

# Prep Academy opens to 88 students for second year

By HSU PUBLIC INFORMATION

Henderson State University will host 88 ninth and tenth graders from local school districts as the second year of an innovative educational opportunity in Clark County begins. The Arkadelphia College Preparatory Academy is scheduled to resume classes on Oct. 24 on Henderson's campus. The program was designed as part of the High School Redesign Initiative of the Southwest-A Education Renewal Zone and the Arkansas Department of Education.

Leaders from Arkadelphia Public Schools, HSU, Ouachita Baptist University, Ouachita Technical College, Dawson Educational Cooperative, Southern Bancorp, Ross Foundation, Clark County Strategic Plan, local business and community representatives and elected officials participated in the development of the Academy last year.

The project was expanded to include the Centerpoint and Gurdon School Districts for the Academy's second year with the Cabe Foundation becoming a partner earlier this month.

The purpose of the Academy is to provide additional academic opportunities for students to ensure that they are ready for postsecondary studies upon completion of high school. Students

See Academy, Page 3

## Academy Continued from Page 1

were selected based on their interest in attending a four-year postsecondary institution and an application process. Information from the EXPLORE test administered in the eighth grade will be used to help students prepare for the ACT they will take as juniors.

The Academy will focus on the areas of reading, English, mathematics, and career planning. The program will pair a public school teacher with university professors from HSU and OBU, resulting in a teacher-student ratio of 1:5. The Academy will hold classes on selected Saturdays from October through May and two weeks in June. Activities will take place on the college campus with plans to expose stu-

dents to other areas of the college experience through field trips and campus activities. Funded by grants from private foundations, all classes and activities will be offered at no cost to the students.

"The development of this project has been a true collaborative effort and we are grateful to all of our partners," said Donnie Whitten, superintendent of Arkadelphia Schools. "With the success of the pilot program, we are pleased to welcome other area school districts and students for our second year. We are fortunate to have the support of our community and universities."

Plans for expansion of the program include involving high school juniors and the

creation of other sites throughout the state.

Dr. Charles Welch, President of Henderson State University said, "I think I am even more excited this year about the beginning of the Academy. Now, we know exactly the type of impact this program has on these students, and we are so excited to be able to expand the program to Gurdon and Centerpoint. I truly believe that this is one of the most progressive and innovative p-12/higher education collaborative projects in our state in many years, and I continue to be so very proud of our faculty, students, and program organizers for the excellent work they are doing."

Paulette Blacknall, director of the Southwest-A Edu-

cation Renewal Zone at Henderson, said, "We are so proud of these students and the commitment they have made to their future. We

look forward to the return of our charter class and to meeting our ninth graders on Monday night. Our teachers and staff are planning many exciting activities preparing for their return."

The opening celebration for the Arkadelphia College Preparatory Academy will be held today at 6 p.m. in the Garrison Center Banquet Room. Gov. Mike Beebe is scheduled to deliver the keynote address to the students, staff and partners.

For more information on the Academy, call Blacknall at 230-5476.

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