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Barfield Elementary principal honored for job well done

By TOSHEENA ROBINSON-BLAIR
Gannett Tennessee

Published: Monday, 05/07/07

MURFREESBORO — When Barfield Elementary Principal Judy Goodwin is honored today along with 17 other principals from across Tennessee — for advancing students academically — she'll be thinking about the work that went into making that possible and what it takes to stay ahead.

The Education Consumers Foundation Awards ceremony recognizes Tennessee's most effective school principals. Value-added gains — how far a school takes the individual child regardless of their academic starting point — are used to pick the winners.

"When the man on the line told me that we had won an award, I thought it was a salesman and was ready to hang up," said Goodwin. "When he mentioned TVAAS (the measure for learning gains), I knew that the call was legitimate.

"After he told me all the details, I went to the PA system and told everyone that I had news that could not wait. You could hear the cheers throughout the building when I told them about the award that would be given because of their efforts.."

Eighteen winners were selected from more than 1,300 public elementary and middle schools. Goodwin snagged third place in the Middle Tennessee elementary school division.

It's the second year in a row that a Rutherford County principal has been honored. Buchanan Principal Mike Swanson won third place in the middle school category for Middle Tennessee last year. Awards are based on three-year value-added gains in reading/language arts and math and are given for first, second, and third place in grades 4-6 and grades 6-8.

Only schools where the principal has served for five or more years are considered.

Goodwin attributes the school's success to being smart.

"We ... have the wisdom to make changes as needed when something no longer works. (We) celebrate our achievements and continue to look for ways to do it better," she said.

"Nothing breeds success like success. We never want to reach a comfort level that causes us to stop learning and growing, whether as a school or as individuals."

The winning principals received a certificate and a cash award: \$3,000 for first place, \$2,000 for second place, and \$1,000 for third place.

The Education Consumers Foundation is a nonprofit consumer organization.

Published: Monday, 05/07/07



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Amqui principal honored, Madison school lead state in improvement

By MICHAELA JACKSON
Staff Writer

Published: Monday, 05/07/07

Six regional elementary and middle school principals were honored today for strides in academic achievement at their schools.

Middle Tennessee's winning elementary principals were Brenda Steele of Amqui Elementary in Madison with first place, Gail Bell of Collinwood Elementary in Wayne County with second place and Judy Goodwin of Barfield Elementary in Murfreesboro with third place. Amqui is the most improved school in the state.

The top middle school principal in the state for academic improvement was Deborah Grasty at North Stewart Elementary in Stewart County. Second place went to Carol Cutsinger at Dupont Tyler Middle School in the Metro system. The third place winner was Johnny Chandler at Dickson Middle School.

The Education Consumers Foundation measured students' gains in Math and Reading/Language Arts and awarded first, second and third place awards to principals of elementary and middle school principals in East, Middle and West Tennessee. The awards were bestowed according to the value-added system, regardless of academic starting and ending points and based only on the actual performance improvement to level the playing field.

Winning principals, who must have been at their schools at least five years, were awarded a certificate and a cash prize at today's award ceremony in the state capitol.

Published: Monday, 05/07/07

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HEAD OF THE CLASS

SCHOOLS HONORED FOR EXCELLING IN THE BASICS



PUBLISHED: MAY 07 2007 03:45 PM UPDATED: MAY 07 2007 03:52 PM

Eighteen principals from across the state of Tennessee are being recognized for being the best in Tennessee at advancing students academically. Each of their schools has been exceptionally effective in lifting the achievement of students as measured by Tennessee's value-added accountability system.

The awards were presented by the Education Consumers Foundation at a ceremony in the State Capitol.

"Educating our children is the most important thing we do," said Governor Phil Bredesen. "The principals and teachers of these schools are doing an excellent job in helping their students learn, and in raising standards and expectations. Their record of performance attests to the hard work and dedication."

Tennessee's value-added assessment system measures achievement gain in a way that permits schools to be compared regardless of the makeup of the student body. Schools whose students make the greatest annual gains in achievement earn the highest value-added scores; and superior schoolwide performance reflects superior teaching, teamwork, and leadership.

"We are very pleased to have seven repeat winners from last year," said Dr. J. E. Stone, President of the Foundation. "They, along with the 11 principals that are first time winners, embody the qualities we hope will become the standard for all Tennessee schools."

