

Terrel H. Bell Award
For
Outstanding School Leadership
Is Presented to:
Mrs. Sandi Jones, Principal
West Side Elementary School
Jacksonville, TX

On Tuesday, November 16, Mrs. Sandi Jones will receive the Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership at the 2010 Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony. Principals nominated for the Terrell Bell Award are school leaders committed to fostering successful teaching and learning at their schools. They are principals who do whatever it takes to help their students meet high standards; and have demonstrated that they understand that when it comes to educating America's children, failure, is not an option.

When Mrs. Jones became principal of West Side in 2007, the school already did a good job of providing instruction to a challenging student population. Close to 90% of West Side's students are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch, and over half are English Language Learners. With over 90% of students scoring proficient or better on state assessments, *most* students were excelling. Some principals would have been satisfied with such statistics, but true leaders, like Mrs. Jones, are not. Since she assumed the role of principal, West Side's students have continued to improve, and last year nearly 100% of students in all grades and all subgroups scored proficient or better.

Good leaders inspire and empower, and Mrs. Jones is no exception. Prior to becoming principal, Mrs. Jones taught kindergarten, and served as campus librarian and as instructional strategist at West Side. She attributes these experiences to her collaborative leadership style. Under her direction, district staff and teachers describe a supportive atmosphere that focuses on strengthening relationships, creating effective teams, and challenging all stakeholders in the school community to focus on success. Mrs. Jones works closely with her teams, sharing her knowledge and offering guidance as needed in order to help all involved meet their goals.

Mrs. Jones has faced several challenges since becoming principal. Among them was an achievement gap between English Language Learners and the other students. To address this problem, Mrs. Jones has implemented daily interventions. During these

opportunities, students receive targeted, small group, and individualized instruction. Groups and interventions are data-driven, and Mrs. Jones works with administrators, content specialists, teachers, and paraprofessionals to address student needs.

Recently, Mrs. Jones also worked to establish West Side as a “No Excuses University,” promoting college readiness that begins in Pre-kindergarten. Thanks to Mrs. Jones, West Side has already manifested a positive culture; and adopting the goal for all students to attend college is a natural extension. Under the program, teachers build student interest in college, host alumni, introduce college vocabulary, and instill a belief in students that their future is bright and full of wonderful opportunities. .

By empowering everyone--including administrators, teachers, students, and parents--Mrs. Jones inspires the members of the West Side community to take a self-directed role in education. Mrs. Jones challenges the community to meet and exceed her expectations every day, and she works hard to meet and exceed theirs.

Mrs. Sandi Jones is an outstanding school leader who inspires, guides and sustains others; she is a leader willing to do whatever it takes to meet students' needs. She shows that with effective leadership and teaching, and a conviction that all students can learn, schools can become powerful, joyful places that generate energy in their communities.