

THE HEAD *of* CLASS PROJECT

The Head of Class project will award \$50,000 annually to the faculty and staff of the best performing elementary school in Lee County, NC. The unique, incentive-based model is the first of its kind in North Carolina and could be considered as a model program nationwide.

After more than a year of planning and work, the Lee County Education Foundation announced the project on August 26, 2010. The Foundation's mission is to fund programs highly likely to result in improved student achievement and the Head of Class project was developed with this in mind.

The project will utilize standardized testing and data available through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. With the assistance of the Lee County schools elementary program director, Dr. Carol Chappell, the Foundation designed a system to measure performance at the 7 Lee County elementary schools. An incentive award point evaluation system will be used that assigns points, in 8 categories, to each school. Every effort has been made to "level the playing field" so that schools with a higher number of free and reduced lunch students may be fairly compared with other schools, as an example.

At the conclusion of the school year, after NC DPI test results are certified, the winning school will be announced. The distribution of the cash award will be made to school employees based on a unit system. The principal will receive 2 units, assistant principal 1.75 units, certified teachers 1.5 units, certified instructional support personnel 1.5 units, teacher assistants 1.0 units, and office support, custodians and cafeteria workers .50 units each. The \$50,000 award will be distributed in this manner.

Details of the project were presented to all 7 elementary school principals prior to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year. The principals, in turn, presented the project to their school faculty and staff so all Lee County elementary school employees began the 2010-2011 school year with knowledge of the incentive award.

The first Head of Class award will be presented to the employees of the winning Lee County elementary school on September 12, 2011.