Tennessee Education Commissioner Lana Seivers, representing Governor Bredesen, is taking part in the presentations once again this year.

"It's a distinct pleasure to honor the educators and schools that are doing such an excellent job of advancing the knowledge and skills of their students," said Education Commissioner Lana Seivers. "Tennessee is the only state to have an assessment system that permits educators to gain a truly accurate picture of how their efforts are impacting students."

In all, 18 winners were selected from Tennessee's over 1300 public elementary and middle schools. Awards based on 3-year value-added gains in Reading/Language Arts and Math were given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in grades 4-6 and grades 6-8 within each of Tennessee's 3 regions--East, Middle, and West.

Because the awards were given in recognition of high quality leadership, only schools where the principal has served for 5 or more years were considered.

"The leadership shown by the principals at these 18 schools is remarkable and it illustrates what can be accomplished regardless of the wealth or poverty of the student body. With TVAAS, people are able to see exactly what each school contributes to the success of its students, not just the test score averages that are so heavily influenced by demographic and socioeconomic differences" said Stone. "These are the schools that do the best job of helping students 'be all they can be,' regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, their advantages and disadvantages."

Additional information about the winners, including their "recipe for success" and school performance charts showing how they compare to other schools around the state are available at www.education-consumers.com.

The winning principals received a certificate and a cash award: \$3,000 for first

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place, \$2,000 for second place, and \$1,000 for third place. A complete list of the winners is included with the news release. Complete details of the selection process are available via the Foundation's website: www.education-consumers.com.

The Education Consumers Foundation is a nonprofit consumer organization. It gathers and disseminates information about education policy and practice on behalf of parents, taxpayers, and their elected representatives.

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Midstate briefs: Amqui Elementary's improvement lauded

Published: Tuesday, 05/08/07

NASHVILLE

Amqui Elementary School in Madison and Principal Brenda Steel were honored Monday for having the most improved public school in Tennessee between 2004 and 2006.

Gail Bell and Collinwood Elementary in Wayne County won second place, and Judy Goodwin and Barfield Elementary in Murfreesboro won third place.

The top middle school principal in Middle Tennessee was Deborah Grasty at North Stewart Elementary in Stewart County.

Second place went to Carol Cutsinger at Dupont Tyler Middle School in Metro.

The third place winner was Johnny Chandler at Dickson Middle School in Dickson.

The Education Consumers Foundation, a non-profit group that studies education policies and practices, measured students' gains in math and reading/language arts. The awards were based on academic gains, regardless of where the schools started.

— MICHAELA JACKSON

Two teens' volunteer work recognized

Two Middle Tennessee students have been honored in the nation's capital for their outstanding volunteer work.

Taylor Cox, 16, of Brentwood and Miles Karro, 14, of Nashville were recognized Sunday night during the 2007 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

The two received \$1,000, as well as personal congratulations from Indianapolis Colts quarterback and Super Bowl MVP Peyton Manning.

Cox, a sophomore at Ensworth High School in Nashville, works year-round to educate the public about juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and raise money for the Arthritis Foundation. She discovered she had JRA when she was 13.

Karro, an eighth-grader at Harding Academy, helped his mother start a program in Nashville that collects flowers after they've been used in weddings, funerals and other events, and delivers them to hospice patients, nursing homes, service agencies, and homeless shelters.

— RALPH LOOS

Two are hospitalized after Antioch wreck

Two people were in critical condition Monday night after a sport utility vehicle collided with a box truck in Antioch, Metro police said.

The wreck occurred about 10 p.m. on Apache Trail when the SUV crested a hill as the truck was making a U-turn into the car's lane, Metro Capt. Mike Alexander said. The SUV struck the truck,

and the ensuing wreck sent the drivers of both vehicles, who were not identified, to Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

A passenger in the truck and two passengers in the SUV received minor injuries, Alexander said.

— COLBY SLEDGE

Police capture shooting suspect

A convicted felon accused of shooting one man and firing at another Saturday morning has been charged with 89 crimes over 19 years, Metro police said Monday.

Roderick Chadwick, 37, is charged with two counts of aggravated assault. Police said he fired at Censka Shaw and Charles Marshall, both 30, as they left Faded nightclub, 117 Second Ave. N., about 5:30 a.m. Chadwick, who did not know either of the men, shot Shaw in the leg after an argument, police said.

