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TO: News Editor

CONTACT: **Sheri L. Thompson**
Director of Communications
Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals
122 Valley Road
P.O. Box 39
Summerdale, PA 17093
(717) 732-4999 (Phone)
(717) 732-4890 (Fax)
sherit@paessp.org

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State and National Education Leaders To Convene in King of Prussia

(Harrisburg, PA)—More than 225 elementary, middle level and secondary school principals, assistant principals and supervisors will convene in King of Prussia for the thirteenth annual conference of the **Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP)** to be held October 23-25, 2005, at the Valley Forge Radisson / Scanticon Hotel & Convention Center.

According to Thomas W. Sigafos, principal at Ridge Park Elementary School in the Colonial School District and the 2005 conference chairperson, “This year’s theme, *No PRINCIPAL Left Behind*, was deliberately selected to parallel the No Child Left Behind initiative. Issues such as accountability for student achievement, assessment, rigorous curricula and innovative approaches are being addressed in this year’s program.”

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Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak, Acting Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, **has been selected to receive the PAESSP's prestigious Educational Excellence Award.** The honor is given annually to a citizen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who has made significant contributions to the attainment of education excellence in the state's elementary and secondary schools. *Dr. Zahorchak has demonstrated a sincere commitment to the quality of public education in the Commonwealth. The award will be presented to Dr. Zahorchak during the PAESSP's annual banquet (6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 24, 2005).*

In addition to the more than 85 vendors exhibiting their wares for schools and classrooms, a multitude of professional and informational breakout sessions and keynote addresses will be presented to attendees during the three-day conference. **Dr. Michael Pladus**, superintendent of schools in the School District of Upper Dublin, former principal and recipient of the 1999 NASSP/MetLife National Secondary Principal of the Year Award, will present "*The Lessons of a Lifetime: Observations and Insights on the Principalsip,*" in the First General Session on Sunday, October 23, 2005.

Dr. Daniel Gottlieb, Philadelphia area psychologist/family therapist, motivational speaker and author will speak on "*Maintaining Our Humanity in Stressful Times*" at the Second General Session on Monday, October 24, 2005.

Also, on Monday, October 24, **Salome Thomas-EL**, educator, chess coach and author of *I Choose to Stay*, will present the third general session, "*Why We Choose to Stay: The Power of the Principal.*"

As the final general session speaker on Monday, October 24, **Michael I. Levin, Esq.**, PAESSP's chief legal counsel and president of Levin Legal Group in Huntingdon, Pa., will present the annual "*School Law Update.*"

“The Original” Mike Smith, will take the conference theme, *“No PRINCIPAL Left Behind,”* and *bring it to life* at the final general session on Tuesday, October 25, 2005. Smith, known as an “edutainer,” is a motivational speaker, leadership trainer and author.

Other distinguished speakers and guests include the president of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, **David Vodila**, who is the principal at Red Lion High School in Red Lion, Pa., and **Susan E. Masterson**, the president of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

For further information or to schedule an interview or photo opportunity, please contact Sheri Thompson, PAESSP director of communications at (717) 732-4999 or e-mail: sherit@paessp.org.

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PAESSP’s mission: *The Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals is dedicated to assuring that every Pennsylvania child receives the very best education possible. In carrying out this mission, the association recognizes that the early elementary years are most crucial to successful lifelong learning, that appropriate middle level programs are essential for successful adolescent maturation and development and that strong high school programs are critical for preparing youth for successful entry and transition into adulthood.*

PAESSP recognizes an obligation to make continuing contributions toward strengthening the principalship and the profession. The association is committed to providing critical professional growth opportunities through training programs, opportunities for constructive professional mentoring and relationships, publications, conferences and professional meetings and activities aimed at helping aspiring principals in reaching their goals and practicing principals to hone their skills.