FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACTS: Roger Caswell, rcaswell@emporia.edu, 1-877-378-5433, 620-341-5372
ATTACHED: Photo of check presentation (Left – Euler, Right – Caswell)

Advanced teacher training supported by State Farm

Teachers from across Kansas pursuing a prestigious national certification are receiving help from area businessmen.

State Farm Insurance gave $10,000 to help the program mentoring teachers as they complete work necessary to attempt to become nationally board certified. This is the 12th consecutive year State Farm has given $5,000 or more for the services supporting teachers, provided through ESU’s Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification.

In December 2009, 25 Kansas educators found out their efforts during the 2008-09 school year were successful. Kansas now has a total of 325 national board certified teachers in the state’s schools. In Kansas, 84% percent of the teachers who received assistance from the ESU program in 2008-09 attained the certification in their first year of attempting it. This 84% initial certification rate is 40 points above the initial certification rate nationally.

“Currently, there are approximately 40 teachers working towards certification that we know,” said Dr. Roger Caswell, director of the program, located the Jones Institute for Educational Excellence. “Without the sustained support of State Farm, especially during these economic times, it would be difficult to provide teachers with the support we give them as they go through this process.”

While the process is often misunderstood to mean that a teacher passed a test or was nominated for the award, Caswell explained National Board certification is a different kind of honor.

“While there are exercises teachers have to demonstrate knowledge about the content they teach, to earn certification educators must also submit four portfolio entries,” Caswell said. “These entries include written essays and video recordings of classroom exercises, strongly focused on student involvement and demonstrating students are learning in an authentic environment.”

“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, 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.”

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. Local State Farm agent Vicki Burnett is also supportive of the center’s program.

“Our local State Farm agents continue to clearly demonstrate their ongoing commitment to help make this program a reality in our state,” Caswell said. “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 one-to-three-year-long certification process.”

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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