

## 2013 CSCTFL

# The 2013 Simon Award



*Dr. David Benson*

Dr. Benson has demonstrated leadership in the promotion of language learning and promoting international understanding. During his tenure in Blue Valley Schools, we proposed an elementary Spanish or French program for all K-5 schools in the district. Dr. Benson provided the leadership and administrative support to pave the way for the development of what eventually became a long sequence K-12 world language program that started in all 15 elementary schools in the Blue Valley School District. This program was approved and was slowly implemented over a period of 5 years with a transition to the middle level to revise schedules for articulated world language courses. About 8,000 elementary students received Spanish and French language and culture lessons every week during the school year. Dr. Benson has served as a superintendent in Kansas, Missouri and Iowa. In each district he has promoted and supported early language learning programs as well as the 6-12 sequences that follow the early start language experiences. He has paved the paths for thousands of children in the Central States region to have the opportunity to learn a second language. Superintendents with his degree of dedication to world languages rise to the top and serve a models of leadership. Dr. Benson has not only initiated a FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools in our district of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; but he did so as well in two of the previous districts where he was superintendent in Blue Valley, Kansas and in the Ladue, Missouri School District.