

# the **CONNECTOR**



**TALENTED ARTIST PUSHES HER CREATIVITY, MAKES HISTORY WITH 2 SCHOLASTIC AMERICAN VISIONS NOMINEES P.3**



**CASE FOR KIDS, CITY COUNCIL HONOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS AT CITY CONNECTIONS RECOGNITION P.7**

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# of Note

What many may not realize is that in addition to being a Superintendent with a strategic, systems-oriented mindset, I also have a creative side. When I was in college, I wrote poetry and won several awards for my poems. This creative outlet helped me to clearly articulate thoughts and ideas which has helped me immensely throughout my academic and professional career.

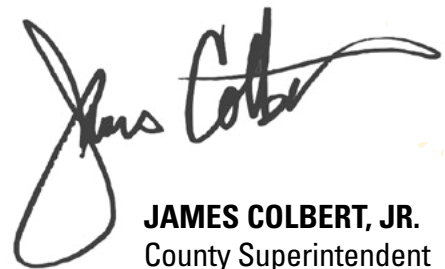
So I eagerly look forward to the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards every year. This is probably one of the largest and most impactful programs HCDE runs, supporting tens of thousands of students in the region with their art and writing aspirations. This week ELT visited the Scholastic Exhibit at the Houston Central Library where art and writing award winners are proudly displayed through the end of March. I love to see the creative ideas that come out through painting, photography, drawing and the written word. Local students are so gifted and their talent always amazes me! I know that writing helped me throughout my journey to success and I am proud that HCDE is helping thousands of young artists realize their dreams as well.

I started the week fulfilling my duties as a member of the UIL State Executive Committee followed by standing meetings with staff to discuss ongoing projects and initiatives. On Tuesday, I met with the Leadership Team and worked on my presentation for the Board Priorities Workshop later this month.

On Wednesday, I met with staff for regular updates and toured the Scholastic Art Exhibit at Houston Central Library. That afternoon I met with the two finalists for the Communications Director position. Today, I extended the welcome at the Leadership Houston Education Day held at our Adult Education facility, followed by standing meetings in the afternoon.

The Connector will be on hiatus next week as almost all HCDE facilities will be closed for Spring Break.

Have a wonderful weekend.



**JAMES COLBERT, JR.**  
County Superintendent



# Program Connections



Faina Meredia, a senior at Houston Independent School District's Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, was named a 2026 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards American Visions nominee for two pieces: "Dream Body" and "I Fear To Be Anything Less Than Perfect."

## SCHOLASTIC AMERICAN VISIONS NOMINEE PUSHES THE MEDIUM, HER CREATIVITY TO EARN RARE RECOGNITION

**EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW MATERIALS TAKES COURAGE** because there is no guarantee everything will work out. But it's often a risk artists are willing to take.

When Faina Meredia was accepted into the Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) in Houston Independent School District as a freshman, she focused on painting and other two-dimensional media. Her instructors, however, quickly encouraged her to branch out. That small push recently paid off, and the reward was twofold for the senior.

"I opened my laptop just after I got home from an amazing day of showing all my artwork in my senior showcase, and it was right there, 'You're a Scholastic American Visions nominee,'" Meredia recalled with enthusiasm. "It was really the cherry on top of one of the best days. I was super excited and motivated to continue creating."

Meredia, a first-time Scholastic Art & Writing Awards submitter, received six Gold Keys, one Silver Key, one Honorable Mention and more significantly, was named an American Visions

nominee for two pieces – "Dream Body" and "I Fear to Be Anything Less Than Perfect." The distinction marks the first time in regional history that a student has been nominated for two top-level awards in the national competition within the same year.

Presented by the nonprofit organization The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program has fostered creativity and talent within millions of students in grades 7-12 for more than 100 years. Serving as the second-largest regional affiliate of the program, Harris County Department of Education received nearly 14,000 submissions from students in Harris, Galveston and Fort Bend counties this year. The number is almost 2,000 more than last year.

"Scholastic Awards is creating a whole space for young artists to get together in person and evaluate each other's work, talk about ideas and show them what it means to be recognized on a regional, state and sometimes a national level," said David Waddell, the director of the visual art department at HSPVA.

Like many creatives, Meredia's artistic journey began as a young child doodling on notebooks. Peers noticed her talents and commissioned her

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

# Program Connections

interpretations of their favorite animals, characters or landscapes. Her mother then introduced her to the renowned artwork at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and that's when Maredia's inspiration for art really took shape.

