American Express Awards Approximately $2.5 Million in Grants to Five Innovative Principal Leadership Programs

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American Express (NYSE: AXP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals today announced the five winners of the Principals Path to Leadership grant, a giving program created to expand effective principal preparation programs.

The winners—selected from more than 70 applicants—will receive a total of approximately $2.5 million to increase their capacity and impact over the next three years with an eye toward long-term sustainability. The grants are awarded at a time of heightened awareness of principals' crucial roles in school improvements.

“We have built several effective global programs to develop the critical leadership skills of nonprofit and social purpose leaders,” said Timothy J. McLimom, president, American Express Foundation. “We are pleased to partner with NASSP to award grants to these five exemplary organizations that have already made strides in principal leadership training. By giving more principals access to these programs, we hope to help students and schools thrive.”

“Principal leadership is an essential component of any school improvement initiative, especially now as schools remodel their internal structures to implement college and career-ready standards,” said NASSP Executive Director JoAnn Bartolletti. “We deeply value the partnership of American Express in our shared goal of providing the best preparation possible for the next wave of principals who will advance student achievement.”

The five winning organizations and programs are:

**American Express / National Association of Secondary School Principals’ Path to Leadership Grant**

**Learning Forward** [1] (Oxford, Ohio): This grant will support Learning Leaders for Learning Schools, a partnership between the Arizona chapter of Learning Forward and the Arizona Department of Education. The program will provide leadership training to 80 current and aspiring principals and include seminars, small conference sessions, and personalized coaching.

**Alabama State Department of Education** [2] (Montgomery, Alabama): This grant will support the statewide implementation of the Alabama Strong: Principals as Catalysts for School Improvement program. As part of the Alabama State Department of Education’s commitment to an integrated learning supports framework state rollout, 50 districts and approximately 300 principals are currently involved in the initiative. This funding will expand the work being done by adding in-depth leadership development, as well as coaching and training for 71 principals and their leadership teams in high poverty areas throughout Alabama.

**NYC Leadership Academy** [3] (New York City, New York): This grant will support the Aspiring Principals Program, which is being expanded to serve multiple districts in the New York Tri-state area, to prepare and support 50 aspiring principals and train approximately 50 local mentor principals. The program will include a multi-week summer intensive leadership training, as well as face-to-face and online-facilitated learning sessions throughout the academic year.

**Arlington Independent School District** [4] (Arlington, Texas): The grant will support the Emerging Leaders Program, designed to strengthen the leadership skills of 105 assistant and aspiring principals, directing them on a path to principalship. The program, in partnership with New Leaders, a national nonprofit that develops school leaders, will include a summer induction session, ongoing webinars, and one-on-one coaching. The program will develop the participants’ application of learning, which will promote increased student outcomes.

**North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals’ Association** [5] (Raleigh, North Carolina): This grant will support Distinguished Leadership in Practice, a rigorous leadership development program reaching 135 early-career principals and assistant principals. The blended program will include face-to-face sessions every other month, followed by a six-week online, application-based course. The goal of the program is for participants to internalize leadership skills which will enable them to transform their schools.

The winning programs were announced today at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Leaders of the five programs participated in a panel discussion about the importance of and need for principal leadership moderated by Education Week Assistant Managing Editor Leslie Maxwell. Today’s announcement coincides with the launch of National Principals Month [6].

The Principals Path to Leadership grant program represents one of American Express’ largest investments in education leadership training to date and continues its commitment to leadership development across the social sector. One of American Express’ longest-running non-profit and social purpose leadership programs is the American Express Leadership Academy, which launched in 2008 and connects emerging leaders on a path to principalship. The program, in partnership with New Leaders, a national nonprofit that develops school leaders, will include a summer induction session, ongoing webinars, and one-on-one coaching. The program will develop the participants’ application of learning, which will promote increased student outcomes.

The grant program launched in late spring with a call for applications among districts, states, and U.S.-based 501(c)(3) organizations that manage programs to train new and emerging K-12 principals. A selection committee comprising American Express staff, NASSP professional development staff, NASSP-recognized principals, and other education leadership experts reviewed applications and selected grantees in September.

NASSP and American Express will work with the grantees to collect and disseminate effective practices and other data in the hopes of reaching more leaders and having a broader impact.

For more information about the grant program and the winners, visit http://www.nassp.org/principalspath [7].

About American Express

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Key links to products and services: charge and credit cards [14], business credit cards [15], Pentrewards program [16], travel services [17], gift cards [18], prepaid cards [19], merchant services [20], corporate card [21] and business travel [22].

About American Express: Developing New Leaders for Tomorrow

One of American Express’ three philanthropic platforms is Developing New Leaders for Tomorrow [23]. Under this giving initiative, which recognizes the significance of strong leadership in the nonprofit and social purpose sectors, American Express makes grants focused on training high potential emerging leaders to tackle important issues in the 21st century. Nearly 16,000 emerging nonprofit and social sector leaders worldwide have benefited from American Express leadership programs, including the American Express Leadership Academy among others. Launched in 2008, the American Express Leadership Academy addresses the growing deficit of leadership talent in the nonprofit sector by bringing together emerging leaders from a diverse set of nonprofit, social sector and non-governmental organizations.

About NASSP

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is a Washington, D.C.-based, nonprofit, 60,000-member association of secondary school principals. NASSP promotes the personal and professional development of its members, their students, and the profession as a whole. NASSP works to ensure that each student is prepared for college, work, and life in the 21st century. NASSP members include secondary school principals, as well as other school leaders, secondary teachers, consultants, university faculty, and education leaders. NASSP represents secondary school principals and educators to the public, policy makers, and the education profession, as well as administers the secondary principal certification program. For more information about the grant program and the winners, visit http://www.nassp.org/principalspath [7].

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