



**Arkansas  
Leadership Academy**

# Special Edition Academy Action



February 2009 SPECIAL EDITION

Volume 8, Issue 3

## Upcoming Institutes:

**Master Principal Institute**  
P1S3—Feb. 10-12, 2009  
P3S3—Apr. 21-23, 2009  
P2S3—May 6-8, 2009  
P1S4—Jun. 16-19, 2009  
P1S1—Jul. 7-10, 2009

**Superintendent Institute**  
Session 3 Webinar—  
Mar. 12, 2009  
Session 4—May 4-5, 2009

**Teacher Institute**  
Forum 16, Session 3—  
Feb. 15-17, 2009  
Forum 15, Session 4—  
Jun. 24-26, 2009

**DKL Team Institute**  
Session 2—Jul. 1-2, 2009

## Special points of interest:

- Phase III Learning Reunion held for PIII graduates in late January.
- Academy considering regional institutes for Master Principal Institute.
- Academy currently conducting Master Principal Leader interviews.
- If you are interested in attending any of the Academy's institutes, check out the Academy's website or call the Academy office.

## Introducing the Academy's 2009 *Master School Principals*:



**Michele French of Cabot School District**

**Michele French** has served as principal of Ward Central Elementary in Cabot for 16 years. Before she was principal, French was a kindergarten teacher, kindergarten specialist and district HIPPIY coordinator, and an Arkansas State HIPPIY coordinator over Training and Technical Assistance Center at ACH. Michele has been president and conference chair of the Arkansas Early Childhood Association and Wilbur Mills Zone Director for Arkansas Association of Elementary School Principals. She has also published a book entitled *Can You Really Say NO? Standards and Good Practice Work Together!* On receiving Master Principal Designation, Michele remarked, "The Leadership Academy had me hooked after the first meeting the first year. The total package worked! The assignments and planning I did changed our school. Our staff has become a community of learners, our community and parents have voice in the school, and our students have shown progress over the years. The Leadership Academy has been the most influential agent of change and growth for our school."



**Jackie Smith of Pulaski County Special School District**

**Jackie Smith** has served as principal of Arnold Drive Elementary in the Pulaski County Special School District for 9 years. Before becoming principal, Jackie served as an assistant principal, 1st-3rd grade teacher, 6th grade teacher, and 7th-8th grade math & science teacher. She is a member of the Arkansas Association of Education Administrators, Arkansas Association of Elementary School Principals, and National Education Association among others. On receiving Master Principal Designation, Jackie said, "The Arkansas Leadership Academy Master Principal Institute is the most meaningful job-embedded professional development opportunity for building level administrators. Knowledge and experiences obtained from the Institute provide principals with strategies and tools to facilitate systemic change needed for school improvement. Learning is relevant and relationships motivate, support, and nurture all learners. The work of professional learning communities proves that ordinary people can produce extraordinary things."



**Kay York of Ashdown School District**

**Kay York** has been principal of Margaret Daniel Primary in Ashdown since 2000. Before that, she served as an assistant principal, counselor, library/media specialist, and kindergarten teacher. She was a state finalist for Principal of the Year in 2007 and 2008, and she has facilitated Principal Training for the Arkansas Principals in Reading First. On receiving Master Principal Designation, Kay remarked, "The Leadership Academy has been for me, personally, the solid rock that has challenged me in the areas that make the biggest impact in student achievement. The Academy stays focused on the cutting edge of research and through the phases of the Master Principal Program, one acquires the tools needed to move a school toward excellence. With the Master Principal Program, one acquires the skills to reach a higher level of professional gratification. When I realized I was selected for Designee, I was of course thrilled but also have such a desire for this intense professional development to continue."

## Arkansas Leadership Academy

346 N. West Ave.  
College of Education and Health Professions  
University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Phone: 479-575-3030  
Fax: 479-575-8663  
www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org



### Academy Staff

<b>Debbie Davis</b>	<b>Chuck Leverett</b>
<b>Paula Cummins</b>	<b>Shirley Easley</b>
<b>Michele Linch</b>	<b>Jackie Base</b>
<b>Marilyn Cain</b>	<b>Stephanie Westmoreland</b>
<b>Nicole Francis</b>	<b>Beverly Elliott</b>

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## Arkansas Leadership Academy Designates Three *Master School Principals*



Three Arkansas school principals recently achieved the status of Master School Principal and were recognized at the Arkansas State Board of Education meeting at the Arkansas Department of Education on January 12th. These three principals have completed three years of rigorous professional development plus additional performance evaluations to graduate from the Academy's Master Principal Program with the designation this year.



beyond the licensing requirements for school administrators will indeed benefit these fine principals and, even more importantly, the teachers and students where they serve." Dr. James also recognized the new Master Principals' superintendents for their support: Tony Thurman of Cabot School District, James Sharpe of Pulaski County Special School District, and Joseph Walker of Ashdown School District.

Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education, and Dr. Debbie Davis, Director of the Academy, presented certificates and awards of distinction to

- **Michele French**, principal of Ward Central Elementary in Cabot,
- **Jackie Smith**, principal of Arnold Drive Elementary in the Pulaski County Special School District, and
- **Kay York**, principal of Margaret Daniel Primary in Ashdown.

Dr. James said, "I congratulate these individuals for pursuing excellence in their careers as educational leaders...This training above and

The Master Principal Program was authorized by Act 44 of 2003 and is designed to develop leadership skills of principals through three phases of professional development. More than 500 principals from 70 counties have participated in Phase I of the program, and, of those 500 principals, 112 have continued through the process to Phase II, III, or Designation. Currently, only six other Master Principals have been designated. Phase I of the Master Principal Program is open to all school principals with at least one year of experience and who have support from their superintendents to participate. Please contact the Academy office if you are interested in participating.