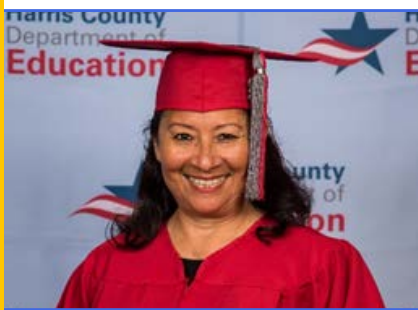




Of Note...

I began this week, as usual, with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team (ELT), followed by a meeting with one of my mentees. I also met with a client district superintendent, and as mentioned, this is an ongoing practice of mine to ensure that the Department is exceedingly meeting the needs of the Harris County school districts we serve. I also conducted my usual standing meetings with staff.



I am attending the 2019 TABSE Conference where I am serving as the keynote speaker for the Distinguished Gentlemen’s Dinner. During the conference I am presenting at the Superintendent’s Pipeline event where my topic is Leadership Judo: Samurai to Shogun. I will also serve as a panelist at the Men on a Mission Panel Discussion event. This event, among others similar to it, serves as excellent visibility for HCDE, and it allows me an opportunity to network with other education executives from various parts of the state. It is certainly a worthwhile event.



This week, in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted and/or facilitated the following workshops and training sessions: Alternative Certification Program for Teachers- Information Session; National Incident Management System (ICS 300), a 3-day workshop; Learning to Lead for Success; Quest for Grants Training Series: So, You Want Me to Write a Grant! Grant Writing 101; Houston Science Educators’ Leadership Association; Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades K-2); lead4ward: Math Rockin’ Review: Volume II (Grades 3-EOC); Capturing Kids’ Hearts; and Make and Take, Science- Grade 1. HCDE remains a pioneer in professional development and advancing the teaching and learning experience for children across both the county and state. Benefiting both educators and teachers, alike, HCDE is an invaluable resource to the community that supports public education.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 18, 2019

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4 \$7,500 Grant to Support Autism Summit April 9-10

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin with a meeting of the ELT, followed by a meeting with another HCDE client school district superintendent. I will also be in meetings with staff throughout the week and I am tentatively scheduled to attend the CASE Debates event at the Bob Casey Federal Courthouse.

Please be reminded that the next meeting of the Board is Wednesday, February 27 at 1:00 p.m.

In closing, and as always, thank you for your service to HCDE. I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

I look forward to seeing you at Wednesday’s Board Meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

HCDE Board Meeting—Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

20th Anniversary Unites CASE for Kids, City Council Members, Nonprofit Afterschool Service Providers



The Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and continues to partner with the City of Houston to bring afterschool

activities to each of the 11 city council districts. These unique learning opportunities cater to the individual out-of-school time needs of each district and help keep children in communities engaged and safe. Nonprofit afterschool service providers met with council members and CASE for Kids this month for a photo opportunity.

Photos:

<https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/2019-City-Connections/>

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(password is hcde1889)



ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

FEBRUARY 19, 2019

Alternative Certification Program for Teachers - Information Session

National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS 300 (3 Day Workshop)

Learning to Lead for Success

FEBRUARY 20, 2019

Quest for Grants Training Series: So, You Want Me to Write a Grant! Grant Writing 101

Houston Science Educators' Leadership Association

Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades K-2)

SESSION CLOSED/FULL:

lead4ward: Math Rockin' Review: Volume II [Grades 3 - EOC]

Capturing Kids' Hearts

FEBRUARY 21, 2019

Make and Take for Grade 1 Science

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Persistence Helps Adult Student Bike the Distance to Gain GED, State Award



GED student Silvia Cruz, 58, rode her bike nine miles each way to her class at Harris County Department of Education last year and ultimately earned her high school equivalency degree.

Her persistence literally paid off this month as she received a \$500

check from Burlington English along with the “English as a Second Language Persistence Award” through the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE). The nonprofit provides professional development, networking and state-wide recognition to adult education programs in Texas.

HCDE Adult Education Manager May O’Brien nominated Cruz for the award after learning about Cruz’s dogged determination to get to class. Through heat, humidity and rain, the Mexico native braved the elements and served as a role model to her fellow students as she logged in 473 class hours.

Cruz attended classes at the Spring Branch Family Development Center as an ESL adult learner and Memorial Assistance Ministries for GED classes, two of the 50-plus community locations where

HCDE holds adult education and workforce classes. Teacher Rosie Coleman called her student an inspiration to her fellow students as she assisted them as a peer tutor.

Although Cruz couldn’t attend the TALAE Conference to claim her award, she got the proverbial “check in the mail” after moving to her new home in New Mexico.

O’Brien said Cruz expressed her gratitude for the award via phone.

Each Texas region awards one “Persistence” award to an ESL student who is an exceptional student, according to O’Brien.

“The coastal region is quite competitive for the award because it serves more than 50 percent of adult learners of the whole state,” she said.

Adult Education Director Stephanie Ross explained that HCDE Adult Education offers 10,000 adults the opportunity to go back to school each year through its flexible scheduling that includes morning, afternoon, evening and online or distance learning. GED, ESL and workforce training classes help adults gain the skills necessary to take advantage of better job opportunities or move into higher education.

For more information about adult education classes, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

\$7,500 Grant to Support Autism Summit April 9-10



Dr. Paula Kluth

The Teaching and Learning Center Special Populations division was awarded a \$7,500 grant from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities through the Center for Grants Development to support TLC's upcoming Autism Summit on April 9-10. The summit features Dr. Paula Kluth, a nationally known independent consultant and advocate for inclusive schools for children with disabilities. As

a writer, she has been featured in several scholarly journals and directed the film: "We Thought You'd Never Ask: Voices of People with Autism." The grant was acquired through collaboration between Center for Grants Manager Joyce Akins and TLC Special Populations Curriculum Director Dr. Brenda Arteaga.

