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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Advanced teacher training supported by State Farm

Teachers from across Kansas beginning their pursuit of a prestigious national certification and received help from area businessmen.

Over 40 teachers from across the state attended the Fall 2006 National Board Orientation Academy sponsored by State Farm Insurance. This is the eighth year the company has funded the academy.

State Farm contributed \$6,000 to support two orientation academies held at the beginning of the school year – one held at ESU and the other in Wichita due to the number of teachers interested in the program in the area. The program supporting national board candidates operates from the Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification in ESU's Jones Institute for Educational Excellence.

“ESU's National Board Certification candidate support program has a national reputation, in part because of its long-standing goal and achievements in providing equitable access to teachers throughout the state as they pursue the NBPTS advanced national board certification,” said Phil Bennett, Interim Dean of The Teachers College. “With the increased interest in national board certification, the supplemental financial support from State Farm is much appreciated and serves as an excellent example of how the partnership between private and public funding sources can help assure our ability to meet the goal of equitable access to the academy for all teachers in the state.”

Over 80% of educators mentored through a program at Emporia State University in the 2004-05 year achieved national board certification highest honor of the teaching profession. With the new national board certified teachers, Kansas now has a total of 204 national board certified teachers in the state's schools. In Kansas, 81% percent of the teachers who received assistance from the ESU program in 2004-05 attained the certification in their first year of attempting it. This 81% initial certification rate is 30-40 points above the national initial certification rate. Teachers who sought national board certification in 2005-06 will find out in November if they will receive certification.

Pete Euler, a State Farm agent in Emporia, played a major role in advancing the original ESU proposal to the State Farm Foundation Kansas-Oklahoma regional office in Tulsa. Euler has continued to support the Center's proposals to the State Farm Foundation. Euler, along with local State Farm agents Vicki Burnett and Gene Reneau, have been supportive of the center's program.

“Our local State Farm agents continue to clearly demonstrate their ongoing commitment to help make this orientation program a reality in our state,” said Roger Caswell, director of ESU's Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification. “Their generous support has helped us build and sustain a model academy that includes professional guidance and mentoring for teachers throughout Kansas as they begin the rigorous year-long certification process,” Caswell said.

For more information about the NBPTS program at ESU, visit the Jones Institute web site at www.emporia.edu/jones. For more information about the State Farm gift, contact Tara Eubanks, with the Overland Park office at 913-814-6915.

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