Waco ISD’s McKethan Honored as ACTE Administrator of the Year

WACO, Texas – The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announced Donna McKethan, Director of Career and Technical Education of Waco Independent School District, as the 2018 National ACTE Administrator of the Year. This award recognizes administrative CTE professionals at the school, district, county, state or federal level who have demonstrated leadership in ensuring teacher and student success and have made significant contributions toward innovative, unique and effective career and technical education programs.

McKethan’s three-decade career in CTE includes time as a family and consumer sciences teacher in Bosqueville ISD before serving as the Career Placement Facilitator and ultimately the Director of Career and Technical Education for Waco ISD. In addition to increasing the student participation in CTE to 90.9% district-wide, McKethan developed and established two multi-district academies: the Greater Waco Advanced Manufacturing Academy and the Greater Waco Advanced Health Care Academy, which currently serve 13 area school districts.

McKethan and her staff wrote and were awarded a $6.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide state-of-the-art equipment and training at the advanced academies; through her strong relationships with the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce and the Waco Business League, McKethan was able to secure an additional $2 million in industry donations. Under McKethan’s leadership, the number of Waco students earning industry certifications has increased by 120% over the last six years. In addition, McKethan has become more active in the political process, and recently worked with State Representative Charles Anderson to craft bill HB639, which allows students under 18 greater flexibility to work on heavy machinery and equipment as part of their CTE programs.

“It’s incredibly rewarding to be a part of a program that allows students to discover their passions and then focus their skills and talents,” McKethan remarked. “Whether our CTE students pursue college or enter the workforce after graduation, their ability to earn professional certifications sets them up for success.”
Superintendent Dr. Marcus Nelson said, “This is a well-deserved honor for Donna and endorses that our CTE program should serve as a national model. The district has seen tremendous support from our community through the business partnerships she has built and fostered, and our students have been given unprecedented opportunities that are unique and career-driven.”

McKethan was one of five finalists for the 2018 national title. The national winner was announced at the ACTE Awards Banquet, a dinner and award presentation recognizing the best CTE educators in the country. The event took place on Wednesday evening, December 6, during ACTE’s CareerTech VISION 2017 in Nashville, Tennessee. The Awards Banquet was sponsored by Express Employment Professionals, the US Army, CareerSafe, Stratasys, and International Baccalaureate.

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*Note to editors: A photo of McKethan is attached.*