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FROM THE OFFICE OF JAMES COLBERT, JR.—SUPERINTENDENT

Of Note...

It's now official. All Harris County school districts have completed the spring semester. Crosby ISD, the last district to close, ended its academic year Wednesday. We, like all of our client districts, are now in the midst of short and long-term planning for our various programs and services as we evaluate, tweak, and improve our operations across the board.

This week, the Department commenced the Summer Flex Schedule. As mentioned in the last two issues of **The Connector**, by implementing this schedule, the Department realizes tremendous cost-savings related to energy efficiencies, as well as conservation across many other areas of energy and resource consumption. We have extended our hours of operation from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, to 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, with offices closed on Friday. For divisions needing to provide services to client districts on Fridays during the summer, the North Post Oak location is open and available to staff within those divisions. The Summer Flex schedule concludes early August.

As usual, I began the week with my regularly scheduled meetings, including my ongoing Executive Leadership Team meeting. The Leadership Team also met this week as division directors provided updates and pertinent news and information regarding their respective areas.

Wednesday night, I attended Noche de Estrellas at the Crystal Ballroom at The Rice Hotel. This scholarship gala was hosted by the Association of Hispanic School Administrators' (AHSA) Scholarship Fund. The mission of the local AHSA is to promote the interests of Houston Independent School District students by providing financial and educational opportunities to become effective and successful instructional leaders in the school district.

It is also important to note that we are in full gear in terms of preparation for the opening of the county's first public recovery high school. I am meeting with both staff and other individuals regarding all elements of this program. We look forward to launching a successful endeavor as we

help students regain control of their academic careers by encouraging sobriety in a controlled environment that brings about such.

Yesterday, the Executive Leadership Team and I held agenda review, in preparation for the upcoming Board Meeting.

This week in the area of teaching and learning, HCDE hosted the following trainings and workshops: TExES BTLPT Exam Test Prep Series; All inOne Place! Establishing and Maintaining ELA Portfolios in Your District; Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades K-2); Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades 3-5); CPR/First Aid; Building Conceptual Understanding in Grades 1 and 2; Home on the Range for k-2 grades; Standards-Based Planning; Building Conceptual Understanding in Grades 3 and 4; Capturing Kids Hearts; Quarterly Operations Board Meeting; and Home on the Range for Grades 3-5. Again, HCDE is a trailblazer in Harris County as a resource to educators and other professionals as we endeavor to advance teaching and learning.

Please be reminded that a Special Board Meeting to consider the hearing examiner's recommendation from the May 18 hearing will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 13, followed by the Board Budget Workshop at 12:00 noon. The regularly scheduled June Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, June 20, at 9:00 a.m.

I hope you enjoy this issue of **The Connector** and I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

- 11:00 a.m.-Special Board Meeting to consider the hearing examiner's recommendation from the May 18 hearing.
- 12:00 noon- Board Budget Workshop

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

- Board Meeting

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Students Combine Problem-Solving, Teamwork Skills at UH-D during Amazing Race College and Career Exploration June 15



Students from a dozen schools participate in the “Amazing Race College and Career Exploration” June 15 and apply their problem-solving and teamwork skills. The event is sponsored by Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids and the University of Houston-

Downtown and supported by University of Houston Central, Houston Community College Central and Texas Southern University.

Students arrive at the METRORail Fannin South location, 1604 West Bellfort, for a rally at 9 a.m. and then travel to the their assigned respective campus for clues for each tour. After touring and uncovering the clues, students return to the University of Houston-Downtown for lunch where ambassadors share information about the UH-Downtown campus with the students.

The students who are enrolled in CASE for Kids summer programs through the Texas Education Agency’s Afterschool Centers on Education’s 21st Century Learning Center gain valuable information about college through interactive tours on the METRORail System. School districts participating are Alief, Spring, Clear Creek, Aldine, Galena Park, Sheldon, Houston, Pasadena, Stafford, Humble, and Southwest Schools.

The Texas ACE program which is implemented locally through CASE for Kids works to promote workforce awareness and college readiness as one of its four core components. CASE for Kids provides afterschool support services, including grant funding, training, and materials which supports over 13,000 children in greater Harris County.

“This interactive field trip initiates a unique learning experience as it introduces students to colleges and universities as means to encourage the pursuit of higher education,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids.

ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING BY TRAINING THE TRAINER

Trainings hosted at HCDE this week

JUNE 5, 2017

TExES BTLPT Exam Test Prep Series

JUNE 6, 2017

All in One Place! Establishing and Maintaining ELA Portfolios in Your District

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

Using Manipulatives to Teach the TEKS (Grades 3-5)

JUNE 7, 2017

CPR/1st Aid

Building Conceptual Understanding in Grades 1 and 2

Home on the Range for K-2 grades - SESSION FULL/CLOSED

Standards-Based Planning

Building Conceptual Understanding in Grades 3 and 4

Capturing Kids Hearts

JUNE 8, 2017

Quarterly Operations Board Meeting

Home on the Range for 3-5 grades - SESSION FULL/CLOSED

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

School Safety Summit Agenda Set for June 12



Harris County Department of Education is partnering with Crime Stoppers of Houston for the 2017 School Safety Summit, a free event to be held Monday, June 12,

2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The annual event will bring school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and those interested in school safety together for a summit about the issues facing schools in 2017-2018.

The event begins at 8:30 a.m. Keynote speaker will be Juliet Stipeche, City of Houston director of education.

Breakout sessions include juvenile law updates from the Harris County District Attorney's Office; information

regarding current drug trends from the DEA; Internet crimes against children from Katy Independent School District Police Department; positive interactions with students from Klein Independent School District; restorative justice; and human trafficking from Love 146.

This year's theme, "I PLEDGE TO KEEP MY SCHOOL SAFE," emphasizes the ways that the combined work of individuals leads to a community-minded culture and increased safety.

For the third consecutive year, the School Safety Summit will take place at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas. Those interested in attending may pre-register online at www.hcde-texas.org/register at no cost. Participants who pre-register will receive a free breakfast and lunch at the event. TCOLE credits are available for registrants.

Opportunity

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



HCDE Workshop Helps Educators, Administrators Reach the Heart of Children

Harris County educators and administrators joined HCDE's Darlene Breaux and the Flippen Group last week for the two-day "Capturing Kids' Hearts" workshop. This workshop is designed to reach the heart of children to impact their life and learning. Participants gained research-based processes to improve the five key indicators of school performance: fewer discipline referrals, improved attendance, higher student achievement, lower dropout rates, and higher teacher satisfaction.

Service

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Teachers Learn to Solidify the Math TEKS with Manipulatives and Visual Cues through HCDE Workshop



Harris County educators gathered June 6 to learn how to use hands-on manipulatives to teach the grades 3-5 math TEKS. Specialist director Nicole Shanahan led the professional development workshop, showing participants how Cuisenaire rods, Unifix cubes, and pattern blocks help students overcome the conceptual challenges of fractions.

“With manipulatives, students then later have a concrete, mental picture to refer to,” Shanahan explained.

Wordy explanations of these mathematical ideas are too abstract for young learners, she said. The workshop draws away from algorithms that encourage memorization and moves toward tangible tools that encourage deeper understanding.

The workshop activities were not only visual, but also manual. Teachers simultaneously saw models of the rods, cubes, and blocks on the screen and had the tools in their hands to combine and rearrange.

“In whole groups, small groups, and workstations, teachers physically enacted mathematical processes to further solidify the concepts,” said Shanahan. One exercise included adding unlike fractions by stacking various pattern blocks.

The workshop covered 32, ready-to-use activities, with 10-12 activities geared to each grade level.

Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Professional Growth and Development

In accordance with the Board's expectations of me to:

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



This past Tuesday, Harris County educators gathered to gain knowledge related to using hands-on manipulatives to teach math TEKS for third through fifth grade. HCDE math content specialist Nicole Shanahan showed participants how Cuisenaire rods, Unifix cubes, and pattern blocks can help students better understand math concepts. These tools help students overcome conceptual challenges of fractions.



This technique offers students a concrete, mental picture to which they can refer when tackling math assessments related to fractions. The workshop covered 32, ready-to-use activities with 10-12 activities geared toward each grade level.

By HCDE's Education and Enrichment division consistently offering quality professional development to over a thousand educators annually, I am striving to meet the Board's goal of ensuring that, not only is HCDE's staff exposed to quality professional development in an effort to stay abreast of developments in educational leadership and administration, but I am also ensuring the same for educators and professionals in education across Harris County.

HCDE BOARD

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