**Kansas Teachers of Promise**

Twice each year, Kansas colleges and universities that offer teacher preparation programs are invited to select two teacher education students identified as Teachers of Promise to participate in a specific professional learning and recognition opportunity. Currently, 23 institutions offer teacher preparation programs and most participate in these opportunities.

**Selection**

 The selection process is left to the discretion of each college and university; however, most institutions choose one elementary student and one secondary student to represent them.

**Professional Learning and Recognition Opportunities**

***Fall Event***

The Teachers of Promise selected each fall are invited to attend a half-day workshop presented by the current Kansas Teacher of the Year Team, comprised of the Kansas Teacher of the Year and the seven state finalists or Kansas Regional Teachers of the Year. The Teachers of Promise also are invited to attend the Kansas Teacher of the Year State Awards Banquet. The workshop is held in conjunction with the Kansas Teacher of the Year State Awards Banquet in November, so the Teachers of Promise attend the workshop Saturday morning and then the awards banquet that evening.

 During the workshop, the Teachers of Promise have the opportunity to hear and learn from eight exemplary teachers who have a passion for teaching and are excited about working with those who will soon be entering the teaching profession. They share numerous resources, strategies, lesson plans, and tips. A different Kansas Teacher of the Year Team presents this workshop every year; but, it consistently receives excellent reviews from the workshop participants. The colleges and universities pay the registration fee for their students to attend the workshop.

 During the Kansas Teacher of the Year State Awards Banquet, each Teacher of Promise is introduced and presented with a framed certificate of recognition by the Commissioner of Education. They wear a special ribbon imprinted with the words “Teacher of Promise.” The printed program also identifies the higher education institutions and the names of their Teachers of Promise. Typically, this celebration is attended by 450-500 people. The colleges and universities pay the reservation fee for their students to attend the awards banquet. The Teachers of Promise may invite family members and other guests to attend the state awards banquet, but there is a charge to cover the cost of the meal.

***Spring Event***

 The Teachers of Promise selected during the spring semester are invited to attend the two-day Kansas Exemplary Educators Network (KEEN) State Education Conference in February. They are recognized during a special awards event at the conclusion of the conference.

 KEEN is comprised of educators who have been recognized through one of the programs administered by the Kansas State Department of Education, including the Kansas Teacher of the Year program, Milken Educator Awards program, Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science & Mathematics Teaching program, Horizon Award program, and National Board Certification program. The Kansas State Department of Education sponsors two conferences for KEEN members each year – one in February and the other in June. The February conference focuses on education policy and issues, while the one in June deals with curriculum.

 In addition to content, the KEEN Conference includes elements of celebration. The state’s Milken Educator and National Board Certified Teachers are honored during an evening event, and the conference closes with a celebration honoring the Horizon Award educators and Teachers of Promise. Each Teacher of Promise is introduced and presented with a framed certificate of recognition by the Commissioner of Education. They wear a special ribbon imprinted with the words “Teacher of Promise.” The printed program also identifies the higher education institutions and the names of their Teachers of Promise. Typically, this celebration is attended by 400-450 people.

 The colleges and universities pay the registration fee for their students to attend the workshop; however, the Kansas State Department of Education provides an honorarium to help pay conference expenses. In addition, the Department provides lodging for Teachers of Promise who live a distance from the conference site.

 The Teachers of Promise may invite family members and other guests to attend the awards celebration, but there is a charge to cover the cost of the meal. Guests are not permitted to attend any part of the conference other than the celebration recognizing the Teachers of Promise.

**Benefits**

The Teachers of Promise initiative was developed a number of years ago, and it has been very well received and supported by the state’s colleges and universities. The designation is special to the students who are selected to represent their college or university as a Teacher of Promise. They have wonderful opportunities to learn from and network with excellent educators and policy leaders.

 This program has been in place long enough that individuals who were selected as Teachers of Promise have been recognized through other programs. This is first evident when these individuals, after completing their first year of teaching, are selected as Horizon Award educators. The Horizon Award program recognizes up to 32 outstanding teachers each year who have completed their first year of teaching and are in their second year of teaching. Equally exciting is that these promising teachers are going on to be recognized in other awards programs administered by the Kansas State Department of Education. In 2010-2011, we had our first three-peat: an individual selected as a Teacher of Promise, Horizon Award educator, and state finalist for 2011 Kansas Teacher of the Year.

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