"I had an interest in all the figurative art, so everything that had a body in it or represented someone," she described. "When I was younger, I felt I understood the artwork on a personal level, but when I got older and could read the context tags, that formed another meaning. I started to see the artist's own interpretation of their creation, and now I strive to create a personal interpretation for my viewers as well."

The Visual Arts curriculum at HSPVA parallels the challenges of a college-level Fine Arts program and is designed to provide students with a foundation to build on and a dynamic range of experiences. Students can experiment with textiles, digital media, welding, photography, woodworking and more.

Maredia tried them all.

"She's showing so much evolution, artistic and even personal growth," Waddell said, beaming with pride as he recalled watching Maredia's journey throughout her four years at HSPVA. "She's worked with all the mediums, experimented, taken risks and pushed her creations to the limit. I think all her work is just stunning and so different."

Added Maredia: "I really love to incorporate any sort of medium that kind of contradicts each other, and it's interesting to work with. The exploration pushed me to create more work, and the more I created, the more I fell in love with mixed media artwork."



*"I Fear To Be Anything Less Than Perfect"*

"Dream Body," one of her American Vision award winners, is just one byproduct of that exploration. For the project, Maredia created a dress, inspired by a recent shopping trip with her mom and friends. She noted that while searching for clothes, she realized her friends' harsh comments about how the clothes fit their body types stemmed from societal expectations, not from genuine unhappiness with themselves.

To combat stigma and express her feelings about the world around her, the Maredia headed to the studio.

"The bodice is made out of resin and fabric, which lends itself to a certain fragility, but also strength," she described. "I wanted the bottom to be fluid and flowy to mimic regular clothing that moves with the body. The hanger is connected to a wire I've attached that punctures into the breastplate, which symbolizes the body's connection to clothes and the depth of how far consumption can affect us."

Femininity, consumerism and identity are all words the high school senior uses to describe the piece, but resilience can

be used to describe her. She spent two months in the studio developing a concept and working with new materials like resin, a moldable substance that cures into a durable, glass-like solid. She was forced to troubleshoot along the way, but says that's part of the beauty in creating.

"Every art piece you create can teach you something, and that's one thing I love about sculpture: it's so unpredictable," Maredia said. "With painting or other media of that sort, you can kind of predict the outcome, but with sculpture, you can't figure out what the piece will look like in the end."

"I Fear To Be Anything Less Than Perfect," the second piece to be named an American Vision award finalist, reflects similar themes. The mixed-media creation can be viewed as a culmination of Maredia's education at HSPVA, as it is both a callback to



TO SEE MORE  
OF THE STORY:

[VIEW OUR VIDEO](#)

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# Program Connections



*"Dream Body"*



*Maredia has experimented with various media, and her efforts are paying off with significant regional recognition.*

her painting roots and uses embroidery thread to cross-stitch the words "I Fear To Be Anything Less Than Perfect" across a woman's face. She urges viewers to pay attention to the details in the lettering and recognize that the stitching is not perfect, nor are the letters that spell "perfect," emphasizing that it's okay to make mistakes throughout life.

"The amount of emphasis we place on presentation or the way we want to be seen in the world takes so much effort, but there are flaws to everything," Maredia smiled. "That's what makes the world and everyone in it so unique. There is beauty in imperfection."

The first-time Scholastic winner hopes people draw their own interpretation from each piece.

"Art can mean so much to people, and I've certainly looked at different artworks and found a deeper meaning or interpretation,"

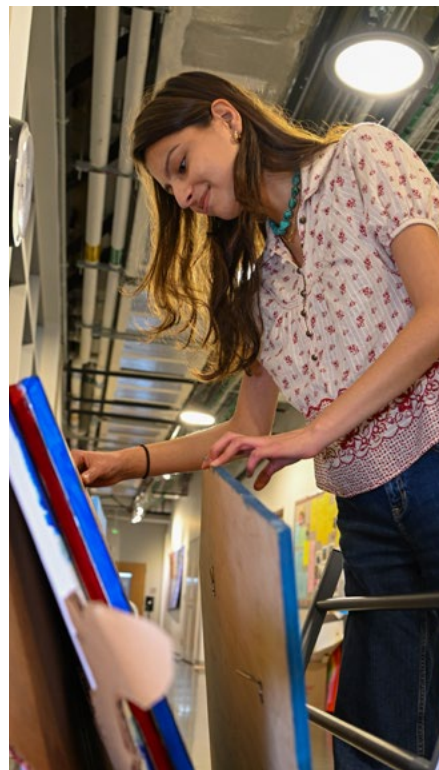
she explained. "I've seen people really connect with these pieces, especially when they see the titles, because I feel this is a topic that many can relate to."

