



The National Association for Magnet and Theme-based Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charlotte's Idlewild Elementary Named Nation's Top Magnet School for 2017

Magnet School Exemplifies Excellence and Celebrates Multicultural Diversity

May 1, 2017 Washington, DC - During Magnet Schools of America's 35th National Conference in Los Angeles, CA Idlewild Elementary School in Charlotte, NC was named the recipient of the Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Distinguished Merit Award for 2017. This award is given annually to the nation's top magnet school and commemorates the organization's founding member Dr. Ronald P. Simpson. It also includes a \$5,000 cash prize sponsored by American Education Solutions, Inc.

"We are very proud to give our most prestigious award to Idlewild Elementary for exemplifying the five pillars of magnet schools: Diversity, Innovative Curriculum and Professional Development, Academic Excellence, High Quality Instructional Systems, and Family and Community Partnerships," said Executive Director, Todd Mann. "The school offers a highly enriched learning environment that helps students develop a foundation of skills that will enable them to succeed socially and academically."

Idlewild Elementary is part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and is a Title I Learning Immersion and Talent Development magnet program. It provides gifted and high ability learners from all racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds with the opportunity to maximize their potential. The school's motto is, "Empowering all to be extraordinary." This philosophy is evident throughout the urban school where multiculturalism is celebrated to reflect the diversity of its students who represent 40 different countries and speak 24 different languages.

Writing in support of Idlewild Elementary's merit award, parent Kelly Barclay stated, "My husband and I chose Idlewild for our girls because we want our daughters to be engaged in a community that fosters an appreciation of all people and the unique gifts that each culture offers. I am continually impressed with the education offered by Idlewild Elementary, which challenges students and stretches them academically and relationally."

Accepting the award on behalf of the school and reflecting on the honor, Principal Larenda Denien stated, "We want to empower all our students to be extraordinary so they can achieve their potential, because without education they don't have a choice. We want to provide students with a choice and options so they can be successful in everything they do."

National merit awards are given to magnet schools that demonstrate a commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, diversity, and strong parent and community involvement. To be considered for a merit award, member schools must submit a detailed application that is scored by a panel of experienced educators. This year, 244 public magnet schools and programs located in 20 states received a national merit award.

MISSION STATEMENT

Providing leadership for high quality innovative instructional programs that promote choice, equity, diversity, and academic excellence for all students.

There are two categories of merit awards: (1) Magnet Schools of Excellence, which are given to only a select group of magnet schools and (2) Magnet Schools of Distinction, the second highest award of recognition. The highest ranked magnet schools in the Excellence category are eligible to receive MSA's most prestigious national awards including the Simpson Award.

Idlewild Elementary has an outstanding academic reputation. It has received either an MSA Excellence or Distinction Award nine times since 2006. The school has been identified as a high growth school by the state of North Carolina, it was named a NC School of Progress, as well as a Title I Blue Ribbon School. Idlewild students consistently succeed in academic competitions and many of the school's teachers have advanced degrees, are Nationally Board Certified, or are working towards their Academically Intellectually Gifted Certification.

About Magnet Schools of America:

Magnet Schools of America is a nonprofit education association that was founded in 1986 and authorized as a 501(c)3 in 1994. It represents approximately 4,340 magnet schools serving nearly 3.5 million students. It sponsors a national awards program, hosts professional development activities, and provides technical assistance through the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL). MSA supports and serves the leaders and teachers of magnet and theme-based schools, while promoting the development of new magnet programs and public schools of choice.

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