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NEWS

For Immediate Release: June 3, 2010

TEXAS AFTERSCHOOL CENTERS ON EDUCATION ENCOURAGE FAMILY PARTICIPATION

San Antonio, TX - The Texas **Afterschool Centers on Education™ (ACE™)** are actively engaging parents and families as partners in programs that will help students thrive and prepare them for college and the workforce. ACE centers across Texas are offering services and activities that support and help increase the participation of parents in their student's educational experience.

Family Involvement is a federal requirement of the Federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (CCLC). The Texas Education Agency emphasizes the importance of family engagement in the ACE Four-Component Activity Guide, a model that provides a framework for ACE activities and is essential to program success. The four components include:

- Academic assistance
- Enrichment
- ***Family and parental support services***
- College and workforce readiness

Activities specifically developed for adult family members of students participating in ACE include educational and literacy related activities such as GED, English Language classes, computer literacy, financial literacy and resume building classes. ACE programs offer other services customized for family participation such as health and fitness activities and sessions on effective parenting strategies. A main focus of ACE family and parental support services is to help advance student achievement.

Vidor Independent School District's (ISD) ACE program provides an excellent example of integrating the family into the ACE program. Recently awarded the Bright Idea award at the Texas Community Education Association's annual conference, Vidor ACE has implemented a "Terrific Tuesday" family night, hosted the first Tuesday of each month. The program includes parent presentations on diverse and important topics such as TAKS testing tips, proper concert etiquette and facilitation of a *Family Night* in the home. Following the parent presentations, students from ACE campuses demonstrate activities learned in the ACE program. The series has been a success with **average attendance of 300 participants!**

Sally Andrews, Vidor ISD Project Director, provided some valuable insights into this program, "Terrific Tuesday has provided a wonderful opportunity for parents to see what their children are learning in the ACE program, meet the instructors, and feel a vital part of the education of their children. A sense of community and a snapshot of the importance of parental involvement have formed as ACE leaders encourage parents to be allies in the education of their children. It's encouraging and exciting for all concerned!"

Vidor ACE is only one such example across Texas. The value of parental support is recognized as a critical factor for student success in school and beyond and Texas ACE Centers strive to develop programs that encourage family involvement and create a welcoming environment.

ACE is administered by the Texas Education Agency and funded by the Texas 21st CCLC Program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Edvance Research, a women and minority, employee owned firm, is the provider to TEA for Program Enhancement & Quality Assurance for ACE, and is headquartered in San Antonio, Texas. To learn more visit www.TexasACE21.org

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