Added Waddell: "Art can be a powerful tool, and I think that's what is happening with Faina. I'm proud that she'll have the opportunity to share her work through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, while also being inspired by other people who are also at her level."

Maredia will be honored as an American Visions nominee on March 26 at the Wortham Theatre at the Scholastic Art & Writing Exhibit and Celebration, joining more than 2,800 Gold and Silver Key winners who brought a distinct

and authentic voice, perspective and technical skill to their work. As her senior year comes to an end and she prepares to enroll in a collegiate Visual Arts program, Maredia has one piece of advice for young creatives.

"Your experiences are never singular – keep creating, stay motivated and search inside for a deeper understanding of life and look to that when creating your artwork, because that is where people start to relate," she said. "And always remember that life is unenjoyable without art. Yes, you can keep living without it, but there's really no point, because art inspires us all, whether we know it or not." ★



*Maredia searched through years' worth of her work to find the perfect creation to submit for the 2026 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition.*

# Program Connections

## 2026 SCHOLASTIC ART AND WRITING AWARDS AMERICAN VISIONS AND AMERICAN VOICES NOMINEES

### AMERICAN VISIONS NOMINEES | GOLD KEY ART AWARDS

#### *"Blueprints of life"*

**Brenda Guzman Quesada**, 9, Freeman High School (Katy ISD)  
Submitted through teacher Terrence Clark

#### *"From Within"*

**Juliet Zhou**, 9 (Fort Bend ISD)  
Submitted through teacher Feng Zhu

#### *"I Fear To Be Anything Less Than Perfect"*

**Faina Maredia**, 12, Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (Houston ISD)  
Submitted through teacher David Waddell

#### *"Cousins"*

**Saj Evans McNallan**, 11, Seven Lakes High School (Katy ISD)  
Submitted independently

#### *"Nana"*

**Avery Wong**, 9, Jeni's Art  
Submitted independently

#### *"Dream Body"*

**Faina Maredia**, 12, Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (Houston ISD)  
Submitted through teacher David Waddell

### AMERICAN VOICES NOMINEES | GOLD KEY WRITING AWARDS

#### *"America Reloads"*

**Zinnia Garrett**, 8 (Houston ISD)  
Submitted through teacher Megan Baxter

#### *"Dolled Up"*

**Maithreyi Asthagiri**, 12, Kinkaid School  
Submitted through teacher Angelique Jamail

#### *"Good Night Mystic"*

**Alice Cancienne**, 8, Annunciation Orthodox School  
Submitted through teacher Marian Rosse

#### *"The Bombs Came on Tuesday"*

**Emma Emig**, 9  
Submitted independently

#### *"The Window"*

**Asmi Santra Dastidar**, 8 (Katy ISD)  
Submitted independently



## SUPT. COLBERT VIEWS SCHOLASTIC ART & WRITING WORKS AT HOUSTON CENTRAL LIBRARY

A SELECTION OF THE 2026 SCHOLASTIC ART & WRITING GOLD AND SILVER KEY WINNERS IS CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY at the Houston Central Library Downtown. Superintendent James Colbert Jr., HCDE Trustee Andrea Duhon and members of the Executive Leadership Team stopped by on March 4 to admire the artwork and writing of some of Harris, Fort Bend and Galveston counties' most talented 9-12 graders.

This year's Scholastic exhibit features several new elements. For the first time in several years, selections include three-dimensional art like American Vision nominee "Dream Body" by Houston ISD's Faina Maredia and sculpture pieces "Ātḡishjaġlmrĕ™s Respite" and "Meltdown" by Grayson Borbidge and Ryan Li from Fort Bend Christian Academy and Studio Z Art School, respectively.

"These creations are just incredible," Colbert said, admiring each submission. "With some of them, you really can't tell if it's a painting or photograph, but I think that's part of the beauty about the Scholastic Award Exhibit, because that's part of each individual building their interpretation of the piece."

In addition to the traditional excerpts from written works typically included in the exhibition, writers were encouraged to let their voices truly shine. Attendees can now scan QR codes listed next to the artist's name to hear a recording of students reading an excerpt of their creations for a more interactive experience.

