



NEWS RELEASE

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Trinity University Education Department to Expand Leadership Networks for School Principals

SAN ANTONIO – Efforts to help school principals hone relevant leadership skills will continue under a grant to Trinity University's education department from the Meadows Foundation in partnership with School Leaders Network (SLN.)

The Meadows Foundation has awarded Trinity \$281,000 for the first year of a three-year project to maintain the Trinity Principals' Center with a paid director and support staff, to expand to eight networks where school principals develop leadership skills, share best practices and solve problems of practice related to student achievement, and to begin an intensive leadership development effort in the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio.

Paul Kelleher, the Murchison Professor and chair of Trinity's education department, implemented a range of leadership initiatives four years ago after meeting Elizabeth Neale, founder and CEO of SLN. The Principals' Center has been credited with meeting the needs of between 75 and 80 principals who comprise the current five networks that meet once a month and are led by SLN-trained facilitators to learn from each other to benefit their individual campuses. "The demand has been there to set these up," he said, adding that the number of participants could rise next year to as many as 130 administrators.

The Edgewood component of the project will involve all principals from the district in a SLN cohort, additional skills workshops, and one-on-one coaching throughout the academic year, Professor Kelleher said. The goal is to demonstrate a multi-faceted, district-wide leadership development strategy that will impact the district, especially student learning, he said, adding, "We're talking about the growth of people and the development of people to be school leaders."

An important lesson Professor Kelleher has learned from the success of the Principals' Center is to try different strategies "and see what happens. When we hit upon something that meets their needs, we need to move with it." Data from the 2008-09 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills tests shows that schools with SLN principals score higher than their counterparts at schools without the School Network focus by a 2:1 margin in the minimum and commendable scores.

The grant is the third round of funding from the Dallas-based Meadows Foundation. An initial gift was made to Trinity in 2002 for \$225,000 and a second grant was made in 2006. "We are grateful for their ongoing support," Professor Kelleher said.

About Trinity Principals' Center

The Trinity Principals' Center serves 24 school districts and five charter and private schools in San Antonio. The center, through a variety of components, offers activities to help school leaders identify and solve problems while developing leadership skills that improve the culture, climate, and student achievement on their campuses.

About School Leaders Network

School Leaders Network was founded in 2006 to address the leadership development needs of principals, to accelerate their efforts to increase student achievement and to create a community of mentoring and support. Across the U.S., networks of school principals participate in SLN's program of collaborative coaching and problem-solving sessions focused on closing the student achievement gap. More than 250 network members represent a wide range of ethnic/cultural backgrounds and experiences. More than 250,000 students across the country current attend schools led by SLN-participating principals.