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Association of Texas Professional Educators

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 25, 2013

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Rio Hondo special education teacher wins Special Services Educator of the Year Award

AUSTIN – Rio Hondo Independent School District teacher Susana Gonzales Andrews was honored July 19 with the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) Special Services Educator of the Year Award. Andrews, a 22-year education veteran, was presented with the award plus a \$1,000 check during the 2013 ATPE Summit Awards Banquet held at the Austin Convention Center.

“I love my job, and I love the people I work with,” Andrews said. “Although it can be tiring at times, trying to be a good leader at my campus is one of the most fulfilling accomplishments that I will ever know.”

Nearly 1,000 people celebrated the achievements of public school educators at the banquet, at which numerous awards were presented to educators who demonstrate exceptional and innovative skills in their respective education fields.

Andrews, a special education teacher at Rio Hondo Intermediate School, was one of three finalists for the award in the special services category. ATPE’s Educator of the Year Award Committee was impressed with Andrews’ teaching philosophy, leadership skills and commitment to helping students who may not learn as easily as others.

“When students do not learn, it is our duty to find a way to teach, so that they will understand and retain what is being taught,” Andrews said. This fall, she plans to take online courses to become certified to teach the visually impaired. “My future is in helping children for as long as I possibly can.”

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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.