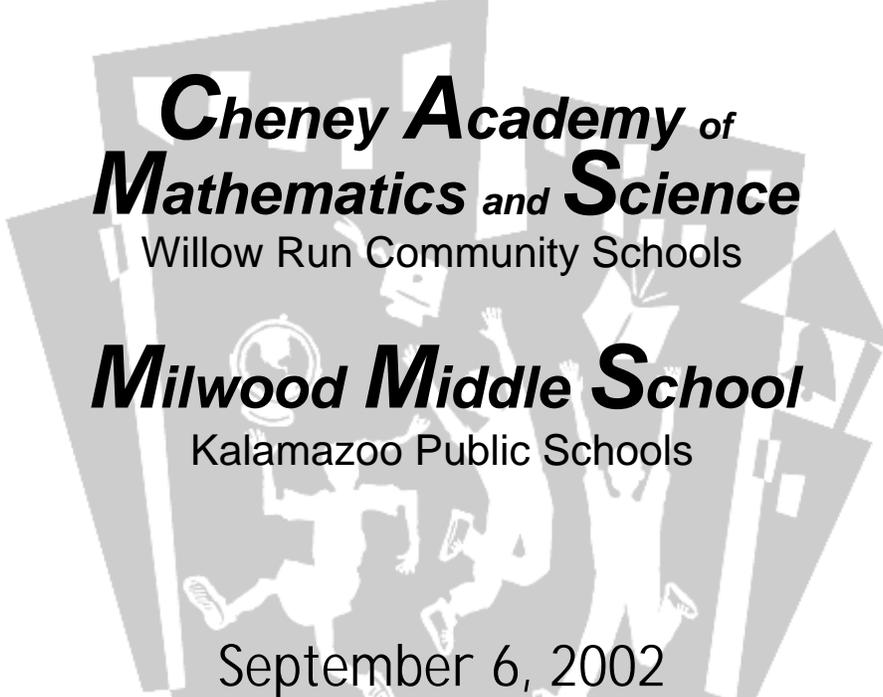


THE ROBERT AND PATRICIA MUTH  
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

HONOREES:



**Cheney Academy** of  
**Mathematics and Science**  
Willow Run Community Schools

**Milwood Middle School**  
Kalamazoo Public Schools

September 6, 2002  
Kellogg Center, East Lansing

MIDDLE CITIES  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

September 6, 2002



14<sup>th</sup> Annual Award Presentation

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# THE ROBERT AND PATRICIA MUTH EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

was instituted by Robert and Patricia Muth upon Bob's retirement as Executive Director of Middle Cities Education Association in 1988.

*The purpose of the award is to recognize Middle Cities school principals and staff who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in school improvement, specifically improvements which reflect gains in students' social and educational achievement. Schools must show sustained improvement over time among major subgroups of students, must have a written school improvement plan and must show evidence of community, staff and student support of the school program.*

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## THE ROBERT AND PATRICIA MUTH EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

### **Cheney Academy of Mathematics and Science**

Willow Run Community Schools ~ Eddie Ruth Williams, Principal

**CHENEY ACADEMY OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE** serves 344 students in grades K through 8. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the student population receives free/reduced lunch and 11.34% are designated Special Education. Their population is 82% African American, 17% Caucasian, and 1% Other.

The staff of Cheney believes that all students can learn and that it is the staff's responsibility to enable all learners to be successful. Decisions are based on their knowledge of students' work and collaborative planning to improve teaching and learning.

Cheney has set goals for student learning based on an exacting study of student performance. They have allocated staff time to study the data and work on matching instructional practices. They have used multiple measures to assess student success.

Extensive professional development has been incorporated into the culture of Cheney. All staff have participated in learning in relation to reading, math and science. They have also prioritized work on integrating technology into the classroom when appropriate. Teachers and students use discussion and reflection in their daily work. A learning community has been established. Educators at Cheney have restructured the traditional school use of time and space and rethought how children should be grouped for the most effective instruction. They have organized into teams and "pods" so that students can build understandings and relationships and not change teachers every year. The stability of teachers over time creates increased continuity for students. In addition, teachers can get to know children much better. The teams also have the advantage of studying student work together and refining instruction. Staff at Cheney really wants students to know they are important and that the school is a supportive place to be. The students wear uniforms of blue and white. Teachers have chosen to wear blue and white everyday also!

Parents at Cheney are offered multiple opportunities to understand the academic expectations for the children. Beyond the normal parent-teacher conferences, parents can get involved in attending school with their child, with curriculum pod nights, with literacy nights and in making and taking a book home.

Students at Cheney take part in student led conferences, where the student not only shares accomplishments but also demonstrates his or her understanding of the progress being made and goals to be set.