CSSS Building Relationships with Harris County School Districts



Student, Teacher and Officers Prevention (STOP) School Violence Grant Manager Colina Poullard recently started visiting the 25 Harris County school districts to spread the word about the over \$480,000 grant the

Center for Safe & Secure Schools (CSSS) received. This grant will provide students and staff training and support for violence prevention, mental health care and restorative practices implementation. It will be put in place at school districts over the next three years.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

HCDE Public Recovery High School Provides Wrap-Around Approach for Addiction



Cy Lopez, 18, found out about Harris County's first public recovery high school through his therapy group while recovering from addiction.

The bright, determined young man, who takes advanced academic courses, visited the school called Fortis Academy after trying to return to his home school in north Houston while recovering from his addiction. There, peer pressure provided too much temptation.

"He's been one of our leaders here since joining our school this year," said Anthony Moten, principal at Fortis, a Latin term associated with strength, courage and determination.

Fortis is building its student roster this year as Harris County Department of Education administrators spread the word about the campus in the 25 school districts it serves, who send students to Fortis on a contractual basis. The school represents a huge paradigm shift in treating substance abuse.

"It's moving educators to understand a punitive-discipline model versus a restorative-therapeutic model," said James Colbert Jr., superintendent of HCDE and a strong proponent of the recovery school.

The school combines counseling, recovery coaching and academics in a low, student-to-faculty ratio for students who have completed substance abuse or dependency rehab programs. The goal is for students to continue their high school education in a sober environment.

Omar Lopez, Cy's father, attends meetings with his son and counselors at the school. One of the school's foundational principles is that it is important for parents to be active in their children's sobriety.

"The main thing about this school is the support it gives to kids to stay sober," said Omar as he visits his son at the school. "He is doing good with his grades and being sober."

Fortis has all the academic elements of a regular high school, with certified classroom teachers for core subjects. Small classes are coupled with computer electives, including physical education. Last month the school opened its culinary component, a kitchen where students get certified in safety

and sanitation before learning to cook and bake. In the kitchen, students come together as a team and collaborate as they gain new skills to bolster their preparation for life after high school, as well as their self-esteem.



Senior Juan Garcia finds his cooking skills handy in winning the approval of his girlfriend, he said while learning to make crepes. Garcia will be the school's first graduate, walking the stage in May at his home school in Galena Park ISD.

Cy's father is impressed by the culinary program at Fortis and appreciative of the recovery support his son receives each day. He's a strong advocate for public recovery high schools such as Fortis, even though they are relatively rare, with only three in the state of Texas.

"Private recovery schools are not affordable for many people," he said. "What you don't know, you don't know, and more people should know about this school. Recovery education has to be shared with low-income parents too."

He points to the benefits to taxpayers with public recovery schools tackling problems of addiction early on versus having residents go through the penal system later.

"The amount of taxpayer money we can be saving by having these kids here for four years versus 10 years in jail is amazing," he said, circling his arms to demonstrate the greater good. "Can't you see the difference in the money and lives saved?"

Omar insists his son Cy is learning how to live a good life without drugs or alcohol, despite the temptations of society. He credits Fortis for that change in attitude and said one of the greatest benefits of the school is Cy's ability to have a personalized recovery coach and meetings at the school during the day.

Cy said this model allows for problems to be tackled head on.

"We share what we're going through, and they give us feedback and help us learn to deal with issues," he said. "They listen to me, and I listen."

For more information about Fortis Academy, go to www.hcde-texas.org/schools/fortis-academy.

Systemic Achievement

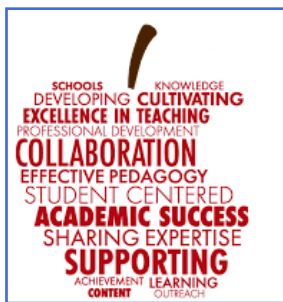
...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development and Community Relations

In an effort to meet the Board's expectations of me to achieve the element of performance related to this goal to:

- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration;
- Ensure that appropriate staff development is available and monitor staff development for effectiveness;
- Stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration;
- Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, ensuring a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and the community; and to
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.

This week, I am deeply engrossed in the professional development process, as both an attendee as well as a presenter.



The TABSE Conference is being held this week and I am presenting at

three events within this year's statewide conference. I am the keynote speaker for the Distinguished Gentlemen's event, and I am presenting at the Superintendent's Pipeline. Finally, I am a panelist at the Men on a Mission Panel Discussion.

My participation at this year's conference not only increases HCDE's visibility, but it also allows me to share my professional experiences with my colleagues, as well as with those aspiring to become administrators in the executive education sphere. Additionally, by attending sessions, I am receiving professional development through various sessions and workshops.

HCDE is also being represented by other administrators from the Department in other workshops and trainings during this annual conference.

By ensuring that I continue to serve in this capacity, and that HCDE is represented at such events, I am striving to meet the Board's goal of me to communicate the needs and accomplishments of HCDE through a variety of formats including public meetings; ensure that HCDE is represented by attendance at such events and ensuring that staff members are making professional presentations to all audiences in all areas of the community—listening and taking into account—differing viewpoints of various constituencies, and using good judgment to discern the best decision and action for the Department.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Josh Flynn

Vice President

George Moore

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

February Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

