

THE CONNECTOR

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

WEEK OF DECEMBER 7, 2020

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 13

GIFTS THAT GIVE

TOP STORIES

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Of Note...



'Tis the season for generosity and giving and that spirit can be seen all around HCDE. This week we once again highlight how a grant from the Education Foundation of Harris County is benefitting a Harris County school district. I really enjoy seeing what our local districts are doing with the money the board approved for disbursement through the foundation for grants, scholarships and sponsorships. This funding has proven invaluable to ISDs and we are starting to get inquiries about the next round of applications and funding, set for spring 2021.

Next week we gather for our annual Bates Car Giveaway to watch as a deserving Head Start family gets a hand up from a business partner in Baytown. This is one of my favorite events of the year as I get to experience the joy of a family seeing a positive future unfold before their eyes. I hope you will be able to join us for this fabulous activity. Details about the event are on page 2 of this issue.

I started the week with my ELT and met with Leadership Team as well. On Wednesday, I met with several board members and staff for a Feasibility Committee discussion regarding a potential Equine Enrichment Center. This was a dynamic discussion with lots of feedback and ideas and I look forward to discussing this potential new endeavor with the entire board in January.

On Wednesday we also took another step forward in our renovation plans for the Irvington Administration building, meeting with the architects and project manager about location of divisions and areas by floor as well as space allocation. This was a great conversation about how to efficiently use all the available space in the building and the strategic approach to office size and location. On Thursday I toured recently renovated administration buildings at Stafford, Dear Park and Goose Creek ISDs to see the latest concepts in space and design in school district offices. It was very interesting to see how the different districts approached their renovations in diverse ways from location of the building and use of existing structures, to the strategy of implementation to layout of individual offices and spaces. I am excited to see our administrative offices transform into spaces that are not only useful, but representative of the HCDE's excellent reputation both locally and around the nation.

Today I am with a team, including Mr. Cantu, supporting the Aldine Education Foundation Golf Tournament. I believe participating in these types of events benefitting our local districts is yet another way we can support public education in county.

I look forward to seeing you at the board meeting next week. Have a relaxing weekend.

PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS

It's a First! Dad Receives Rehabbed Car for Bates' 22nd Annual Responsible Parenting Award with HCDE Head Start

For the first time in 22 years of gifting rehabbed cars to needy moms, Bates Collision Centers presents keys to a young father whose daughter is enrolled in Harris County Department of Education Head Start.



The historic moment will be celebrated in person, outside the Bates Collision Center, 3219 N. Main St. in Baytown, on Thursday, Dec. 17 at 10 a.m. Dad John Rose and daughter Journee join owners Lee and Leila Bates, their staff and community to unwrap the mystery vehicle filled with gifts and equipped with insurance for six months.

The 22nd Annual Bates Responsible Parenting Awards provides “helping out with a hand up” as the Bates and their staff spend months rehabbing a collision vehicle and gifts it to a deserving parent.

The 32-year-old father works as a truck driver for Amazon. He says he has turned his life around after getting into trouble in his younger years. Daughter Journee, 4, attends the HCDE Head Start at Fifth Ward. Her dad also volunteers at the center through a leadership group called the Policy Council.

“This car is going to change my life because I won’t have to take the bus anymore,” John said. “I will be able to take my daughter to school every morning. It’s important to be in my child’s education.”

The Bates make the annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents often make in order to provide for their children.

Journee is a precocious, bright child with a big vocabulary. She is enthusiastic about learning sight words and is enamored with her father. She will be presented with her own ride, a bike with training wheels.

“Most kids just want to play in school, but Journee wants to go to school to learn,” her dad said.

Co-owner Lee Bates was immediately impressed by John’s application which was submitted by the center manager. John wrote an essay about his life as part of the application process.

“He owned his mistakes in his life and wants to be a good father for his daughter,” Lee said.

Bates co-owner Leila says both she and her husband Lee are proud of their employees who continue to supply time and resources to families they have yet to meet.

“Putting cars back on the road is part of our daily grind, but this is putting families back on the road,” she said. “We have a giving staff, and this project brings our entire team together.”

[Read more...](#)



PROGRAM

CONNECTIONS

CASE for Kids: Did You Know?

CASE for Kids continues to be an important partner for school districts and community partners through the 17 districts and organizations it serves. In 2019-2020, 17,020 students and educators were served.

Through comprehensive programs which provide funding for actual afterschool services to individual students, CASE for Kids provides afterschool services before and after the school day. During the pandemic, many of those services were accomplished virtually. Through social-emotional learning, CASE for Kids helped make a difference in children's mental well-being.

