

Grace, Kenbrook earn NCACS honors

By SUE BUCK
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Two Farmington Elementary schools have been honored by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools after completing a five-year, eight-phase improvement process.

William Grace, 29040 Shawassee, and Kenbrook Elementary, 32130 Bonnet Hill, were among more than 60 Michigan schools that were recognized.

In addition to meeting the traditional accreditation standards of teacher preparation, number of instructional hours, etc., the schools adopted a school improvement approach which requires "a new level of accountability," according to Myra Richards, administrative assistant for NCA evaluation.

"Administrators and staff make a commitment to implement a plan of continuous effort to improve student performance in selected areas," she said. "The documentation of results throughout this demanding improvement cycle reveals the effectiveness of the plan."

A vital component of the overall evaluation process is peer review. Both schools were successful in demonstrating to the

visiting peer review team that students are performing better.

It doesn't end the journey, however, said William Grace Principal Mark Marowski, who was particularly proud that his staff kept the process going despite the fact that several different administrators became ill or retired during the time period.

"The staff stuck together without the consistency of the same administrator," Marowski said. "I just fell into it."

This is Marowski's first year at the school.

With input from parents and staff, surveys and test scores, three goals were set: problem solving in math, information reading, also known as non-fiction reading, and conflict resolution.

"It targets every student," Marowski said. "We identified selected target areas before the process was implemented."

Kenbrook Principal Margaret McKinley couldn't be reached for comment.

"The NCA school improvement process demands more of schools than any other change process," said William Bushaw, state director in a press release. "Schools must document that

their efforts resulted in students who are more prepared for the 21st century."

The report from the final visit of the peer review team resulted in a recommendation of both schools for endorsement to the Michigan NCA State Committee. This committee, which is elected by the membership of the Michigan NCA, reviewed the documentation from the school and the team.

Upon their approval, the North Central Association of Commission of Accreditation and School Improvement awarded these schools its highest honor.

CAMPUS PIPELINE

NORTHWESTERN DEAN'S

Christopher L. Erickson of Farmington Hills was named to the dean's list for the winter quarter at Northwestern University.

WICHITA DEAN'S

Akm Nurul Huda was named to the dean's list for the fall semester at Wichita State University.

Kenbrook Elementary celebrates 2000 Blue Ribbon School award

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State School Board Member Kathleen Straus made a strong impression on both the faculty and students at Kenbrook Elementary when she came for a special celebration recently of the school's 2000 State Blue Ribbon Exemplary School status.

Hillside Elementary was also honored.

Chris Baker, a Kenbrook special education teacher, recalled how Straus drove home the fact that Kenbrook students are numbered among the elite.

"She wanted to show them how special they are," Baker said.

Straus asked all 400 students to hold up and wiggle their hands to show how many schools there are in Michigan. She pulled three children up to the front and, with two children holding up all their fingers and a third child holding

■ 'Good, better, best; Never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best.'

Nancy Bates
—Farmington Hills Mayor

up just two fingers, the children could count to 22.

That's just 22 in the state to receive the recognition, she said.

To achieve this honor, both schools submitted applications. The state then sent a visiting team, consisting of teachers and principals, former Blue Ribbon winners, to assess them.

Kenbrook Elementary's honors just keep on coming. They were also recognized by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools for completion of their five-year, eight-phase improvement program.

"I think of NCA as the process," Baker said. "Blue Ribbon is the passion for what we do."

In attendance at the celebration were State School Board Members John C. Austin, Herbert S. Mayor and state Supt. of Public Instruction Arthur Ellis, Congressman Joe Knollenberg and Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates also appeared.

"It was outstanding to see the pride on the faces of the faculty and teachers," Bates said.

A short time after the assembly, at which Bates recited a poem her father taught her, a young boy from Kenbrook wandered into Bates' yard. He remembered the first portion of the verse, but not the remainder. He asked Bates to help him remember.

Bates gladly recited it again: "Good, better, best; Never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Resident named fellow

Elizabeth Giffels of Farmington Hills has been named Fellow of the Society of Actuaries. Fellowship is the highest professional recognition an actuary can achieve in the United States

or Canada.

It represents several years of study and the successful completion of a series of examinations administered by the Society of Actuaries.

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