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Oct. 13, 2008

Texas principals in training this month to improve leadership skills

Austin -- For the second year, Texas public school principals and administrators have the opportunity to participate in an intensive two-day orientation geared toward a year-long program improving their leadership skills and providing invaluable professional development.

The Texas Principal Excellence Program (TxPEP) is open to school leaders who are interested in improving their problem solving, critical thinking, relationship-building, organizational management, and effective use of data. For the 2008-09 school year, more than 300 principals have signed up for the program that begins this month.

The TxPEP orientations will be held in the following locations:

- Hilton Arlington, Arlington, Oct. 13-14;
- Crowne Plaza Dallas Market Center, Dallas, Oct. 15-17;
- Drury Plaza Hotel Riverwalk, San Antonio, Oct. 27-28; and
- Holiday Inn Select-Greenway Plaza, Houston, Oct. 29-30.

The Texas Education Agency in collaboration with the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) and the University of Houston-Victoria School of Business have developed the year-long program to integrate business and management training into an educational leadership professional development program.

TxPEP has been revised from the first program in 2007, to serve as a support mechanism for any principal in his/her role as a high-impact leader of a high-impact school. The new program has:

- reduced the time away from campus to only two required days during the school year.
- increased the number of course offerings available to more than 450 titles.
- redesigned course curriculum so that there is more application and less theory;

In addition, participants can earn a minimum of 102 hours of professional development hours during the year, which can be applied to professional development requirements for principal recertification.

Goals

Participants will have the chance to meet numerous performance goals, including:

- improved leadership skills in self-selected areas, as measured by a 360-degree pre- and post-assessment (National Association of Secondary School Principals' 21st Century instrument selected).
- increased understanding of the correlation of a principal's demonstration of effective leadership and high levels of student achievement, as evidenced through reflective journal/portfolio entries.
- improved ability to network with other school leaders for problem-solving, sharing ideas, and learning together, as measured by number of contacts with TxPEP Learning Network (TLN) members and other TxPEP participants and/or staff
- increased valuing of professional development and reflective practice as vehicles for continuous school improvement, as measured by increases in test scores (2008 vs. 2009), decrease in drop-outs, increase in student and staff attendance.

The TxPEP was created by House Bill 1 in 2006 in an effort to improve school performance. Introduced in legislation as the School Leadership Pilot Program (SLPP), TxPEP was designed to specifically produce improvements in student achievement, graduation rates and teacher retention through the expansion of principal leadership and management skills.

For more information on the program, please visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/HB1/PriLeaPro/>.

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