Through Resource Management, CASE for Kids connects organizations with afterschool providers who offer services ranging from tutorials to robotics.

Because of funding provided through project-based learning, CASE for Kids supplies CASE Debates and the All Earth Ecobot Challenge. This year those events will be hosted virtually.

Through quality support, CASE for Kids supports afterschool professionals with professional development and an afterschool library with games, software and tangible, hands-on resources called the SMART Zone.



Ecobot Challenge 2019 archived photo



CASE Debates team from Spring ISD archived photo

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Education Foundation Begins Second Round of District Funding, Supports Fundraising Efforts

Our Education Foundation of Harris County continues to support area school districts through the Partners in Education initiative.

First, the foundation solicited a second round of grant requests to fund unmet needs and innovative ideas in area school districts. Grant requests are due at the end of January, and announcements will be made in February.

Supporting district education foundations through fundraiser sponsorships is another goal for our foundation. On Dec. 8, HCDE Trustee Amy Hinojosa who represents Precinct 2 volunteered at the Pasadena ISD Education Foundation's "Back 4 the Future Virtual Telethon" where our foundation donated \$2,500. Proceeds support teacher mini-grants and student scholarships. Hinojosa manned the phones as well as presented the check at the telethon.



The EFHC will also support an upcoming golf tournament for the Aldine ISD Education Foundation in addition to incoming sponsorship requests.

Because school district foundations have been forced to cancel in-person, fundraising events, many of their plans to support teachers and classrooms are lagging. These strategic initiatives allow us to support districts quickly and effectively during the pandemic.

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



Superintendent Colbert presents a drone to Stafford ISD Superintendent Dr. Robert Bostic. The drones were purchased from a grant from our foundation.

BOARD BRIEFS

250 Student Debaters Join for Friendly Rivalry, Annual Competition

More than 250 students from CASE Debates and the Houston Urban Debate League (HUDL) compete in a virtual 2nd annual HUDL Winter Classic on Saturday, Dec. 12.

The competition includes students from 28 high schools across eight districts and three charter schools.

To view the action from 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m., email Toni Candis, CASE Debates, tcandis@hcde-texas.org for a link to the debate platform.



Records Management Information Video: Document Storage, Scanning, Shredding and More

Records Management provides document storage services, scanning, shredding and delivery to most of the area school districts in Harris County as well as many municipalities. View the new information video on Records Management services with Curtis Davis and his staff:

[View video](#)

Save the Date: Dyslexia Summit 2021 Jan. 16



The Teaching and Learning Center readies for the Dyslexia Summit 2021 set for Jan. 16. The virtual event features several notable experts from the Neuhaus Center, a 501c nonprofit educational foundation dedicated to promoting reading success. The summit is being organized through Brenda Arteaga, director of special populations at HCDE. <https://tinyurl.com/DyslexiaSummit21>

More details about speakers and topics will be provided in next week's Connector.

A Don't Miss: Transitioning from HPD to ISD Podcast with Katy ISD Police Chief Henry Gaw



The Center for Safe and Secure Schools presents a new podcast for its "Take Care Tuesdays" sessions on Dec. 15 called "Transitioning from HPD to ISD" with Henry Gaw, police chief for Katy ISD. Listen to the podcast next Tuesday: <https://anchor.fm/safe-secure-schools>.

IN THE NEWS

Video Promotes 22nd annual Responsible Parenting Award for Car Giveaway with Head Start, Bates Collision

View the video that promotes the upcoming car giveaway with Bates Collision Centers and Head Start. The video features the Bates family, employees preparing the car and John and Journee Rose. John is the first father to receive the car as he receives car no. 39.