— COLBY SLEDGE

40 arrests made in gang crackdown

An initiative targeting Nashville gang members netted 40 arrests last weekend, according to Metro police.

Operation Safer Streets, which took place Friday and Saturday, resulted in six felony charges and more than 40 misdemeanor charges, as well as seizure of 8.6 grams of marijuana, 2.8 grams of cocaine, two pills and a weapon, police said.

Police from all six precincts and the Specialized Investigations Division participated in the citywide initiative.

— COLBY SLEDGE

FRANKLIN

Chemicals are still problem in Harpeth

Roughly five months after industrial chemicals were first found under a Franklin neighborhood and in the Harpeth River, those same pollutants are still showing up in water samples taken from the river by state environmental officials.

The ongoing pollution has prompted Harpeth River Watershed Association officials to urge state officials to step up their removal of the chemicals by adopting federal guidelines for corralling and removing the solvents.

Egyptian Lacquer Manufacturing Co. has assumed responsibility for the spill that includes the industrial solvents acetone and toluene, both used by the paint-making company.

Bill Penny, an Egyptian Lacquer attorney, said the clean-up process is "a little complicated."

— KEVIN WALTERS

Manicurist says star's dog bit her

A Nashville woman is suing country music star Tanya Tucker over an alleged dog attack.

Danielle D. Hobbs, a manicurist for Carol G's Hair Salon, says in a Williamson County lawsuit filed last week that she was bitten by a dog named Bella.

She said the incident occurred on May 2, 2006, when Hobbs was called to Tucker's home to give her a manicure.

Hobbs had been to Tucker's home twice before.

She said Tucker has at least eight dogs and that several growled and barked at her during each visit.

Hobbs says Bella ran from a bedroom, jumped on her and began biting her. She says she suffered from painful and disfiguring scarring on her leg. Hobbs is seeking \$300,000.

— MITCHELL KLINE

Published: Tuesday, 05/08/07

Hardy principal honored for progress

Tuesday, May 08, 2007 -

By Christina Cooke
Staff Writer

Each morning at Hardy Elementary, principal Natalie Elder assembles the student body in the auditorium just inside the school's front doors.

She makes announcements and calls students to the front of the room to show off their skills, such as being able to recite the preamble to the Constitution or their multiplication tables. To conclude, she reminds them that they attend a school of excellence.

"Show me that throughout the day," she says to end the morning ritual.

Under Ms. Elder's leadership, Hardy Elementary is improving its students' achievement more rapidly than most other schools in Tennessee, according to a grass-roots consumers union for public school customers.

The Education Consumers Foundation, which distributes information about schools to the public, on Monday in Nashville designated Ms. Elder one of 18 "K-8 Tennessee Effective Educators." For the second year in a row, she received the first-place award among East Tennessee elementary school principals.

Guilford Hill, principal of Blythe-Bower Elementary School in Cleveland, Tenn., received second place in the region.

The award recognizes principals whose schools "are doing the heavy lifting" by drastically raising student test scores, foundation President J.E. Stone said.

"Their test scores are below average for the state, but they are doing a heroic job of increasing the proficiency of their students," Mr. Stone said of Hardy Elementary. "Public education was created for the purpose of making a difference in the lives of young people by giving them a chance to make something of themselves. What they're doing fulfills the promise of public education."

While Hardy Elementary received D's in math and social studies and F's in reading/language arts and science on the state report card in 2006, it received straight A's for student improvement as measured by the report card's Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System data.

Ms. Elder said Hardy Elementary teachers focused heavily on improving math scores last year. They tutored students in math before school from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. and offered Saturday math workshops, usually attended by 50 to 75 students, she said.

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Students identified their academic goals in one-on-one meetings with their teachers at the beginning of the year, then tracked their progress throughout the school year. They also focused on acting respectfully, Ms. Elder said.

"When we talk about excellence, it means a lot of things -- not only your grades, but your character, too," she said. "We may not be perfect all the time, but our goal is to be excellent in everything we do."

Fourth-grade teacher Vonetta Maston said Ms. Elder makes sure teachers have all the materials they need to do their jobs.

"Anything she feels is going to increase student achievement, she supports that," Ms. Maston said. "If she doesn't have it, she'll find a way to get it for us."

