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**DPS: 2014-156**

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Directors, University Developmental Research Schools  
President, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind  
Director, Florida Virtual School  
Assistant Director for Education and Job Training, Department of Corrections

**FROM:** Pam Stewart

**DATE:** September 19, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Florida Teacher LEAD Network

This summer was a wonderful opportunity to meet and learn with district Teachers of the Year. During the Teacher of the Year Roundtable, we were excited to provide experiences to not only continue advancing their own teaching skills, but also expand their teacher-leadership capabilities. By inviting our district Teachers of the Year to actively share their knowledge and expertise with other teachers in their schools and districts, the Florida Teacher LEAD Network can support school district initiatives for professional development/learning.

We now look forward to offering support for this exceptional group of teachers throughout the year via a year-long learning community. The goals for this professional learning are

- Celebrating the accomplishments of district Teachers of the Year;
- Strengthening teacher leadership at their local sites;
- Fostering new professional norms of collaboration and on-going learning; and
- Supporting increased academic achievement at their local sites.

To support the content development and delivery, we have partnered with the New Teacher Center (NTC), a national nonprofit organization with over 20 years of expertise in helping individuals develop leadership and coaching skills. NTC has deep partnerships with numerous Florida counties, and through this partnership will be providing professional learning to district Teachers of the Year in the following areas:

- Increasing skills around coaching and facilitation with the goal of supporting teachers to accelerate the practice of others in their school and district (either formally or informally);
- Understanding the power of collaborative cultures;

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- Developing individual action plans for increasing teacher leadership this year;
- Sharing strategies and learning from the field with each other; and
- Deepening relationships across the state with peer teachers of the year.

As we move forward with the Florida Teacher LEAD Network, we solicit your support in allowing your district's Teacher of the Year to fully participate in this on-going professional learning. Specifically, we will ask that you release your district Teacher of the Year to attend two one-day workshops in November and February; costs for this workshop will be paid by the Department. They will also participate in five virtual learning community meetings at dates and times that should not impact their regular assignment. Participation is voluntary, and the benefit for schools and districts is more expertly trained teacher leaders supporting the improvement of instruction in schools and districts, a goal we all share.

Thank you in advance for your support of these outstanding teachers. Please feel free to contact Bonita Hampton at 850-245-0544 if you have any questions or need additional information.

PS/bh

cc: Principals of the 2015 District Teachers of the Year