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Nilsa Gonzalez to Receive ALAS Lifetime Achievement Award

Longtime Educator Lauded for Contributions to Latino Students in Pennsylvania

WASHINGTON, D.C.—September 27, 2013—The Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) will honor longtime Pennsylvania educator Nilsa J. Gonzalez with the Lifetime Achievement Award during its 10th Annual Education Summit in Denver, CO, next month.

Ms. Gonzalez' distinguished career in education spans more than 40 years, including 35 years with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). She began her career as a bilingual education teacher. She also worked as a principal and piloted a year-round schooling program, as well as developed the Kensington Cluster where she spearheaded the first decentralized Truancy Court in the city of Philadelphia and helped with the cluster-wide development of Comprehensive School Process, which is a support system for students. She was named associate superintendent for the Office of Leadership and Learning where she oversaw all aspects of professional and leadership development of teachers and administrators. Additionally, as the central east area academic officer for SDP, Ms. Gonzalez was responsible for directly managing 27 schools and continued to increase the instructional capacity and academic success of over 2,000 teachers and 21,000 students. In her last position with SDP before retiring, she was the school management officer with direct oversight of more than 264 schools.

"It is both personally and professionally very exciting to have the opportunity to honor a professional like Nilsa Gonzalez. She exemplifies what it means to be a nurturing educator; her personal story having started as a school paraprofessional and eventually working her way up to teacher, principal, regional and central office leader serves as an inspiration to us all throughout the educational and service community," said Pedro A. Rivera, Lancaster School District Superintendent and ALAS Board Member. "As a leader she has always taken the time to mentor and support upcoming educators and administrators. As a result of her dedication and relentless support, thousands of children and adults have been provided the opportunities needed to be successful not only academically but in life."

Ms. Gonzalez is currently the chief academic officer for Camelot for Kids, one of nation's leading providers of alternative education. She works with campuses in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Texas, Illinois, Colorado and Florida. In this position, she helps shape the organization's academic and behavioral philosophies so that they reflect the tenets of diversity, tolerance, education and acceptance. Ms. Gonzalez is a past board member and current member of ALAS, the American Association of Schools Administrators and Pennsylvania Association of Hispanic School Administrators. She holds a BA in Education from Temple University and a master's in Educational Administration from California State University. She also holds a Superintendent's Letter of Eligibility from Beaver College (now Arcadia University).

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About the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)

The ALAS mission is to provide leadership at the national level that assures every school in America effectively serves the educational needs of all students, with an emphasis on Latino youth, by building capacity, promoting best practices, and transforming educational institutions. ALAS was established in 2003 in response to a lack of national advocacy and representation of Latino students.