Hamilton County Schools Superintendent Jim Scales said Ms. Elder's award is testament to her dedication.

"She moves forward, but she moves forward in such a way she takes her entire staff with her," Dr. Scales said. "Although she's demanding, they understand she's going to be with them."

E-mail Christina Cooke at ccooke@timesfreepress.com

ON THE WEB

Visit www.education-consumers.com/ecf_vaaa_about.php to see charts that show how Hardy Elementary -- and all other Hamilton County elementary and middle schools -- stack up with other schools in terms of student growth.

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Principal demonstrates her value

New Hopewell's Harb honored for leading students to success

By News Sentinel staff
May 8, 2007

When teachers begin the school year at New Hopewell Elementary, they use value-added test scores to focus on three R's: review, reflect and revise.

By reviewing scores, reflecting on how to improve weak areas and revising action plans to meet high goals, the South Knoxville school has helped pupils advance academically better than almost any school in Tennessee.

Principal Melanie Harb was one of 18 principals honored Monday in Nashville as one of the state's most effective elementary and middle school principals, based on value-added performance.

Tennessee's value-added testing system gauges student progress year over year, regardless of external factors such as socioeconomic status, by using a statistical model that analyzes annual Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program scores.

"It's our job to take (children) to their fullest potential, and the only way we can find that out is through our value-added scores," said Harb, 42.

Monday's awards were given by the Education Consumers Foundation, a group headed by East Tennessee State University professor John Stone. State Education Commissioner Lana Seivers took part in Monday's awards ceremony.

Principals had to be at their schools at least five years, to assure the test results were connected to their leadership.

"It's not the principal alone," Harb said. "It takes the hard work of the educators, the teachers in my building, the support staff, the parents who come in to volunteer and help, and the students themselves. We set high expectations and they have to take ownership of that."

New Hopewell has 287 students. Harb won second place for East Tennessee and plans to put the \$2,000 prize into staff development at New Hopewell. Prizes ranged from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and were provided with help from the Cornerstone Foundation of Knoxville.

Other area winners were Jim Kirk of Alcoa Middle School, Curtis Wells of Joppa Elementary in Grainger County and Marty Cosby of Forge Ridge School in Claiborne County.

The Education Consumers Foundation honored three elementary and three middle school principals from each of Tennessee's three grand divisions.



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Hill, Blythe-Bower lauded for excelling in the basics

Special to the Banner

Published May 08, 2007 10:20 AM EDT

Eighteen principals from across the state of Tennessee were recognized Monday for being the best in Tennessee at advancing students academically. Each of the schools has been exceptionally effective in lifting the achievement of students as measured by Tennessee's value-added accountability system.

Principal Guilford R. Hill and Blythe-Bower Elementary were recipients of the Education Consumers Foundation's Value-Added Achievement Award. The school was third in the Elementary Schools East division.

Hill said, "I am very excited for the Blythe-Bower family to receive this award. Even though I am named as the recipient, I can say that those who are the most deserving are the staff and students of Blythe-Bower Elementary School. I will gladly accept this on their behalf."

Hamilton County's Hardy Elementary School and Principal Natalie Elder finished first. Knox County's New Hope Elementary and Melanie Harb, principal, were second in the east division.

The awards were presented by the Education Consumers Foundation at a ceremony in the State Capitol.

"Educating our children is the most important thing we do," said Gov. Phil Bredesen. "The principals and teachers of these schools are doing an excellent job in helping their students learn, and in raising standards and expectations. Their record of performance attests to the hard work and





dedication.”

Tennessee’s value-added assessment system measures achievement gain in a way that permits schools to be compared regardless of the makeup of the student body. Schools whose students make the greatest annual gains in achievement earn the highest value-added scores; and superior schoolwide performance reflects superior teaching, teamwork, and leadership.

“We are very pleased to have seven repeat winners from last year,” said Dr. J. E. Stone, president of the Foundation. “They, along with the 11 principals that are first time winners, embody the qualities we hope will become the standard for all Tennessee schools.”

“I am extremely pleased with this exciting announcement,” states Dr. Rick Denning, director of Cleveland City Schools. Mr. Hill and his staff at Blythe Bower Elementary have worked so hard to enable their students to make continuous progress. To be listed as one of the top three schools in the state in student gains is a tremendous accomplishment.”

Tennessee Education Commissioner Lana Seivers, representing Gov. Bredesen, participated in the presentations once again this year.