All of the work and collaboration and centering on students has paid off. The students at Cheney feel a part of their learning and have raised performance on the state MEAP test significantly in the last two years. They have not succeeded with 100% yet so they are not satisfied. They continue to monitor gender and poverty differences in performance so they can revise instruction when needed.

In describing their school culture, the staff assert that "Collaboration is a natural way of life, and represents 'air' to the Cheney Academy staff."

## THE ROBERT AND PATRICIA MUTH EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

### Milwood Middle School

Kalamazoo Public Schools ~ Darrell Clay, Principal

**MILWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL** serves 532 students in grades 7-8. Seventy percent (70%) of the student population receives free/reduced lunch and 14% are designated Special Education. Their population is 51.7% African American, 41.5% Caucasian, and 6.8% Hispanic.

Milwood staff have chosen a model for whole school change that is called "The Circle of Inquiry" and is part of a research design from the Coalition of Essential Schools. The Coalition is a nationally recognized process that began by looking at successful practices in secondary schools. The Cycle process facilitates the collection and analysis of multiple sources in information related to student performance. This process has allowed staff to align school improvement planning with a number of other improvement methods (Title I – Federal, North Central Accreditation, and the Ten Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools) to create an integrated focus for work on student achievement. That step is central to effective school change when connected to the analysis of student work.

Staff have participated in professional development to learn processes for looking at student work critically and to understand quality assessment. Both teachers and paraprofessionals have received training in strategies to improve literacy tailored to the middle school student. A number of additional best practices form the core of strategies used by all staff, including cooperative learning and learning to effectively teach with diversity in mind. Because culture is important in any school for students to be able to focus on learning, staff have also focused on methods of assuring a safe and orderly environment. A leadership team, work groups and grade level teams have been structured to allow for collaboration to occur and for teachers to review student work and refine instruction.

Literacy has been studied and specific skills identified for improvement, such as "Can the student provide specific evidence to justify conclusions or general statements?" and "Can the student conjecture/question based on variables they identify?" Student performance on the last state assessment reading test was raised more than 10% in the highest category and the lowest performance group was reduced by almost 10%.

Together with the district funds, building budget was allocated to the data analysis and the study of instruction of students at Milwood in regard to all of the learning experiences developed and implemented by educators related to reading. Their joint efforts will provide the culture for improvement of instruction and increasing achievement for all students. Other innovative programs used by Milwood include their partnership with Western Michigan University. It focuses on developing pre-service and intern teachers within a context of ongoing professional development for the entire staff. Mentor teachers meet bi-weekly to discuss current research on best practices.

## PAST AWARD WINNERS

2001	2000
Barth Elementary, Romulus Oakview Elementary, Muskegon Winchell Elementary, Kalamazoo	Kimball Elementary, Port Huron Woods Lake Elementary, Kalamazoo
1999	1998
Leggett Elementary, Waterford	Bluffton Elementary, Muskegon Ann J. Kellogg Elementary, Battle Creek Port Huron High School, Port Huron
1997	1996
Glenside Elementary, Muskegon Ballard Elementary, Niles	Sherwood Park Elementary, Grand Rapids
1995	1994
Harding Elementary, Ferndale Kettering Elementary, Willow Run Macomb Elementary, Mount Clemens	Angell Elementary, Ann Arbor Eastern Elementary, Grand Rapids Woods Lake Elementary, Kalamazoo
1993	1992
Pioneer High School, Ann Arbor Sibley Elementary, Grand Rapids Washington Elementary, Mount Clemens	Battle Creek Central, Battle Creek Hall Elementary, Grand Rapids Oasis High School, Mount Pleasant Seminole Elementary, Mount Clemens
1991	1990
Hillcrest Elementary, Grand Rapids Mount Clemens HS, Mount Clemens Southwestern Junior High, Battle Creek Kaiser Elementary, Willow Run	Chapelle Elementary, Ypsilanti Ferris Elementary, Highland Park Stocking Elementary, Grand Rapids Union High School, Grand Rapids
1989	
Bach Open Classroom, Ann Arbor Fountain Elementary, Grand Rapids Ottawa Hills High School, Grand Rapids	

## Mission Statement

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Middle Cities Education Association is a consortium of urban school districts, which was formed out of a shared commitment to improving educational opportunities for the urban learner. The unique mission and emphasis of Middle Cities is to serve as an advocate for member districts to insure quality educational programs for all students.

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## Member Districts

Albion	Mt. Clemens
Battle Creek	Mt. Pleasant
Bay City	Muskegon
Beecher	Muskegon Hts.
Benton Harbor	Niles
Buena Vista	Pontiac
Ferndale	Port Huron
Flint	Romulus
Garden City	Saginaw
Grand Rapids	Southfield
Hazel Park	Traverse City
Highland Park	Waterford
Inkster	Wayne-Westland
Jackson	Westwood
Kalamazoo	Willow Run
Lansing	Ypsilanti
Monroe	