



27 July, 2021

# Yukon Public Schools & SWOSU Honored for Partnership



Yukon Public Schools (YPS) was among business and higher education partnerships throughout Oklahoma that were recently recognized as innovative collaborations that further the education of Oklahoma's workforce.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education honored Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) and YPS's partnership with its Business Partnership Excellence Award.

SWOSU has a unique relationship with YPS. In early 2020, Dr. Chad Kinder, dean of the SWOSU College of Professional and Graduate Studies, began collaborating with YPS Superintendent Dr. Jason Simeroth and Assistant Superintendent Lance Haggard on a program to encourage YPS faculty and staff to pursue advanced degrees from SWOSU—the Master of Business Administration and Education Administration Master of Education.

YPS currently has 97 employees enrolled in SWOSU degree programs. This program allows YPS employees to take classes, offered by SWOSU practicing professionals, at Yukon Public Schools.

Simeroth sees this as an opportunity to recruit and retain quality teachers and administrators. The program is an incentive for recruiting employees who want to further their education at an affordable rate, retaining loyal employees who appreciate the investment, and building a more skilled workforce. This program has made it possible for many YPS paraprofessionals to earn bachelor's degrees and remain with the school system as teachers.

This program took off at just the right time for SWOSU. As universities were seeing a downturn in enrollment, SWOSU's program experienced growth as YPS employees enrolled in these education programs. This has not only helped build the university's education program, but now community members and employees from nearby schools are taking advantage of opportunities to take university classes in education, business and technology right in their own area at Yukon Public Schools.



SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell is excited about the partnership with YPS and is impressed on how the project continues to develop.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award is designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses and to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents' Economic Development Grants.

Institutions involved in these partnerships provide \$500 for tuition waivers to employees of the partnering businesses; internships that enable current students to work at the partnering businesses; faculty externships with the partnering businesses; and/or enhancement of the partnerships with additional equipment, materials or supplies. The State Regents provide a \$500 match to the waivers.

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### Weatherford Campus

100 Campus Drive  
Weatherford, OK 73096

### Sayre Campus

409 E Mississippi Ave  
Sayre, OK 73662