“It’s a distinct pleasure to honor the educators and schools that are doing such an excellent job of advancing the knowledge and skills of their students,” said Education Commissioner Lana Seivers. “Tennessee is the only state to have an assessment system that permits educators to gain a truly accurate picture of how their efforts are impacting students.”

In all, 18 winners were selected from Tennessee’s more than 1,300 public elementary and middle schools. Awards based on three-year value-added gains in Reading/Language Arts and Math were given for first-, second- and third-place in grades 4 through 6 and grades 6 through 8 within each of Tennessee’s three regions — East, Middle, and West.

Because the awards were given in recognition of high quality leadership, only schools where the principal has served for five or more years were considered.

“The leadership shown by the principals at these 18 schools is remarkable and it illustrates what can be accomplished regardless of the wealth or poverty of the student body. With TVAAS, people are able to see exactly what each

school contributes to the success of its students, not just the test score averages that are so heavily influenced by demographic and socioeconomic differences” said Stone.

“These are the schools that do the best job of helping students ‘be all they can be,’ regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, their advantages and disadvantages.”

The winning principals received a certificate and a cash award: \$3,000 for first place, \$2,000 for second place, and \$1,000 for third place. A complete list of the winners is included with the news release. Complete details of the selection process are available via the Foundation’s Web site: www.education-consumers.com.



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DuPont Tyler Middle and Amqui Elementary recognized

By ANDY HUMBLETS | ahumbles@tennessean.com | 726-5939

Published: Wednesday, 05/09/07

DuPont Tyler Middle School and Amqui Elementary have been recognized by the Education Consumers Foundation's for student achievement gains in math and reading-language arts.

The Value Added Achievement Awards were given to 18 elementary and middle schools in the state. Performance was based on student gains from the beginning of the school-year to the end over a three-year period.

Published: Wednesday, 05/09/07

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Mark Cate to leave Maryville College

May 10, 2007

By Lance Coleman

Editor

Blount Today

In June, Mark Cate will "graduate" Maryville College and join the business world.

Cate, current vice president of advancement and finance at Maryville College, will leave the school on June 30. Cate, who has been with the college 16 years, will join the firm of Lawler-Wood.

Cate started with the school when he was 25 as a residence director and met his wife Cathy during the interview process. The couple has two daughters, Bailey, 9 and Abbie, 6.

Cathy Cate said their daughters have grown up around the administration, students, culture and traditions of the college. "We plan to stay involved in the life of Maryville College and in the civic arts center," she said. "It's exciting."

Mark Cate said his emotions were bittersweet because his career grew during his time with the college. As he moved up through ranks, Cate says he found the college gave him various opportunities to grow, he said. "I wouldn't have this opportunity with Lawler-Wood if it weren't for opportunities the college gave me. I feel like I've graduated."

Cate said he would strive to take the values and traditions he learned while working at Maryville College and apply them in the business world.

The Cates plan to stay in Maryville, where Cathy Cate is executive director of Leadership Blount County.

Lawler-Wood L.L.C., which was retained in April of 2005 to manage the Phase II projects of the Civic Arts Center, is a provider of commercial development, property management and housing services. The company was founded in 1975 in Knoxville by Pat Wood and Rodney Lawler.

Blount County budget committee recommends 5-cent property tax hike

The Blount County Budget Committee will send a budget to county commission that is less than what both the Blount County Sheriff's office and the Blount County school system requested. Accompanying the proposed budget is a recommended 5-cent property tax increase.

The committee met on Monday, May 7, and recommended the 5-cent property tax increase. The committee members voted unanimously to approve a \$39 million general fund budget. It would require the county's property tax rate jump from \$2.18 to 2.23 per \$100 of assessed value. State law mandates that the full commission approve a new budget by July 1.

Adding up to about \$1 million in the budget is the committee's recommendation for a maximum 5 percent performance-based raise for county employees.

While the budget does include increased funding for the sheriff's office, it falls short of the \$2.6 million Sheriff James Berrong requested to fund pay increases for deputies.

The budget committee also recommended allowing the sheriff access to other funds to address salary issues. The committee recommended he be able to use a \$550,000 increase in unbudgeted federal funds the office is paid for housing federal inmates. The committee also recommended the sheriff be able to use funds from vacant positions in his department to fund salary increases.