High School art and writing selections will be on display at the Houston Central Library (500 McKinney St.) until March 24, while selections from 7-8 graders will be on display at Texas Art Supply (2001 Montrose Blvd.). All 2,800 Gold and Silver Key winners will then be honored at Wortham Center on March 26. ✨

# Board Briefs

## CITY LEADERS JOIN CASE FOR KIDS TO RECOGNIZE CITY CONNECTIONS GRANT AWARDEES, HIGHLIGHT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING

**THE CITY OF HOUSTON CONTINUES ITS PARTNERSHIP** with Harris County Department of Education's (HCDE) Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids division to bring out-of-school time activities to each of the 11 city council districts. The grant program – City Connections – awards funding to nonprofit afterschool providers.

On March 5, the organizations met with city council members and CASE for Kids leadership where they were recognized for helping keep children in communities engaged and safe. Grant funding ranged from \$5,000 to \$15,000 and is administered to vetted programs by CASE for Kids through qualifications set by City Council.

This year, 96 total organizations and programs received funding for the 2025-2026 school year. With City Connections funding, program directors can organize fine arts, academic enrichment, college exploration and youth mentoring activities. 🦋



TO SEE MORE OF THE STORY:

[VIEW OUR PHOTO GALLERY](#)

## ADULT EDUCATION TEAM MEMBERS EARN TOP TEACHER, SUPPORT STAFF HONORS BY STATE ASSOCIATION



**HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM** won 2 of 3 statewide employee of the year awards at the annual Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE) in February.

Hyo Sung Kwon was named the association's 2026 Texas Adult Education Teacher of the Year, and Raul Truan was named the 2026 Texas Adult Education Support Person of the Year. With their colleagues on hand to celebrate them, Kwon and Truan were surprised with the top honors at the annual awards dinner.

Kwon, an 18-year educator, has a 93 percent student retention rate in her classes. In a support letter, division Senior Director Dr. Eduardo Honold said Kwon's "ability to adapt to the diverse needs of adult learners while maintaining high standards of instruction is truly commendable."

Truan, a program assistant for 10-plus years, is credited with transforming Foundry Church in northwest Houston into a vibrant hub for adult education, including high school equivalency and ESL classes. Honold said Truan's "commitment goes far beyond the typical responsibilities of his role."

Having two staff members recognized for their outstanding service at the state level highlights how HCDE's Adult Education division is blazing a trail by through These wins highlight how the Adult Education division is providing life-changing opportunities to Harris County learners every day. 🦋

## AFTERSCHOOL 'KIDPRENEURS' SELL PRODUCTS, GAIN REAL-WORLD BUSINESS EXPERIENCE AT MARKETPLACE



 TO SEE MORE OF THE STORY: [VIEW OUR VIDEO](#)



**WITH A COUNTDOWN DOWN FROM THREE**, students representing 14 area schools raced toward business shops and product displays. There, they met their peers, and the real-world experience of producing and selling goods, keeping inventory, earning profits and buying consumer goods came to life.

The Kids' Day Entrepreneurship market, held Feb. 28 at the Irvington Conference Center, gave hundreds of students hands-on instruction in money management. The long-time initiative with Harris County Department of Education's (HCDE) Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids uses the market as a culmination of a 6-week financial literacy and entrepreneurship learning unit within programs across the county. Participants earned "CASE bucks" for their contributions to their respective projects, which they could use for currency as buyers in the market.

From jewelry, scented candles and bath bombs, to bedazzled phones cases and even admission to carnival games, the market offered something for everyone. The aspiring entrepreneurs also heard from businesswomen and author Crystal Victoria, who gifted her Teen Biz Box – a small business starter kit she produced – to three CASE programs.

At day's end, winners were chosen based on profit, marketing and overall performance. 🌟

### 2026 KIDS' DAY ENTREPRENEURSHIP WINNERS

- Best Pitch** | *Crespo Elementary*
- Most Innovative** | *Drew Elementary*
- People's Choice** | *Royalwood Elementary*
- Best Marketing & Advertising** | *Ross Sterling Middle School*
- Best Customer Service** | *Sanchez North Charter School*
- Social Impact** | *Promise Community School-Ripley House*
- Best Teamwork** | *Visual and Performing Arts Academy*
- Top Sales** | *Cloverleaf Elementary*



 TO SEE MORE OF THE STORY: [VIEW OUR PHOTO GALLERY](#)

## ALIEF ISD'S KERR HIGH SCHOOL WINS WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATE, LEADS CASE DEBATES CONTINGENT AT HUDL CITY CHAMPIONSHIPS



**A YEAR AFTER PLACING SECOND**, Alief Independent School District's Kerr High School took home top honors in World Schools Debate at the Houston Urban Debate League (HUDL) City Championships on Feb. 28.

