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100 Texas Schools Invited To Participate In Governor's Educator Excellence Award Program

By Patricia Hawke

In November 2005, Governor Rick Perry initiated the \$10 million grant program for paying bonuses to school employees who have performed above expectations in raising student performance levels. One hundred Texas schools have been invited to participate in the Governor's Educator Excellence Award Program. To date, 98 have accepted the invitation.

The chosen Texas Schools have a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Each school has demonstrated high levels of student achievement or marked student improvement. Each has been rated exemplary or recognized, which are the two top academic ratings that can be awarded to a school under the Texas schools' accountability system; or they have shown strong performance gains in the areas of mathematics and reading.

Each school may apply for a three-year grant as follows:

· Schools with 449 students or less -- \$60,000 a year grant, · With 450 to 699 students -- \$90,000 a year grant, · 700 to 1,199 student -- \$135,000 a year grant, or · 1,200 students or more -- \$180,000 a year grant.

To maintain eligibility for the grant program, the participating Texas schools must receive ratings of academically acceptable or better. Recommended bonus amounts range from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per individual.

Each school may develop a customized incentive pay program that fits their individual school, as long as the teachers are involved in its development and under the following guidelines:

· 75 percent of the grant money must be used for classroom teacher incentive pay; · A classroom teacher must be employed by the Texas schools district and spend an average of four hours each day teaching in an academic setting or career/technology instructional setting; · Award recipients must improve student performance and exceed academic growth expectations, · Performance must be determined using objective and quantifiable measures, such as local benchmarking systems, end-of-course tests, and other assessments, and · Recipients must have collaborated with other

faculty and staff members to improve overall student performance at the school.

Athletic coaches are not eligible for the program, unless they also teach and qualify under the classroom teacher guidelines.

The customized incentive pay plans may take into account a teacher's assignment in hard-to-staff areas that are specific to individual school districts. A teacher's initiative and commitment to other activities that directly result in improved student performance also may be considered, such as tutoring students after school.

Some of the possible uses for the remaining 25 percent of the grant money are:

- To provide incentive pay for other school personnel who contribute to increased student achievement,
- Provide training to teachers,
- Support activities for mentoring,
- Teacher induction programs,
- Signing bonuses for teachers in high-need subject areas,
- Activities that support common planning time and curriculum development,
- Proven programs to recruit and retain teachers, and
- Stipends for teachers who participate in after school or Saturday programs, which are designed to improve teaching and learning.

Though 12 percent of the Texas schools' districts have some type of teacher incentive pay program, this is the first state program in almost 20 years. When Texas schools achieve exceptional results, the principals always give credit to their teachers and staffs. The Intent of the Governor's excellence award program is to say a very sincere "thank you" to the teachers and staff who go the extra mile to help students succeed.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K-12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K-12 schools. Patricia has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more on Texas schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Texas/index.html>

San Jose Schools Has A Rewarding Summer

By Stacy Andell

San Jose Schools Win Awards and Honors This Summer

This summer several San Jose Schools won some kind of award or honor for their continued achievements in education. Three schools in the San Jose Schools system have won awards for successfully competing in the California Student Media and Multimedia Festival. River Glenn Middle School and Almaden Elementary entered a multimedia technology and science project into the competition. This project entitled "Environmental Concerns in the Community" won the Multi-Grades & Schools Collaboration for Grades 4-8 category. In this project three San Jose Schools interacted with

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each other electronically to collaborate on a scientific investigation of the impact of precautionary measures designed to protect area wetlands. The students participating in the project came from a fourth grade class at Almaden Elementary, a fifth grade class at Zanker Elementary and a class from River Glenn. The two main coordinating teachers Mary Howland, Special Education Teacher of River Glen Middle School, and Beth Fensterwald, TSG of Almaden Elementary were also honored.

Two San Jose Elementary Schools received 2006 California Distinguished Schools honors this year. Willow Glen Elementary and Terrell Elementary were called by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell to announce their selection as 2006 California Distinguished Schools. This honor is given to schools that have shown themselves to improve over the school year. The California School Recognition Program is designed to aid and publize the success of the California Board of Education and the school district , like San Jose Schools. The California School Recognition Program honors California's best and inspiring schools with the California Distinguished School Award. Participation in the program is completely voluntary and decided by the school district. However, the award is very respect and many schools in the state strive to attain it. About 5% of the schools in California receive the California Distinguished School Award. Usually participation in the program includes about 40 school districts from across the state. San Jose Schools has participated for many years and plans to continue in the future.

California's Model Schools Project

Recently, two San Jose Schools have been selected to participate in the California Model Schools Project. The exhaustive application process narrowed the selection down to eight schools in Santa Clara County of which two are members of the San Jose Schools system. The two schools selected to participate in the California Model Schools Project were Gardner Academy and Willow Glen Middle School. These two schools will work closely with and be supported by other schools across Santa Clara County. They will also collaborate with the Successful Practices Network at the International Center for Leadership in Education. The main goals of the California Model Schools Project is to increase state testing scores, improve the quality of the schools instructional and leadership practices, and raise community involvement in the schools.

San Jose Schools' Schallenberger School Wins Excellence Awards

Schallenberger School has received the State of California's Excellence Award for their performance in last school year. This award recognizes those schools that have raised its overall academic achievement scores and have closed the achievement gap among its students. The State of

California's Excellence Award was presented in Costa Mesa. Schallenberger School has also been given an award from the California Business for Education Excellence Foundation at a ceremony.

Stacy Andell is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in–depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. For more information on San Jose schools visit

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