



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Johnny Key, Commissioner

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Arkansas Leadership Academy Names New Master Principals

LITTLE ROCK — Kelli Martin and Jeff Wasem, having achieved the status of Master School Principal, were recognized by the State Board of Education April 13. Martin and Wasem completed three years of rigorous professional development plus an additional year of performance evaluations to achieve the designation this spring from the Arkansas Leadership Academy's Master Principal Program. Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key, ALA Director David Cook and Master Principal Leader Dr. Diana Peer presented this award of distinction.

Martin, the principal at Greenbrier Middle School, holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Central Arkansas at Conway and master's and educational specialist's degrees from Harding University in Searcy. She is a graduate of the academy's Teacher Institute, a National Board Certified Teacher and an Arkansas Leadership Quest lead principal. Martin has volunteered her leadership and service to the educators and students of Arkansas, the country and her community through numerous roles. An Arkansas Diamond Schools to Watch, Greenbrier Middle School also has been recognized by the ADE and the Office for Education Policy as one of the highest-achieving middle schools in Arkansas.

Wasem, the principal at Old High Middle School in Bentonville, received his bachelor's degree from John Brown University and a master's from the University of Arkansas. He completed subsequent graduate work from Harding University at Searcy. Wasem is a graduate of the academy's Assistant Principal Institute. Beyond his school and district, he also serves the ADE and numerous professional associations committed to increasing student and adult learning. Old High Middle School was recognized as a top 20 middle school in Arkansas based on overall ACT Aspire achievement. Through his leadership, with a focus on growth, the school emphasizes strong relationships between teachers, students and families; literacy integration designed to increase comprehension in all content areas; and providing relevant, real-world engaging learning experiences.

The Arkansas Leadership Academy is based in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas. The academy's Master Principal Program was authorized by Act 44 of the Second Extraordinary Session of the 2003 Arkansas General Assembly.

“The Master School Principal program is an excellent opportunity for principals to build valuable instructional leadership skills, which enhance student academic performance,” Key said. “I commend Ms. Martin and Mr. Wasem for completing the program. They, along with previous program graduates, serve as a great example of instructional leadership in education.”

“Developing principals with the talent to lead complex organizations requires giving them a broad range of leadership experiences along the way,” Cook said. “This rigorous, four-year program enables school leaders to enhance and accelerate student and adult learning. I commend these principals for being dedicated to their students, teachers and learning communities. I also want to thank the Arkansas Legislature, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the academy’s partners for their support and vision in building the leadership capacity of principals across our great state.”

The first phase of the Master Principal Program is open to all school principals who have at least one year of experience and the support and permission of their superintendents to participate. Principals from across the state meet during the year in four multi-day sessions for intense study while applying the learning from those sessions in their schools throughout the year.

Admission to the second phase of the program requires submission of a portfolio documenting the application of the lessons learned from the first phase and the results of that work to improve student and adult learning in the school. To be admitted to the third phase, principals must complete a rigorous application process that includes evidence of their impact on education at the district, state and regional levels. These portfolios are evaluated by education stakeholders from Arkansas and other states. Scorers receive training through the Arkansas Leadership Academy.

After successful completion of all three phases, principals may choose to participate in a rigorous assessment by a team of trained examiners with at least one member on each team from another state. The assessment process examines evidence from three primary sources:

- Student Performance: An analysis of student academic achievement data;
- Principal Performance: An analysis of a portfolio created by the principal; and
- School Performance: A site visit to gather evidence.

Successful performance in these three areas qualifies an individual for Master School Principal status. Master Principals will receive a \$9,000 per year bonus for five years upon earning the designation. They are eligible for an additional \$25,000 per year for five years if they are selected to serve at a low-performing school.

Established in 1991, the Arkansas Leadership Academy is a nationally recognized, statewide partnership of 15 universities; nine professional associations; 15 education service cooperatives; the Arkansas Departments of Education, Higher Education, and Career Education; the Arkansas Educational Television Network; the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce; Tyson Foods Inc; Walmart Stores Inc.; superintendent representatives; the Office of the Governor; and the State Board of Education - a total of 51 partners.

For more information, visit <http://www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org/> or contact Dr. Diana Peer at the Arkansas Leadership Academy at dpeer@uark.edu or 479-575-3030.

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Left to Right: ADE Commissioner Johnny Key and Kelli Martin



Left to Right: Jeff Wasem and ADE Commissioner Johnny Key

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