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Press Release - 2010 National Finalists

For Immediate Release

PRESTIGIOUS CHARACTER EDUCATION COMPETITION SELECTS 20 NATIONAL FINALISTS

February 26, 2010 . . . Washington, DC – The Character Education Partnership (CEP) has named eighteen schools and two school districts as National Finalists in its National Schools of Character (NSOC) awards program.

“These schools are doing remarkable things to improve school climate and develop young people of good character,” CEP Executive Director Joe Mazzola said. “They demonstrate that character education is an effective way to build safe, welcoming schools where students and teachers flourish. We commend all of the applicants and are honored to recognize the National Finalists as models for schools around the nation.”

CEP, the nation’s leading advocate for quality character education, chose the 20 National Finalists from 166 applicants across the United States. CEP selected the National Finalists on the strength of their applications, which exhibit their outstanding work in encouraging the ethical, social, and academic growth of their students through effective character education.

CEP will be conducting site visits to all National Finalists through the end of April. A special Blue Ribbon Panel of noted experts will then review the site visitor reports and select approximately 10 winners in May.

“The NSOC application process is demanding but we know that it has benefits for both applicants and educators around the nation who learn from these exemplars,” NSOC Director Janice Stoodley said. “We are able to find schools and districts using character education in innovative ways to close the achievement gap, transform school culture, give kids opportunities to give back to their communities, and keep good teachers in the classroom.”

In addition to the 20 National Finalists, 18 schools will receive NSOC Profiles in Character awards for their strengths in areas such as social-emotional learning or meeting individual student needs. CEP’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education, which defines excellence in character education, guides the evaluation and selection of finalists and winners.

Schools or districts selected as the 2010 National Schools of Character will be honored at the 17th National Forum on Character Education, *Service and Leadership: Profiles in Character*, to be held October 28–30, 2010, at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Hotel in San Francisco, CA. Having established the success of their initiatives through the rigorous NSOC application and screening process, winners serve as national leaders and models for other schools and districts seeking to improve their character education efforts.

Each year since 1998, the NSOC awards program has recognized 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. For more information about CEP or the NSOC awards program, visit www.character.org.

**Character Education Partnership
2010 National Schools of Character Award National Finalists**

- Alan B. Shepard, Jr. Elementary School**, Old Bridge, New Jersey
- Beverly Elementary School**, Beverly Hills, Michigan
- Duffy Elementary School**, West Hartford, Connecticut
- Duncan Elementary School**, Fort Hood, Texas
- School District of Jefferson**, Jefferson, Wisconsin
- Julian Elementary School**, Julian, California
- Kehrs Mill Elementary School**, Chesterfield, Missouri
- Lake Carolina Elementary School**, Blythewood, South Carolina
- Lore Elementary School**, Ewing, New Jersey
- Lynnwood Elementary School**, Lynnwood, Washington
- Mill Pond School**, Westborough, Massachusetts
- Orrs Elementary School**, Griffin, Georgia
- Peters Township School District**, McMurray, Pennsylvania
- Rocky Heights Middle School**, Littleton, Colorado
- Sarasota Middle School**, Sarasota, Florida
- Seckman High School**, Imperial, Missouri
- Seminole Elementary School**, Seminole, Florida
- Sentinel Career Center**, Tiffin, Ohio
- Sullivan Primary School**, Sullivan, Missouri
- Upper Merion Area Middle School**, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

Geographic distribution:

The 2010 National Finalists represent 15 states. Four states have two or more National Finalists: Missouri (3), New Jersey (2), Florida (2), and Pennsylvania (2). In 2010, 29 states participated in the State Schools of Character awards program, a preliminary step in reaching the national level of competition. All but one of the 20 National Finalists were part of this process and named State Finalists in their states.

Demographics:

All of the 2010 National Finalists are public schools or school districts. Thirteen are elementary schools, three are middle schools, two are high schools, and two are K-12 school districts. Most National Finalists are located in suburban settings, although three are urban and three are located in a rural area. A number of the National Finalists have student populations that may be described as low-income; 10 have one-third or more of their students eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

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