



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**For Immediate Release
April 12, 2010**

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LITTLE ROCK: The Arkansas State Board of Education today recognized three new master school principals: Maribel Childress, principal of Monitor Elementary School in Springdale, Marguerite Hillier, principal of College Hill Elementary School in Texarkana, and Peggy Walter, principal of Fairview Elementary School in Ft. Smith. All three achieved the status of master school principal this spring after completing three years of rigorous professional development plus additional performance evaluations from the Arkansas Leadership Academy, which is based in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas.

Tom Kimbrell, Arkansas commissioner of education, Diana Peer, master principal leader, and Debbie Davis, director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy, presented certificate awards of distinction to the principals during the State Board's April meeting at the Arkansas Department of Education.

"I congratulate these individuals for pursuing excellence in their careers as educational leaders," Kimbrell said. "This training above and beyond the licensing requirements for school administrators will indeed benefit these fine principals and, even more importantly, the teachers and students in the schools where they serve."

Maribel Childress graduated from Louisiana Tech University alumnus with both a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in elementary counseling. She also has a specialist degree in educational leadership from the University of Arkansas.

Marguerite Hillier graduated from Henderson State University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She later received a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from East Texas State University as well as additional post-graduate hours from both Henderson State University and East Texas State University.

Peggy Walter, who holds alumnus, earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in elementary education, as well as a specialist degree in educational leadership, from Arkansas Tech University.

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 270 principals from more than 70 counties have participated in Phase I of the program,” Davis said. “Of those, more than 130 principals have continued through the process to Phase II and III, with twelve earning master school principal designation.”

Master principals receive a bonus of \$9,000 per year 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 who have at least one year of experience and the support and permission of 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 requires 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 on 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.

Established in 1991, the Arkansas Leadership Academy is a nationally recognized statewide partnership of 15 universities; nine professional associations; 15 educational cooperatives; the Arkansas Departments of Education, Higher Education, and Career Education; the Arkansas Educational Television Network; Tyson Foods, Inc; Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.; two superintendent representatives; the Office of the Governor; and the State Board of Education, a total of 49 Partners.

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.