The budget committee members proposed that the 2007-2008 Blount County Schools budget be capped \$5.4 million shy of their \$79.2 million budget request. The system's current budget is \$72.5 million.

While the commission's next meeting is on May 18, it is expected that the commissioners will vote on the new budget during the June meeting.

Kirk is recognized as a top middle school principal

Alcoa Middle School principal Jim Kirk and 17 other principals from across the state were recognized May 7 for being the best in Tennessee at advancing students academically. Kirk was placed second in the Middle School Eastern Tennessee district. He wasn't able to be at the event, and his wife accepted the award on his behalf.

Each of the principals' schools has been recognized as being exceptionally effective in lifting the achievement of students as measured by Tennessee's value-added accountability system. The awards were presented by the Education Consumers Foundation at a ceremony in the State Capitol.

"Educating our children is the most important thing we do," said Gov. Phil Bredesen. "The principals and teachers of these schools are doing an excellent job in helping their students learn, and in raising standards and expectations. Their record of performance attests to the hard work and dedication."

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Downtown Association to hold open house

On June 4, the Maryville Downtown Association will hold an open house for non-members at Preservation Plaza's Top of the Plaza facility.

Association president Roger Young, a vice president with First Tennessee Bank, said the event will be from 4:30 to 6 p.m. with light hors d'oeuvres.

"We're inviting all existing members and anyone interested in the Downtown Association to come and join us," he said. The association's goal is to bring more individuals and businesses to the downtown area.

NALC letter carriers hold food drive on Saturday

On Saturday, May 12, letter carriers in more than 10,000 cities across America will deliver much more than mail. They also will collect the goodness and compassion of their postal customers participating in the 15th annual National Association of Letter Carriers National Food Drive.

Letter carriers will collect non-perishable food donations left by mailboxes and in Post Offices and deliver them to local community food banks, pantries and shelters.

All food collected in Blount County will go to Food Pantry Blount County, Chilhowee Baptist Association and Open Pantry. The food collected will stay in Blount County.

Area residents wishing to donate food to the needy are encouraged to place food donations in or near their mailbox on the Morning of Saturday May 12. Letter carriers will collect donations while servicing their routes.

Evening with Lee Humphrey is Saturday

Former Maryville Rebel and University of Florida basketball star Lee Humphrey will speak and welcome challenges to a game of H-O-R-S-E at 7 p.m. Saturday at the Maryville High School gym.

Humphrey will talk about setting goals, his faith and winning NCAA championships.

Doors will open at 6:15 p.m. A shoot-around with the sharp-shooting guard starts at 7 p.m. Participants can challenge him to a game of H-O-R-S-E.

The atmosphere will be informal, and there is no charge for admission.

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Principal honored for students' improvement

By **Lindsay Melvin**
 Contact
 May 12, 2007

When Mary Anne Spencer, principal of Macon-Hall Elementary, first got the call from the Education Consumers Foundation, she assumed it was one of those companies that tries to bamboozle people out of money.

Instead, the group wanted to give the Cordova educator \$3,000 for navigating one of the top achieving schools in Tennessee.

The Education Consumers Foundation, a nonprofit in Arlington, Va., provides information on education similar to Consumer Reports. The foundation honored 18 Tennessee principals this week in Nashville with the 2007 Value-Added Achievement Awards.

Created in Tennessee nearly a decade ago, the Value-Added Assessment System measures how much a school adds to each student's performance from year to year.

If students meet or exceed their own scores from previous years, that system is said to be doing a good job. If the increases are less than previous years, improvement is needed. The foundation gauged which elementary and middle schools in the state had the highest three-year average gains in math, reading and language arts.

"These are the schools that are doing the best job helping children," said J.E. Stone, president of the Education Consumers Foundation.

Although three other states -- North Carolina, Delaware and Arkansas -- have taken on value-added models, the foundation says Tennessee uses a more detailed model.

"We're trying to give recognition to the heavy lifters in education," Stone said.

Both low-scoring and high-performing schools were honored in the event's second year.

Unlike value-added measurements, school outcome data like that used under No Child Left Behind shows the quality of a school based on the percentage of students who meet or exceed achievement levels, based on broad definitions of proficiency: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced.

Even high achieving schools with advantaged students, could score low on value-added models because talented students are being allowed to slide into mediocrity instead of being pushed forward.

