Committed to leadership

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COLLEYVILLE — Marlin Stanberry took a break from packing up his office at Colleyville Heritage High School. He was the school's first and only principal, and he was having a tough time leaving last week.

Most of the things in his desk had been packed, and he was about to start on the bookshelves, which were jammed with books with "management" and "leadership" in the titles.

"I've been a student of leadership and a practitioner of leadership for over 30 years," said Stanberry, who formally stepped down as principal of Colleyville Heritage on Wednesday to become the executive director of leadership development for Grapevine-Colleyville schools. His main task is to build the area's first Leadership Academy.

The academy, the brainchild of former Superintendent Kevin Singer, is a program that will help Grapevine-Colleyville teachers receive advanced degrees and move into administration. It will also be a source

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of information for employees interested in enhancing their leadership skills.

Stanberry was named in January to be director of the program. But with the school board's attention turned to the May election and a superintendent search, the academy took lower priority.

At the board’s budget workshop in April, trustees confirmed their commitment to the academy, dipping into the district’s fund balance for $125,000 to pay for the first year.

"I think it’s going to be a great opportunity for us," Trustee Jesse Rodriguez said.

Stanberry, who has attended leadership programs locally and at Harvard University, has control over how the program takes shape.

He has taught leadership classes to students at Colleyville Heritage and is an adjunct faculty member at Tarleton State University and the University of North Texas.

“I just have a drive and want to be able to share my experience with other people,” he said. “I love to help people learn more about themselves so they may be more effective as a leader.”

Stanberry is a bit nervous as he builds the program: “The guy who asked me to do this has left town.” But he said the board supports the program and is moving forward.

Stanberry’s first priority is to make it easier for teachers to get their master’s degrees by setting up graduate classes for them within the district so they do not have to travel to area colleges. He also wants to offer Grapevine-Colleyville teachers a break on the cost.

“If we can pull that off, that’s going to be a real coup,” Stanberry said, adding that he hopes to have an answer on that by Sept. 1.

Stanberry also wants the academy to offer guidance to teachers who want to become department heads, team leaders or administrators, and to administrators looking for professional development.

“I want to be seen as a resource,” Stanberry said. “Our focus this year is getting it started.”

Stanberry will be in his office and ready for consultation by July 19.

Steven Poole, associate director of the United Educators Association, commended the district for developing the Leadership Academy.

“It shows their commitment to their employees,” he said. “It’s impressive that a dis-