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International Mindedness Stands Front and Center at Westlake Academy

WESTLAKE, TX – July 19, 2017 -Westlake Academy is proud to announce it will be hosting its 3rd annual International Mindedness Educators Symposium (IMES) on August 3-5.

Westlake Academy's IMES is a conference focused on global collaboration. This innovative conference is unique in that attendees will leave sessions with collaborative units of inquiry designed in concert with an international school. In addition, each session is designed to give participants an opportunity to build a pathway to global collaboration.

It's the Academy's hope that attendees of the conference will select, develop, and schedule a unit of inquiry with a school in another part of the world and that this unit of inquiry will be executed with their students and partnering school(s).

"Educators from five countries will be attending. These international teachers will meet with Westlake Academy instructors to design authentic learning experiences infused with global collaboration opportunities. Authentic global engagement helps our students become intellectually connected and internationally minded. It is through global interactions that our students can find a common humanity", says Westlake Academy Executive Director Dr. Mechelle Bryson.

A secondary purpose of the conference is to create an opportunity for teachers and schools to produce a professional network committed to global collaboration and preparing "future ready" students.

Since opening in 2003, international mindedness has been the cornerstone of Westlake Academy and the International Baccalaureate philosophy. Today, international mindedness is increasingly relevant as virtual worlds collide in a global economic and interdependent marketplace.

In response to the needs of an interdependent world, IB World Schools like Westlake Academy have embraced international mindedness to prepare their students to meet the demands of living in a smaller, flatter world with greater interconnectivity.

This summer Westlake Academy students have traveled all around the world experiencing the culture of other nations, serving those in need, and strengthening their bilingual skills. Seven students traveled to San Miguel de Allende in central Mexico to participate in a Spanish immersion program. Another four

students experienced an exchange program in Costa Rica while two students and a teacher participated in a similar exchange program in Argentina.

“While abroad, our students experienced cultures far different than their own, served those in need, and gained additional exposure to second and third languages. Without question, Westlake Academy will be a richer place because of the experiences these students will be able to share with their peers as this school year progresses”, says Board of Trustees President Laura Wheat.

The Academy also has several students traveling to other continents with their partner organization, Students Shoulder to Shoulder (SStS), which has enrolled more than 400 high school students in dynamic, experiential courses in global citizenship. As classroom educators striving to teach students about many of the pressing problems that exist in the world, as well as potential solutions for addressing them, students were understandably led to ask: what can we do?

SStS was created to provide them with an avenue to explore real-world answers to this question. By partnering with organizations that are actively implementing grassroots solutions in the communities that they serve, Westlake Academy and SStS strive to provide high school students with models for how meaningful change can occur.

These programs are vital components of promoting International Mindedness throughout the school’s culture and provides students immersion experiences like no other.

For more information about the IMES, visit <http://bit.ly/WestlakeIMES>, and for additional background on Students Shoulder to Shoulder, head to <https://shouldertoshoulder.com/>.

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Westlake Academy (WA) is a community-owned, public charter school, serving grades K-12, offering all three rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Founded in 2003, its mission is to provide students with an internationally minded education of the highest quality so they are well-balanced and respectful life-long learners. WA inspires college bound students to achieve their highest individual potential in a nurturing environment that fosters the traits found in the IB Learner Profile. Westlake received the first open enrollment charter ever awarded to a municipality in Texas and today, the town owns and operates one of the leading public charter schools in the United States. Westlake Academy is located at 2600 J.T. Ottinger Road, Westlake, TX 76262. Call 817-490-5757, visit WestlakeAcademy.org, or email Info@WestlakeAcademy.org for more information.