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## **Association of Texas Professional Educators**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 7, 2012**

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### **ATPE to honor three education news reporters**

AUSTIN – The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) selected Abilene Reporter-News reporter Ethan Fowler, The Brownsville Herald reporter Gary Long and San Antonio Express-News reporter Francisco Vara-Orta to receive an award for excellent public education news coverage. Each education reporter is a 2012 winner of the association’s Alafair Hammett Media Award.

The award will be presented at an awards banquet July 16 at the Austin Convention Center in Austin. The banquet will take place during the ATPE Summit, an annual education conference which more than 1,000 educators attended last year.

The media award was established both to honor Alafair Hammett, ATPE’s first state president, and to recognize media outlets for outstanding support and coverage of public education. The recipients are selected by a statewide panel of seven educators who serve on the association’s public information committee.

Long is the winner in the category for newspapers with circulations less than 25,000. During the 2011-12 school year, Long reported on Brownsville Independent School District’s first shooting incident that killed a middle school student on campus as well as stories on local educators collaborating with business leaders to improve the area’s high school graduate rate and BISD academy helping students graduate and receive job training.

Fowler won in the category for newspapers with circulations between 25,000 and 50,000. His news reports shed light on school administrators and teachers feeling left in the dark about the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) testing, extended work hours for teachers without additional compensation, and a local graduate selected to lead a new all-male school in Fort Worth.

Vara-Orta is the winner in the category for newspapers with circulations above 50,000. The committee was impressed with his news reports on how STAAR testing expenses will impact school district funds, an after-school program that helps middle school students cope with problems as well as a story on a student who followed in the footsteps of a teacher that inspired her to go into education.

ATPE is the largest educators' group in Texas and the largest nonunion educators' group nationwide. The association's membership consists primarily of classroom teachers but also includes administrators, paraprofessionals, college students and retired educators.

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*The Association of Texas Professional Educators is the preeminent educators' association in Texas and the largest nonunion educators' group nationwide. Its membership consists of classroom teachers, para-educators, administrators, college students and retired educators. ATPE is committed to advocating for better benefits for all educators, promoting a collaborative work environment and the right of educators to choose the association they feel represents their interests, and providing the best education possible for all Texas school children.*