

THE BLAKE SCHOOL IN HOPKINS IS RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

Ten National Schools of Character winners selected as models of effective school reform

May 18, 2009 . . . Washington, D.C. – The Character Education Partnership (CEP) has named The Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota a National School of Character.

The winning schools demonstrate that school transformation is possible through low-cost, high-quality character education initiatives. They have closed the achievement gap and raised academic expectations for all students, built strong relationships and partnerships between parents, teachers, and students, and given their students opportunities to serve their communities.

“All of the winners are wonderful exemplars of how *comprehensive* character education can truly transform school culture and climate, which in turn allows students and teachers to flourish,” said CEP Executive Director Joe Mazzola.

Founded in 1900, The Blake School is an independent, coeducational day school located on three campuses in the Minneapolis metropolitan area. The school provides students with an academically challenging education in a diverse and supportive community committed to a common set of values. Well-known for a strong service-learning program with an international focus, Blake stresses community involvement and multiculturalism. Service learning at Blake provides students a better understanding of themselves, the world in which they live, and the opportunity and responsibility they have to improve both.

Blake will receive an award and grant at CEP’s 16th National Forum on Character Education, *Citizens of Character – the Foundation of Democracy*, to be held October 29–31, 2009, outside of Washington, DC. Blake will serve as a mentor and model for other schools and districts seeking to improve their character education efforts.

The NSOC application process requires extensive reporting, documentation, and assessment of each school or district’s climate, academics, and programs to develop civic, moral, and social-emotional competencies. CEP’s Blue Ribbon Panel, consisting of experts in the field of character education, considered the written applications and site visit reports of 27 finalists to determine the 10 winners.

2009 National Schools of Character Winners

Alta S. Leary Elementary School, Warminster, Pennsylvania (Public/Grades K-5)
Bayless Junior High School, St. Louis County, Missouri (Public/Grades 7-8)
Beverly Woods Elementary School, Charlotte, North Carolina (Public/Grades K-5)
The Blake School, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Private/PreK-12)
Colonel John Robinson Elementary School, Westford, Massachusetts (Public/Grades K-2)
Fox C-6 School District, Arnold, Missouri (Public/Grades K-12)
Greenfield Elementary School, Beverly Hills, Michigan (Public/Grades PreK-5)
Long Elementary School, Crestwood, Missouri (Public/Grades K-5)

Milwaukee College Prep School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Public Charter School/PreK–8)
Westwood Elementary School, Friendswood, Texas (Public/Grades Pre K-3)

Geographic Distribution

The diverse group of 2009 NSOC Winners includes one school each from Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin and two schools and one district from Missouri. Missouri is a model for how regional excellence in character education can be attained, according to Marvin Berkowitz, professor of character education at University of Missouri–St. Louis. “We are saturating schools with professional development, leadership training, and best practices,” Berkowitz said.

Demographics

The 2008 winners include seven public schools, one public school district, one public charter school, and one private school. Six of the 2008 winning schools are primary or elementary schools, one is a junior high school, two serve a range of grades from elementary to secondary, and one is a school district. Most of the winners are located in suburban settings while three are urban schools. Most of the winners have 10% or more of their students who eligible for free or reduced lunch and three have 25% or more students who fall in this category.

NSOC awards program

Each year since 1998, the NSOC awards program has recognized approximately ten K–12 schools and districts that provide exemplary comprehensive character education programs that consistently yield positive results in student behavior, citizenship, school climate, and academic performance. The national awards program is sponsored and administered by the Character Education Partnership and made possible through the generous support of the John Templeton Foundation and Lockheed Martin Corporation.

Character Education Partnership

The Character Education Partnership, based in Washington, D.C., is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to helping schools develop people of good character for a just and compassionate society. CEP is the nation’s leading advocate for quality character education initiatives. To learn more about CEP and the National and State Schools of Character, visit www.character.org.