

Reading Month Activities Abound

March is reading month across the State in most elementary schools. In the papers this month we have seen Principals getting pies in their faces if their students exceeded a certain number of books read, and other administrators have had to kiss pigs, and even camp out on the roof of the school. While these measures may seem a bit extreme to some, students get caught up in anything that generates excitement, including reading. But maybe there is more going on here than meets the eye.

Reading goes on all year long in our schools,

and the end of the month of March does not signal the end of student reading. What is particularly exciting about the program is that students are learning that reading for fun can be just that-FUN. In schools we often make learning a task, it seems to be the most expedient way to get a group of 25-30 people to do something you want them to. But when students have the opportunity to select their own book based on interest or just plain old curiosity, they are learning a skill that can serve them throughout their entire lives.

Being out and about in our academies this month, we have had the opportunity to see students reading in full class settings, in groups, individually, and even authoring their own books. We have seen students grouped with Book Buddies, and have viewed door decorating contests displaying student authors. The commonality has been that no matter what the incentive used, students have read thousand of books! We believe that as a result of this experience, many students will choose to pick up a good book and read for fun perhaps over spring break, or the summer. If that occurs, all the effort will have been worth it!

Special Points Of Interest

- Consortium Robotics Team Wins Award
- New City Celebrates a Nation
- Thank You Secretaries
- National Charter Schools Week





Spotlight On Academies



Consortium High Schools Wins Award At Robotics Competition

Consortium College Preparatory High School had 18 participants attend the FIRST Robotics Competition on March 9-11 at Eastern Michigan University. The competition hosted 58 teams from the State of Michigan.

To take part in the competition each school had to purchase a basic "kit" of parts, and then had to assemble and program the robot. The CCPHS team spent an intensive six weeks building and programming their robot. Staff advisors Mrs. Allen, Mr. Valliancourt, and Mr. Gaskill volunteered many hours with the students as the robot was being constructed. Along the way they had hands-on assistance with instruction on electrical and pneumatic systems. The finished robot was named the "Cougar Boxing Bot." Although the team's robot took last place in the competition, the Consortium High School team took the Spirit Trophy for their enthusiasm and determination, despite this being their first year in attendance at the competition.

FIRST is a program that is growing each year, and offered of \$4.9 million dollars in scholarships this academic year.

Congratulations to the Consortium High School Team and Advisors!



Members of CCPHS Robotics Team Pose With Spirit Trophy and Staff Advisor Amanda Allen



Team Members Put "Boxing Bot" Through Its Paces



On March 14, the students and staff from New City Academy in Lansing presented their 3rd Annual **Celebration Of A Nation** program. Instead of celebrating Black History Month, school leader Duane Shepherd has chosen to honor a multi-cultural theme of unity and brotherhood. All students in the academy take part in the



presentation with songs, poetry, recitations, speeches, and drama. Mr. Shepherd describes the purpose of the program as follows: "This event is intended to celebrate the oftentimes understated privilege we have been given to be part of a great nation, to honor the

wonderful diversity of people & cultures who have overcome some challenges in its growth."

The NCA Celebration has become a major production for the school each year, and students incorporate research for the program theme into their various school lessons. Congratulations NCA students and staff!



April 25 Is Secretaries Week

The week of April 25 is National Secretaries Week. It is appropriate for us to take a moment to honor all of those unsung heroes of our schools and offices: our Secretaries and Administrative Assistants. We thank you for your tireless work and talents-we couldn't do it without you!

"Special Mention" 2005 CSO Honorees

- Allen Academy:* **Celette Murray, Gwen Jackson**
- Benton Harbor Charter School:* **Angela Adams**
- Bridge Academy:* **Roohi Rahman, Asmahan Nagi**
- Conner Creek East Elementary:* **Michele Jones**
- Conner Creek East Middle School:* **Sharon Martin**
- Conner Creek East High School:* **Cheri Wilson**
- Consortium College Prep High School:* **Shavonne Brown, Tracey Cadwell**
- Creative Technologies Academy:* **Linda Hardenberg**
- Francis Reh Public School Academy:* **Theresa Slaybaugh, Rose Schliska**
- George Crockett:* **Dekeeta Thompkins**

- Hope of Detroit Academy:* **Manuel Rosales**
- Huron Academy:* **Sandy Edgar**
- Joy Preparatory Academy (K-2):* **Markisha Sallie**
- Joy Preparatory Academy (3-7):* **Nicole Lloyd**
- Marshall Academy:* **Jill McCombs**
- New Bedford Academy:* **Diane Gittus**
- New City Academy:* **Ann McDowell**
- Northridge Academy:* **Linda Hopkins**
- Pierre Toussaint Academy:* **Francine Gresham**
- Voyageur Academy:* **Jean Stuwa**
- CSO Charter School Office:* **Susan Impellizzeri, Julia Quilian**

Happy Secretaries Week!



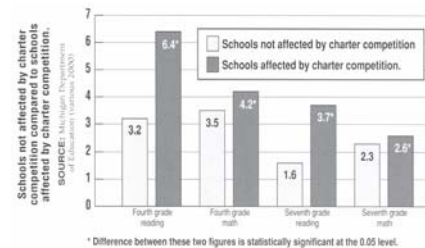
May 2-8 Is National Charter Schools Week

The week of May 2-8 is National Charter Schools Week. This is an opportunity for us to celebrate the charter school movement, and the difference being made for hundreds of thousands of students around the country. Nationally, there are nearly 3,000 charter schools serving more than 800,000 students.

In eleven short years, charter schools in Michigan have expanded from 12 in the '94-95 school year, to approximately 216 in '04-05 and enroll over 82,000 students. Statistically, more than

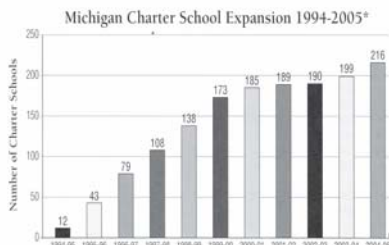
50% of charter students are minorities, compared to the State average of 19%. About 40% of charter school students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, compared to the State average of 28%.

Because of the emphasis Michigan authorizers have placed on performance and accountability, the State's charter school movement continues to grow and strengthen. During its first ten years, Michigan's charter schools have had a significant impact on public education. The competition that charters have provided to the traditional school system have had an overall positive effect for all students in those districts where a charter school has opened. The following graph shows the impact of charter competition on district scores.



Authorizers believe the Michigan charter school movement is meeting and exceeding its original policy goals. Conventional K-12 schools are responding to competition, and charter schools themselves are providing innovative, quality opportunities for the children they serve.

For more information on charter schools in Michigan, you may contact this office for a copy of "Strategy In Motion," the 2004 annual report of the Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers.





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Michigan Charter Schools to Hold Jobs Fair

With support from the Michigan Department of Education, MAPSA has once again organized a one day event to help connect Michigan's charter public schools with prospective teachers from around the State. However space is limited -so get your school signed up right away!

The Fair will be held at Marygrove College in Alumni Hall, April 23 from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. For detailed directions to the campus, go to: marygrove.edu

The registration fee is \$40.00 which includes up to two lunches, a table, and two chairs for your school's representatives. For more info e-mail jstaford@charterschools.

Remember To Save These Dates:

- June 27, 2005
CSO Summer Briefing at
Consortium High School
(Info to Follow)
- October 7, 2005
CSO Shining Star Awards
Celebration at Dearborn
Inn (Info to Follow)

FSU Mission

Ferris State University will be a national leader in providing opportunities for innovative teaching in career oriented, technological and professional education.