



# State Board of Education News

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## **Financial institutions and chamber garner 2016 Employers for Education Excellence awards**

AUSTIN – The State Board of Education today named four Texas businesses as recipients of the 2016 Employers for Education Excellence (EEE). Businesses both large and small are recognized for their ongoing support and commitment to Texas public schools.

“These four businesses and the thousands of others like them that support our Texas public schools are to be commended, and congratulated, for a job well done,” said Donna Bahorich, chair of the State Board of Education. “Our Texas students and educators benefit greatly from their generosity and commitment.”

The EEE Awards are given in three categories – Gold, Silver and Bronze. For the 2016 award, two companies received a gold award and two received a silver award. There were no Bronze awards presented this year.

Winners in the Gold Award category have implemented policies that: encourage and support employees who attend parent-teacher conferences; encourage employees to volunteer in school activities; and support employees that participate in student mentoring programs. Recipients of a Silver Award show that they encourage and support employees who attend parent-teacher conferences and implement a policy to encourage and support employees who volunteer in school activities.

The 2016 EEE recipients are:

### **Gold Award**

- **Lone Star National Bank – McAllen**

Since its inception, the Lone Star National Bank has communicated the importance of education to all its officers and employees. The bank expects its employees to participate in their children’s education and to take part in teacher-parent conferences and volunteer at their children’s schools. Lone Star National promotes its Cowboy Cash program and mascot as a way to teach students about the benefits of savings. Among its other programs that benefit the students of the Region One school districts are the Deep South Texas Financial Literacy Alliance in partnership with the Region One Education Service Center; annual financial literacy summits that have impacted more than 2,100 students; presentations about College for All in the health science and business professions; and other financial literacy outreach and mentoring programs.

- **Happy State Bank – Amarillo**

Happy State Bank encourages their 341 employees to make family their first priority and stresses that work is not an acceptable reason to miss a parent-teacher conference, school program or child's sporting event. The bank has a Kids' Bank in 14 of the 37 elementary schools in the Amarillo ISD serving about 600 student account owners. The program encourages savings and provides financial instruction to the students. In 2008, the bank was a founding partner in the establishment of the Junior Achievement program in the district. Currently 24 bank employees provide mentoring through the program and work with students on team building, work ethics and other skills that students can build a successful future on.

### **Silver Award**

- **Odessa Chamber of Commerce – Odessa**

Receiving a Silver Award is the Odessa Chamber of Commerce. The chamber began working with students in the West Texas town beginning in 1944 when it became a co-sponsor of the West Texas Relays. Since then the Chamber has worked with its business members to assist Odessa educational institutions best educate students. Through the Ector County ISD New Teacher Welcome Breakfast, the Chamber provides welcome gifts and a morning breakfast program to introduce new educators into the area. The Chamber has also sponsored the Junior Leadership Odessa, a program designed to teach high school juniors about Odessa's history and resources and to motivate and develop Odessa's future leaders.

- **First Financial Bank, N.A. – Weatherford**

In the 2015-16 school year, the First Financial Bank proved once again to be a valuable community partner in supporting the Aledo ISD. The bank provided substantial support for two major district events – the inaugural STEAM Carnival and the inaugural Aledo Stock Show. The Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Carnival provided both fun and educational activities for students by integrating science, technology, engineering, arts and math concepts. The Aledo Stock Show, hosted by the Aledo High School Agriculture Department, provided family fun while raising funds for the AHS agricultural program. First Financial donated all the refreshments for both events and supplied volunteers to cover concession stands. The bank has also committed to continuing its sponsorship for the programs for the 2016-17 school year.

The EEE award was established in 2007 by the Texas Legislature to honor Texas employers who encourage and support staff participation and voluntarism in the public schools. Any Texas employer is eligible to win the award, including private companies, nonprofit organizations, and state, local, federal and educational entities. Recognized businesses receive a plaque and the EEE designation is recognized for three years.

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