Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence Recognizes Top Performing Elementary Schools for 2007

PRNewswire
LANSING, Mich.

The Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence (MBLEE) today announced its selection of the top performing elementary schools for 2007. Working with the National Center for Educational Accountability and Just for the Kids, MBLEE identified five elementary schools that consistently perform well academically while overcoming barriers associated with above average levels of poverty.

"These schools, and the educators that lead them, have refused to accept excuses and have worked hard to provide their students with a quality education," said Mike Hayes of Dow Chemical and co-chair of the MBLEE Working Group.

"We believe that there are valuable lessons to be learned and shared with Michigan's high priority schools and we want to work together to discover the best practices that can help all schools succeed," adds Lori Jewell, from State Farm Insurance and the other co-chair of the MBLEE Working Group. Schools selected this year include:

-- Coolidge Elementary School - Flint City School District
-- Godfrey Elementary - Godfrey-Lee Public Schools
-- Longfellow Elementary School - Pontiac City School District
-- Barkell Elementary School - Hancock Public Schools
-- New Era Elementary School - Shelby Public Schools
-- Pierce Elementary School - Flint City School District

Criteria used in the selection process included: academic performance data in mathematics, language arts, listening, writing, science, social studies and reading over the past three years. Each school also had higher than average rates of students on the free and reduced lunch program and a diverse student population that was above average or unique by geographical location.

MBLEE, Just for the Kids and the National Center for Educational Accountability will honor these schools and conduct a best practices study at the Great Wolf Resort in Traverse City on June 18 & 20. Superintendents, principals and a fourth grade teacher from each school will work with researchers and analysts to determine how the practices used in these schools can be adopted by Michigan's high priority schools. Over 300,000 students currently attend high priority schools in Michigan.

"We look forward to celebrating the success of these schools and to learning how they were able to beat the odds in order to reach higher levels of academic achievement," said Jim Sandy, Executive Director of MBLEE and Just for the Kids.

MBLEE is a statewide organization whose corporate members include: Whirlpool, DaimlerChrysler, State Farm Insurance, Steelcase, Ford, Dow, General Motors and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. The Office of the Governor and the Michigan Department of Education are also partners with MBLEE.

SOURCE: The Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence

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