Students from Aldine, Alief, Goose Creek Consolidated and Spring Branch independent school districts join others from YES Prep Public Schools in HCDE's CASE Debates program. The initiative provides inner-city youth and aspiring debaters with training and access to both coaching and tournaments.

At downtown Houston's historic Bob Casey Federal Courthouse, CASE for Kids students competed against Houston ISD students in 4 of 5 events at the championships: Congressional Debate, Policy (CX) Debate, World Schools Debate and Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

Kerr students Leah Ghebrelul and Erica Carranza returned from last year's runner-up team, and were joined by Preston Nguyen, Syed Ali and Gerardo Diaz to comprise the champions. They defeated Maria Ledezma, Raquel Barnes, Logan Nguyen, Piet Athmer and Melissa Habani from Spring Branch ISD's Westchester Academy.

Winning students and teams earned scholarships in addition to advancing to national competition. 🌟

### 2025-26 HUDL DEBATE CITY CHAMPIONSHIPS

#### CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

**Champion** | Samantha Tran  
(Houston ISD's Bellaire High School)  
**Runner-up** | Emilyn Sun (Bellaire)

#### PUBLIC FORUM

**Champion** | Ivy Gu and Roy Zhao (Bellaire)  
**Runner-up** | Mike Weng and Eric Xu (Bellaire)

#### POLICY (CX) DEBATE

**Champion** | Leo Cheng and Ayub Ahmed (Bellaire)  
**Runner-Up** | Sanjit Kathi (Houston ISD's DeBakey High School)

#### WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATE

**Champion** | Leah Ghebrelul, Erica Carranza, Preston Nguyen, Syed Ali, and Gerardo Diaz (Alief ISD's Kerr High School)  
**Runner-up** | Maria Ledezma, Raquel Barnes, Logan Nguyen, Piet Athmer, and Melissa Habani (Spring Branch ISD's Westchester Academy)

#### LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

**Champion** | Luca Cheng (Bellaire)  
**Runner-up** | Aashrith Korampally (Bellaire)

# Board Briefs

## HCDE HOSTS LEADERSHIP HOUSTON EDUCATION DAY

**HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (HCDE) AND THE EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF HARRIS COUNTY (EFHC)** welcomed more than 60 leaders from area organizations to the Adult Education Learning Center on March 7 for Leadership Houston Education Day, a higher education-focused event. Superintendent James Colbert Jr. was invited to speak by Trustee Andrea Duhon, a Class XLIII alumnus, to highlight the importance of strong leadership across the community and to emphasize the critical role educators and civic leaders play in shaping the next generation. Trina Silva, director of EFHC and a Class XLII alumna, also moderated a panel discussion. She guided a conversation with leaders from several Houston-area universities, who discussed strategies to expand access to higher education for underserved and first-generation students while navigating evolving legislative and federal policies. HCDE Trustee Silky Joshi-Malik and Construction Director Joe Carreon are part of Leadership Houston's current Class XLIV. ★



## ABS WEST BRINGS BIG ENERGY TO READ ACROSS AMERICA WEEK



**ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL SCHOOL (ABS) WEST LAUNCHED READ ACROSS AMERICA WEEK**, celebrated March 2-6, with creativity and connection designed to meet students where they are. Senior Director Dr. Charles Ned set the tone for the week on Monday with a virtual reading of Dr. Seuss books, followed by the I-Ready character Snargg, surprising students with donuts to add a burst of fun to an already joyful literary experience. Throughout the rest of the week, members of HCDE's Executive Leadership Team, including assistant superintendents Jonathan Parker and Dr. Tyrone Sylvester, participated in virtual readings. For students with emotional and behavioral challenges, these interactive experiences do more than promote reading – they help ABS West build positive associations with learning and strengthen relationships with staff and peers. ★

## HCDE STUDENTS ENJOY HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO TRIP ON SENSORY FRIENDLY DAY

**TO PROVIDE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL GUESTS**, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (HLSR) included a "Sensory Friendly Day" on March 5, at which select areas in the carnival area featured minimal lights and sounds. Students and staff from Academic and Behavior School East and Fortis Academy enjoyed a trip to the carnival, as the sensory-friendly features provided a positive experience. #TeamHCDE thanks HLSR for providing an accommodating experience for students at our Special Schools. ★



