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## ANNUAL SALUTE CEREMONY HONORS AUSTIN TEACHERS, CIVIC LEADERS AND MICHAEL AND SUSAN DELL FOUNDATION

Salute - the Annual Celebration of Excellence in Austin ISD was hosted by Austin Partners in Education (APIE) May 18th at the Long Center for the Performing Arts with the City of Austin support as the Signature Sponsor. Police Chief Art Acevedo led the event as master of ceremonies. The event included the Teacher of the Year awards, inductions into the Hall of Fame, Chair's and Partner of the Year awards, a Student of the Year, and other District awards.

Austin ISD Superintendent Dr. Meria Carstarphen, the AISD Board of Trustees, and APIE Chair and Wells Fargo Community Bank President Mark Curry recognized the following:

The 2011 Teacher of the Year was awarded to **Caroline Sweet**, a fourth grade bilingual teacher at Metz Elementary. A former TV news reporter, she chose a career in bilingual teaching after volunteering at a center for Latino immigrants. Her acceptance speech urged the audience to support bilingual and Dual Language programs. She asked all teachers to empower their students to become agents for social change. The other two finalists were **Kim Ross** – Middle School Teacher of the Year from Dobie Middle School, and **David Bellesen** - High School Teacher of the Year from Travis High.

**The Partner of the Year award was presented to The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation** for their work improving educational outcomes for underprivileged children in Austin ISD and throughout Texas. The Foundation has invested more than \$160 million in more than 140 organizations in Central Texas, including Austin Partners in Education. The Foundation funds independent non-profit organizations that have demonstrated they can deliver effective services to students during school. They are also working directly with Austin ISD to implement an integrated technology framework for educators and administrators.

**The Chair's Award was given to Dr. Leonard N. Moore**, (Professor of History and an Associate Vice-President in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at UT Austin) for service to APIE program recruitment. Last year, Moore asked how he could engage his students and congregation (he is the pastor of the Soul Movement Church) in service by promoting Austin ISD student success. Because of his overwhelming support, including offering extra credit for students who committed to APIE volunteer programs, he led his students and congregants to register as APIE classroom coaches. His advocacy enabled APIE to reach a long desired goal of having a volunteer population that represents the African American population in Austin.

Two new members were inducted into the **Hall of Fame: Mark Williams, and Bernardo Martinez.**

**Mark Williams** - AISD Board of Trustees President was recognized for his dedicated service to education in Austin. He has served on the Board of Trustees since 2004 - a full-time, unpaid job.



He has served as an APIE Board Director for five years and tutored math students in the Classroom Coaching Program each week for four of those years. His community support includes leadership roles with Any Baby Can, United Way, Community Action Network's Resource, The Center for Child Protection, the West Austin Youth Association, and UT's Department of Diversity and Community Engagement Advisory Council.

**Bernardo Martinez** – Parent Support Specialist and PIE Coordinator Bernardo Martinez has engaged Wooten Elementary parents for 12 years. Martinez was commended for integrating Spanish speaking parents into the school PTA and other volunteer opportunities. He has successfully developed a community of support at Wooten including 3M, St. David's, Austin Travis County Health and Community Services, TBG Partners, Care Van Immunization Outreach, Wooten Neighborhood, and the City of Austin.

Travis High School Senior **Gamaliel Altamirano was named the College Readiness Student of the Year**. With key funding from the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, APIE partners with Austin ISD to increase the number of high school students eligible to take transcript credit coursework upon entrance to college. By meeting the Texas Success Initiative College Readiness Standards before graduation, students avoid the time and expense of developmental non-credit courses. Altamirano participated in APIE's College Readiness program, passed the COMPASS test, and was accepted to Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi.

The evening included awards for excellence in the following categories:

- Classified Staff of the Year: **Dee Gonzales** – Kealing Middle School
- Primary Principal of the Year: **Douglas Hall** - Davis Elementary
- Secondary Principal of the Year: **Anabel Garza** – Reagan High School
- PIE Coordinator of the Year: **Faye Terrell** – Gus Garcia Middle School
- PTA of the Year: **Paredes Middle School**

KEYE-TV was the media sponsor for the event. For more information please see [www.austinpartners.org/salute](http://www.austinpartners.org/salute)

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**Austin Partners in Education** (APIE) provides 3,500 Austin ISD students a year with personalized support by recruiting, training and placing a critical mass of more than 850 volunteer Classroom Coaches and 800 mentors into Austin ISD campuses weekly. APIE fosters effective community and school partnerships that prepare students for college and careers. Founded in 1983 by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce and the Austin Independent School District, today APIE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

The **Austin Independent School District** encompasses 230 square miles and serves 86,2000 students on 121 campuses. AISD has a richly diverse student community. It includes children from all economic levels and all kinds of backgrounds. AISD students come from homes in which more than 50 different native languages are spoken. Fifty-two percent of AISD students are Hispanic, 31 percent are Anglo, 14 percent are African American, and 3 percent are Asian. More than 60 percent of AISD students come from low-income families, and 24 percent enter school as English-Language Learners.