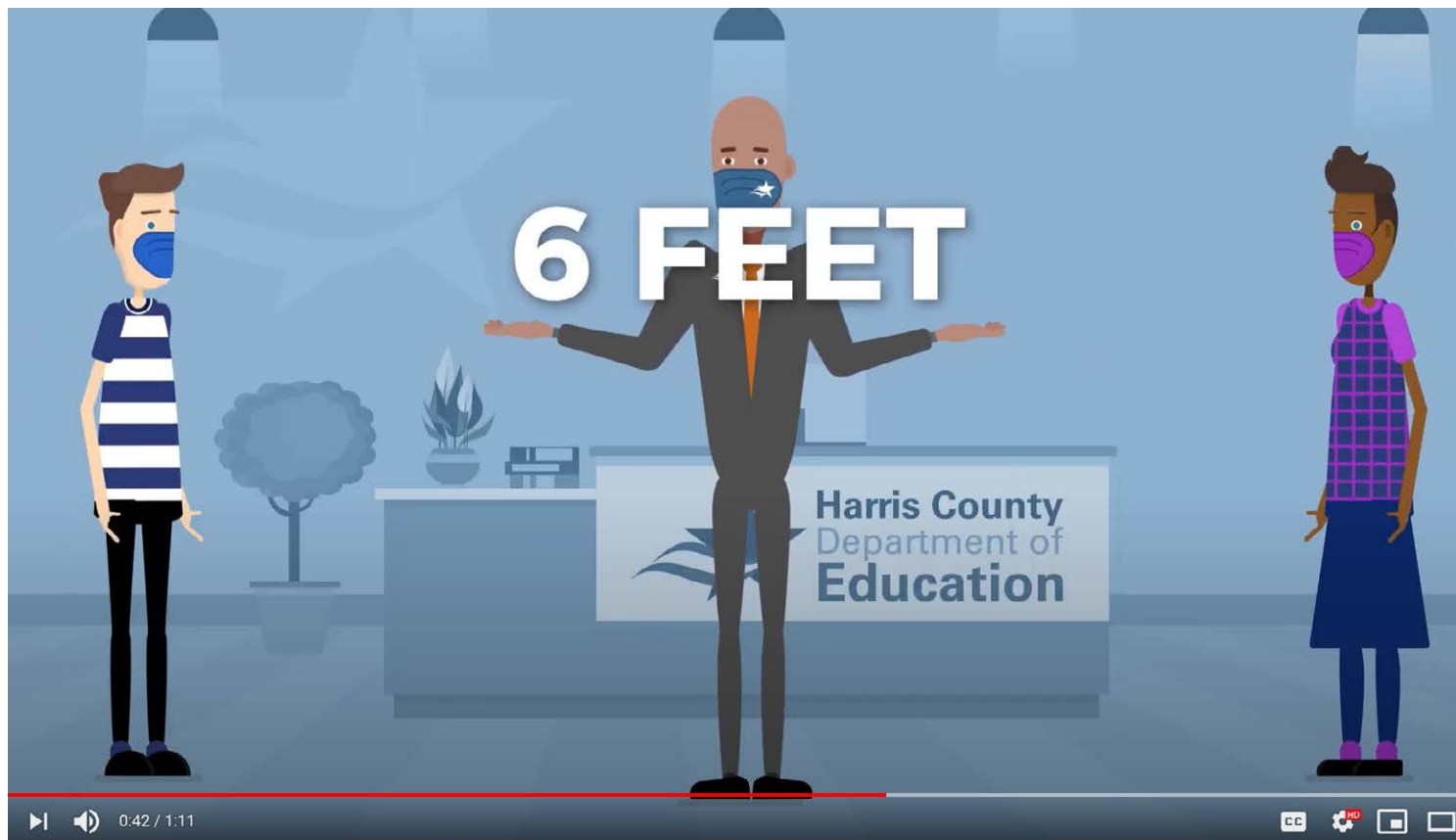
[View video](#)



Six Feet Please! Video Reinforces Social Distancing with Employees

The Communications team prepared this video for employees as a reminder about COVID-19 safety precautions. The animated video uses Superintendent Colbert's height as a guide in judging the six-foot rule.

[View video](#)



ACHIEVEMENT...*WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT*

This week, the following Board expectations were met:

Superintendent Objective B: Organization Morale

- Celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges excellence.

Superintendent Objective D: Community Relations

- Establishes and maintains a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the department and community.
- Works with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.

Superintendent Objective H: Board Relations

- Keeps the board informed of significant issues as they arise, using agreed-upon criteria and procedures for information dissemination.

As a tradition, community partner Bates Collision Center gifts a rehabbed car to a deserving Head Start parent as part of



the Responsible Parenting Award. This year we witness something new as a dad is gifted the car as result of his dedication to parenting his little girl.

This event provides visibility and involvement in the community and brings together elected officials, community leaders and HCDE staff and trustees to celebrate an amazing feat in giving. A car represents new opportunity to John Rose's family, and the event is always a great way to usher in the holiday season.



Through our Partners in Education Initiative, we are witnessing the big impact we are making by providing funding to local ISDs. Through this monthly report on the foundation, I am keeping information flowing between us so that you are knowledgeable about these grants and sponsorships with area education foundations.

HCDE BOARD

Board President

Eric Dick

Vice President

Danny Norris

Board Members

Richard Cantu

Andrea Duhon

Amy Hinojosa

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

UPCOMING EVENTS:

WORKSHOPS

(Online Only)

Dec. 15

Teachers Write! Grades K-12

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dec. 16

Board Meeting Irvington
1 p.m.