TO SEE MORE OF THE STORY:

[VIEW OUR VIDEO](#)

# Board Briefs

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COORDINATORS PROVIDE PRIMARY ELECTION DAY INFO AT IRVINGTON, NPO



**TO BEST SERVE** Harris County Department of Education staff members and provide them with information regarding the primary elections in Texas, HCDE's Civic Engagement team was busy tabling on March 3. Civic Engagement Coordinators Arnaldo Sandoval-Guerrero and Austen Yorke set up tables at Irvington and NPO locations, respectively, with information on hand for anyone with questions or needing assistance. ★

# In the Community



## HCDE LEADERS HELP CELEBRATE HOUSTONIAN'S APPOINTMENT TO NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND TEACHER GRANTS



**HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (HCDE)** Chief of Staff Danielle Bartz and Director of Construction Joe Carreon were on hand to help celebrate a historic moment for civic engagement in the Houston area. They joined fellow dignitaries, including Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, to honor Claudia Ortega Hogue, who was back in Houston following her appointment to the National League of Women Voters board of directors in October.

Ortega Hogue made history as the first Latina president of the League of Women Voters of Houston. Her civic service includes serving as Garcia's district director and she currently joins Carreon as a board member for Houston ToolBank, which strives to uplift communities with equipment and training for projects. ★

# SYSTEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT THIS WEEK, THE FOLLOWING BOARD EXPECTATIONS WERE MET:

## SUPERINTENDENT OBJECTIVE D: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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



*Faina Maredia, a senior at HSPVA and Scholastic American Visions nominee, has plans to enroll in a collegiate Visual Arts program after graduation and continue working with mixed media to express the world around her.*

### WE'RE COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS UNTIL WE HONOR SOME OF THE REGION'S BEST ARTISTS

at the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Celebrations, and it's nice to hear the background stories of these talented students as we approach March 26 and dive into the inspiration for their creativity. Faina Meredia, a senior at Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) in Houston Independent School District, is one of those interesting stories. A first-year participant in the competition, Maredia earned six Gold Keys and was named an American Visions nominee for two pieces. She's actually the first student in region history to be a two-time nominee the same year for the top-level awards. That is enough reason to celebrate. But kudos also goes to Maredia for accepting the challenge of HSPVA's Visual Arts curriculum, which offers a dynamic range of mediums to experiment with. She grew as an artist and truly found her passion. I look forward to hearing more stories and honoring all these talented students at the celebration later this month.

We honored the many afterschool and out-of-school time organizations and providers who invest in students across Houston at the City Connections Recognition Event on March 5. Through a four-year partnership between CASE for Kids and the Houston City

Council, funding is provided for afterschool programs across the 11 council districts to organize fine arts, academic enrichment, college exploration and youth mentoring activities. The Council approved increasing funding in January. CASE for Kids serves as the administrative partner, vetting the organizations and putting funds to work to best serve students and families. It truly takes a village to support Harris County learners and I thank all the partners who help pour into our communities.

Finally, CASE for Kids held its 2026 Kids' Day Entrepreneurship Market event on Feb. 28. The market is the culmination of an entrepreneurship project that provides hands-on instruction about money management, business and entrepreneurship to students in 14 CASE-funded afterschool programs. Over the course of six weeks, student teams develop business plans, name business owners and create products to sell on Market Day. Teaching through play is one of the exciting ways CASE for Kids makes an impact on afterschool enrichment. I'm excited to see how this project develops future Harris County entrepreneurs.

By effectively partnering with community organizations and governmental agencies, I am working to meet the needs of students through a cooperative relationship between the Department and community. 🌟



## HCDE BOARD

**Board President**  
Amy Hinojosa

**1st Vice President**  
Richard Cantu

**2nd Vice President**  
Dr. Erica Davis

**Board Members**  
Eric Dick  
Andrea Duhon  
Silky Joshi-Malik  
Dr. John McGee

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 9-13**  
Spring Break (HCDE Closed)

**March 26**  
Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Celebrations

**March 28**  
Afterschool is Cool Youth Expo

**April 3**  
Spring Holiday (HCDE Closed)

**April 10**  
Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit

**April 15**  
Board Meeting

**April 17**  
Irvington Picnic in the Parking Lot

**April 23**  
NPO Picnic in the Parking Lot