

## ***New City Academy and Hope of Detroit Academy Receive CSO Academic Performance Grants***

The CSO is pleased to announce the two winners of the 2006-2007 competitive Academic Performance Grants (APG). Checks have been presented to New City Academy (Lansing), and Hope of Detroit Academy (Detroit). The checks are the first installment in

a three-year total award of \$200,000 for each school. Our congratulations to the School Improvement Teams and Principals of these academies for their fine proposals and work on this grant opportunity.

### **New City Academy**



*L to R: Zoa Bonifiglio, SIP Team Member; Ronald Rizzo, CSO Interim Director; Suzanne Finney, CSO Academic Assessment Specialist; Michael Bolke, Board Member; Duane Shepherd, Principal; Cynthia-Primes-Heard, Board Member; Marcus Burkholder, Board President*

### **Focus of Grant**

New City plans to use their grant to focus on "institutionalizing" the school improvement process. The grant will enable NCA to hire a curriculum coach and to allow for release time for staff for professional development and for investigation of new programs. NCA takes a multi-faceted approach to the learning environment connecting the entire learning community which includes students, teachers, family, the Board, and the community at large. A main component of the grant will be to establish best practices for the staff to implement.

### **Hope of Detroit Academy**



*L to R: Arveneda McDonald, Curriculum Director;; Alberta Galarza, SIP Team Member; Ronald Rizzo, CSO Interim Director; Suzanne Finney, CSO Academic Assessment Specialist; Anthony Hubbard, Principal; Theresa Perry, SIP Team Member; Shannon Sharp, SIP Team Member; Behind : Kay Reeves, SIP Team Member; Danielle Jackson, Board Member; Erin Irwin, Board Member*

### **Focus of Grant**

Hope of Detroit plans to focus on increasing the ability of English language learners (ELL). Using the research-based model of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), the academy will be looking for strategic ways that make the subject matter concepts comprehensible while promoting the student's English language development. Approximately 60% of Hope's students have been identified as ELL. Additionally, Hope also has a number of students who are bi-lingual .



## Spotlight On Academies

### March is Reading Month



March is reading month across the State of Michigan. Many schools have a number of special activities and contests planned. We applaud all educators in the State for their work in continuing to encourage students interest in reading.



## FSU Board of Trustees Vote to Authorize Strict Discipline Academy

At its meeting on March 14, 2007, the Ferris State University Board of Trustees approved a CSO recommendation for the charter of a Strict Discipline Academy (SDA). The school will be known as the Clara B. Ford Academy and will be located on the campus of the Vista Maria, a Women's Rehabilitation Center in Dearborn Heights.

Vista Maria specializes in residential programs for girls aged 11-17 suffering from mental health issues, trauma recovery, and substance abuse treatment. The center was established 123 years ago on 50 acres of land that was specifically sold for this purpose by Henry and Clara Ford. Each year Vista Maria helps over 1,000 girls with the emotional, educational, and psychological guidance they need to become productive and contributing members of society.

"A Strict Discipline Academy (SDA) is tough to pull off," said CSO Interim Director Ronald Rizzo. "The students need much more than just educational support. There's often a large need for counseling, social work, and vocational training. Vista Maria has all of the infrastructure in place to provide the needed

services and a proven track record of delivering what they promise. We're honored to collaborate with an organization like Vista Maria which has achieved national recognition."

The Clara B. Ford Academy will be open to both genders, and anticipates an initial enrollment of 150 students. Vista Maria CEO Cameron Hosner anticipates ultimate enrollment to reach 400 students for the academy. "Our long-term vision is for Vista Maria to become a Village of Hope, Healing, and Ultimate Restoration," said Hosner. The Clara B. Ford Academy is another step toward that vision.

It is our pleasure to welcome the Clara B. Ford Academy to the FSU Charter school family. The academy plans to open in fall 2007.



## Creative Technologies Academy Earns Reauthorization

Creative Technologies Academy in Cedar Springs has been granted Reauthorization by the FSU Board of Trustees. At its meeting on March 14, the Board granted CTA a seven-year contract to 2014.

CTA was authorized in 1998 as a secondary school only. In 2001, Creative Technologies was approved to expand to grades 4-6, and was allowed to add two successive grades



each year. CTA is now a full K-12 school with approximately 296 students.

CTA is a self-managed school. As the name implies, CTA has technology at the heart of its curriculum. The academy has extensive computer equipment and large website presence for its students and parents. The academy also has its own wind generator plant as well as solar technology.

Congratulations Creative Technologies!



### School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney

Academic Assessment Specialist

#### MARCH IS READING MONTH!

Why the big deal??? Why does reading as a subject get its own month???

This may be restating the obvious, but here goes. . .reading is the foundational content area on which all others rest. Researchers in reading tell us that if a child is not reading 40 words per minute accurately at the end of first grade they will continue to lag behind their peers in academic achievement and the gap will widen significantly as they advance in grades. Sobering thought, isn't it? The National Reading Panel identified five essential elements that every child must master in order to be a good reader: Phonemic Awareness; Alphabetic Principle; Fluency with Text; Vocabulary; Comprehension. For more information see: <http://reading.uoregon.edu/appendices/contents.php> What about the curriculum materials used to teach these components? How do we know which ones to select? Two useful web sites that evaluate curricula in relation to these essential elements are: Florida Council for Reading Research at <http://www.fcrr.org/FCRRReports/LReports.aspx> and Oregon Reading First at [http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/curriculum\\_review.php](http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/curriculum_review.php)

Lisa Moats, reading expert and author of the American Federation of Teachers' *Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science* has a new paper titled, *Whole-Language High Jinks, How to Tell When "Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction" Isn't* which is available from Thomas B. Fordham Institute at: <http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/global/found.cfm?keyword=Whole-Language+High+Jinks&x=21&y=4>

Until next time. . .

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne".





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**CSO Spring Briefing**

Please RSVP for your spot at the 5th Annual CSO Spring Briefing. The conference will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Dearborn and school leaders, assistant leaders, and curriculum/assessment people have already been sent applications.

Please RSVP to: **Susan Impellizzeri 231/591-5807**

**MEAP Reports Mailed Soon**

The CSO has once again contracted with the Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University for detailed MEAP reports. We anticipate mailing them out by the end of March. All school leaders will also receive an electronic version on CD.



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