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## **Award to honor businesses that encourage employees to volunteer in Texas public schools**

AUSTIN – Since 1994, the State Board of Education has honored volunteers in public schools through the Heroes for Children Program. Now the board is beginning a new program to honor those businesses that support and encourage their employees to work with students and volunteer in the state’s 8,000-plus public schools.

The Employers for Education Excellence (EEE) Award, enacted in Senate Bill 1433 (80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session), is designed to honor employers who implement a policy to encourage and support employees who actively participate in school activities. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, D-San Antonio, and Rep. Patrick Rose, D-Dripping Springs.

Any employer in the state of Texas is eligible to apply, including private businesses or corporations, non-profit organizations, state and governmental agencies, and educational entities who have at least one employee and meet the criteria.

“This is great recognition for all those companies and businesses that allow and even encourage their staff members to attend parent-teacher conferences, mentor students, provide tutoring, assist with special projects, and volunteer in many other ways in our public schools,” said Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

“Many times these volunteers can make a real difference in whether a child succeeds. This is one small way to say thank you to those companies that make it possible for employees to take time from the workday to help schoolchildren,” Scott added.

Employers will be eligible to receive an award at one of three levels: bronze, silver, or gold. Eligibility is based on the business meeting the following criteria for one of the three levels:

- (1) Bronze: for an employer that implements a policy to encourage and support employees who attend parent-teacher conferences;
- (2) Silver for an employer that:
  - (a) meets the requirements of bronze; and
  - (b) implements a policy to encourage and support employees who volunteer in school activities; and
- (3) Gold for an employer that:

- (a) meets the requirements of silver; and
- (b) implements a policy to encourage and support employees who participate in student mentoring programs in schools.

The program requires a business to submit an application to the Texas Education Agency. The application forms are available upon request by emailing [EIP@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:EIP@tea.state.tx.us).

Applications will be accepted from June 1 through July 31 of each year. The commissioner of education will review the applications and make recommendations to the SBOE regarding businesses that should receive an award and the level of recognition. The SBOE may approve or modify the commissioner's recommendation.

The SBOE will honor the recipient(s) of an Employers for Education Excellence Award by presenting the recipient(s) with an award that includes the level of recognition and other appropriate information.

The awards will be valid for three years. At the end of three years, a business may reapply for the same level of recognition, or for a higher level if they meet the criteria.

The complete application must be submitted by **July 31** to:

**Texas Education Agency  
Department of State Initiatives  
Employer for Education Excellence Award  
1701 Congress Avenue, Room 5-120  
Austin, Texas 78701**

For additional information, e-mail [EIP@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:EIP@tea.state.tx.us) or call the Division of Educator Initiatives and Performance at (512) 936-6060.

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