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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Sept. 25, 2012

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**Southern Methodist University Doctoral Student Selected as Emerging Leader**

ARLINGTON, Va.—Ashley A. Parker, a graduate researcher and doctoral student at the Institute for Evidence-Based Education in the Simmons School of Education at Southern Methodist University, has been recognized as an Emerging Leader by PDK International, a global association of education professionals.

The PDK Emerging Leader program recognizes top educators under age 40 from around the world for their leadership. A committee made up of PDK's past Emerging Leaders selected the 22 honorees from a competitive field of applicants, based on their outstanding professional accomplishments.

In addition to being honored at an event in Washington, D.C., honorees also have the opportunity to be published by PDK, apply for grants, and participate in PDK initiatives.

"Honoring these young leaders is one of PDK's most important initiatives," said William J. Bushaw, PDK International's executive director. "We know the future of education is in good hands with leaders like these making a difference in the lives of our students."

Parker began her career teaching upper elementary and middle school students. She served as a literacy specialist and teacher mentor for K-6 teachers in high-poverty schools through the Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction at the University of Mississippi, where she also taught undergraduate teacher preparation courses in literacy education. In addition, she helped to develop statewide Common Core State Standards professional development materials and training sessions for K-12 teachers in Mississippi.

"I have a desire to strengthen low-performing schools by supporting teachers in their efforts to utilize research and data to make wise and appropriate instructional decisions," Parker said.

She is a member of the PDK International University of Mississippi chapter, ASCD, International Reading Association, Concern for Affective Reading Education Special Interest Group within the International Reading Association, and National Council for Teachers of English.

For more information on PDK's 2012-2013 Class of Emerging Leaders, go to [www.pdkemergingleaders.org](http://www.pdkemergingleaders.org).

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**About PDK International**

Founded in 1906, PDK International is a global association for professional educators. The organization's mission is to support education, particularly public education, as the cornerstone of democracy. More information is online at [www.pdkintl.org](http://www.pdkintl.org).

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