

For Immediate Release: March 8, 2006

Castillo Names Oregon's Top Schools in Closing the Achievement Gap

SALEM – State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo today named the Oregon public schools that have made significant progress in closing the achievement gap. The announcement was made today at a press conference at Aloha Park Elementary School in the Beaverton School District.

Each school named for the award has demonstrated progress in student achievement in math and reading and showed improvement in student achievement for minority and/or low income students. The schools will be recognized at a banquet on April 28th. This is the second year that Castillo has recognized schools for the **Celebrating School Success Awards**, and each recipient will receive a \$2000 grant.

“These schools prove that it can be done – students can overcome poverty, cultural differences, and other challenges and succeed,” Castillo said. “My goal has been to highlight examples of what is being accomplished in our public schools and send a very important message to all of Oregon about helping all children achieve.”

“I wanted to find a school in each area of the state that could serve as an example for how we can close the achievement gap and ensure that every student has success in school,” Castillo said.

Castillo initiated the **Celebrating Student Success Award** in 2004 to recognize leadership within Oregon’s K-12 public school system and highlight schools that have made exemplary progress toward closing the academic achievement gap. This year's awards, inspired by the work of the Portland Schools Foundation, are in partnership with Portland Schools Foundation’s Excellence in Education Awards. Therefore, Castillo will recognize a school from the Portland Public School district along with the others from across the state. The Portland announcement will be made later.

Selected schools made it through a “data screen” that identified schools where there was significant growth over two years (for example: from 3rd to 5th grade) with individual students who remain in the same district during that time. To be selected, the school must have been rated with at least a "Satisfactory" on the state report card. In addition, Department staff looked at both the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards and growth among students.

The 2006 **Celebrating Student Success Award** recipients are:

- Aloha Park Elementary, Aloha
- Crooked River Elementary, Prineville
- Forest Grove High School, Forest Grove
- Nellie Muir Elementary, Woodburn
- Phoenix Elementary, Phoenix
- Cecil Trost Elementary, Canby

- Portland School (to be announced later)

The 2006 **Celebrating Student Success** finalists are:

- Highland Elementary, Gresham
- Metzger Elementary, Tigard
- Nehalem Elementary, Nehalem
- Orenco Elementary, Hillsboro
- Shaver Elementary, Portland
- Taft Elementary, Lincoln City
- Yoshikai Elementary, Salem

“The finalist schools show us great promise and inspiration. These schools are leading the way for others,” said Castillo.

The recipients and finalists will be recognized at the **Celebrating Student Success Award Banquet**, to be held on April 28, 2006 at the Oregon Convention Center. Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) is the title sponsor for the banquet. The event follows the third annual “Closing the Achievement Gap” professional development conference. Each recipient school has been invited to present at the conference.