



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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LITTLE ROCK: Three school principals in Arkansas have achieved the status of Master School Principal and were recognized today at the Arkansas State Board of Education meeting at the Arkansas Department of Education. These individuals have completed three years of rigorous professional development plus additional performance evaluations to graduate from the Arkansas Leadership Academy's Master Principal Program with designation this year.

Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education, and Dr. Debbie Davis, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy, presented awards of distinction and certificates to:

- **Michele French** - Ward Central Elementary, Cabot School District
- **Jackie Smith** - Arnold Drive Elementary, Pulaski County Special School District
- **Kay York** - Margaret Daniel Primary, Ashdown School District

"The training received through the Arkansas Leadership Academy goes well beyond the licensing requirements for school administrators and will indeed benefit these fine principals as well as the teachers and students in the schools where they serve," Dr. James said. "I offer them my most sincere congratulations for their achievements."

The Arkansas Leadership Academy Master Principal Institute was authorized by Act 44 of the Second Extraordinary Session of the 2003 Arkansas General Assembly. It is designed to develop leadership skills of principals through three phases of professional development.

"More than 500 principals from 70 counties have participated in Phase I of the program," Davis said. "Of those more than 500 principals, 112 have continued through the process to Phase II, III, or now, master school principal designation."

Master Principals will receive a \$9,000 per year bonus for five years upon earning the designation. They are eligible for an additional \$25,000 per year for five years if they are selected to serve at a low-performing school.

Phase I of the Master Principal Institute is open to all school principals with at least one year of experience and who have support and permission from their superintendents to participate. Principals from across the state meet during the year in four multi-day sessions for intense study while applying the learning from those sessions in their schools throughout the year.

Admission to the second phase of the program required submission of a portfolio documenting the application of the lessons learned from the first phase and the results of that work to improve student and adult learning in the school.

To be admitted to the third phase, principals must complete a rigorous application process that includes evidence of their impact on education at the district, state, and regional levels. These portfolios are evaluated by stakeholders in education from Arkansas as well as from out of state. Scorers receive training through the Arkansas Leadership Academy.

After successful completion of all three phases, principals may choose to participate in a rigorous assessment by a team of trained examiners with at least one member from each team from another state. The rigorous assessment process examines evidence from three primary sources:

- Student Performance: An analysis of student academic achievement data
- Principal Performance: An analysis of a portfolio created by the principal
- School Performance: A site visit to gather evidence

Successful completion of these steps qualifies an individual for Master School Principal status.

The Arkansas Leadership Academy is a collaborative partnership which includes nine state professional organizations: Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, Arkansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Arkansas Education Association, Arkansas AdvancEd, Arkansas Rural Education Association, Arkansas School Boards Association, Arkansas Public Relations Association, Arkansas National State Teachers of the Year, Wal-Mart, Tyson Foods, 15 universities, 15 educational cooperatives, and four governmental agencies.

The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.