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### **Center for Learning & Development Co-Founder and Executive Director Steps Down after 19 Years; New Executive Director Named**

Waco, TX – March 21, 2011 – After 19 years of dedicated leadership to the Center for Learning & Development (CLD), co-founder Carol Thompson is stepping aside from her Executive Director position to serve part-time as the Associate Director, continuing to advise and support CLD. Sharon Blanchard has been named as the new Executive Director. Mrs. Blanchard comes to CLD after serving 25 years in public education with experience in special education, counseling, curriculum writing, staff development presentations, and speech and language therapy. She has worked with CLD in the past and understands the philosophy and direction of the organization. Mrs. Blanchard is passionate about helping students be successful academically and is excited about the new opportunities ahead for CLD to impact students and teachers across the nation.

The Center for Learning & Development, a Waco non-profit public service entity, is dedicated to developing and sharing effective strategies and systems that help struggling learners become successful through program implementation, professional development, software programs, and research-based learning tools. Since 1992, CLD has received approximately 2.8 million dollars in grant money used to train over 12,000 educators and to develop research-based academic programs, practices, and tools. The Grand Central Station model of service delivery provided to at-risk students, implemented in over 200 school districts across Texas, has successfully reduced the failure rate of students at an average of 60-70% and reduced the dropout rate to less than 1%. The Grand Central Station model has also been awarded the prestigious Promising Practices Award by the Texas Education Agency. In addition, since 1997, CLD has developed research-based assessment software as well as other software programs that allow students to learn information in a fun, game-like format. These software programs include: Learning Profiler<sup>®</sup>, Parts & Charts<sup>®</sup>, Spellbound for Success<sup>®</sup>, Study Hall 101<sup>®</sup>, Study Skills Station<sup>®</sup> and Tracking for At-Risk Students<sup>®</sup>.

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