"It levels the playing field for all schools," Stone said.

Principals at three Memphis City Schools -- Raineshaven, Jackson and Oakshire elementaries -- received awards last year.

All of the area schools that have received the award are in good standing under NCLB.

After researching the honored schools, the foundation discovered that many of the principals shared a drive to analyze test score data and to get their least effective teachers up to speed, he said.

Spencer, however, says she spends little time with her teachers lingering over value-added models or test scores. "I never say a word to teachers about that."



Karen Pulfer
 Focht/The
 Commercial Appeal

Alisha Whitmore, 9, hugs principal Mary Anne Spencer as other Macon-Hall Elementary children line up to take their turn. The principal says it's important to find a way for teachers to shine. "If the children are well taught, they'll do well wherever they go," she says.

What she does talk to them about is "recycling" and "connections."

In her 1,050-student school, where children come from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds, if children are having difficulty in math, her teachers recycle equations into the reading curriculum.

In music, children will sing about a social studies lesson. And when a teacher is not fully effective in one area, they're recycled to where they can shine, she said.

"I've tried to be careful placing teachers where they're strongest," said Spencer. "If the children are well taught, they'll do well wherever they go."

-- Lindsay Melvin: 529-2445

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Article published May 12, 2007

Schools earn top honors

The Jackson Sun

Several Jackson-Madison County educators and schools have received local, state and national recognition.

Arlington International Leadership School was selected as a Magnet School of Excellence and the winner of the Hogan and Hartson Award for new and emerging magnet schools of merit.

The top award is given to new magnet schools across the country.

Arlington received the distinction during the Magnet School of America conference in Las Vegas. It was held April 28 through May 3.

Eighteen principals, six from West Tennessee, were selected from more than 1,300 of Tennessee's public elementary and middle schools for advancing the achievement of students as measured by Tennessee's value-added accountability system. The awards were presented Monday by the Education Consumers Foundation at a ceremony in the State Capitol.

The awards are based on three-year gains in reading/language arts and math. First-, second- and third-place awards were given in grades 4-6 and grades 6-8 within each of Tennessee's three regions - East, Middle and West.

Because the awards were given in recognition of high-quality leadership, only schools where the principal has served for five or more years were considered, according to a press release.

The winning principals received a certificate and a cash award: \$3,000 for first place, \$2,000 for second place and \$1,000 for third place.

In the third-place category, Tisa Day, the newly appointed principal at Isaac Lane Technology Magnet Elementary, accepted the award in memory of Principal Martha Britt, who died last year.

Other West Tennessee principals recognized were Mary Ann Spencer, Macon Hall Elementary in Shelby County; Marty Arnold, Holladay Elementary in Benton County; Travis Carter, West Carroll Elementary in Carroll County; Lex Suite, West Carroll Junior High; and Joe Horton, Ramer Elementary in McNairy County.

In other education awards, the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation recently recognized Academic Decathlon co-coach Teresa Luna, of Madison Academic Magnet High, and special education teacher Sandy Hardin of Isaac Lane Elementary as teachers of the year.

The annual award is made possible by the foundation and the West Tenn Diamond Jaxx.

Luna and Hardin each received \$1,000 and a trophy. They also will be featured on a baseball card with the Diamond Jaxx players.

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Grasty, NSES lauded for second consecutive year for achievement

By **BONNIE LILL**
Stewart County Editor

For the second consecutive year, North Stewart Elementary School and NSES Principal Debbie Grasty were honored by the Education Consumers Foundation at a recent ceremony at the State Capitol.

The principals, 18 from across the state of Tennessee, were recognized for being the best in Tennessee at advancing students academically as measured by Tennessee's value-added accountability system.

Grasty took first place in Middle Tennessee in the middle school division. Last year, NSES was a K-8.

The winning principals received a certificate and a cash award: \$3,000 for first place, \$2,000 for second place, and \$1,000 for third place.

In all, the 18 winners were selected from Tennessee's over 1300 public elementary and middle schools. Awards based on three-year value-added gains in Reading/Language Arts and Math were given for first, second and third place in grades 4-6 and grades 6-8 within each of Tennessee's 3 regions, East, Middle, and West.

Because the awards were given in recognition of high quality leadership, only schools where the principal has served for five or more years were considered.

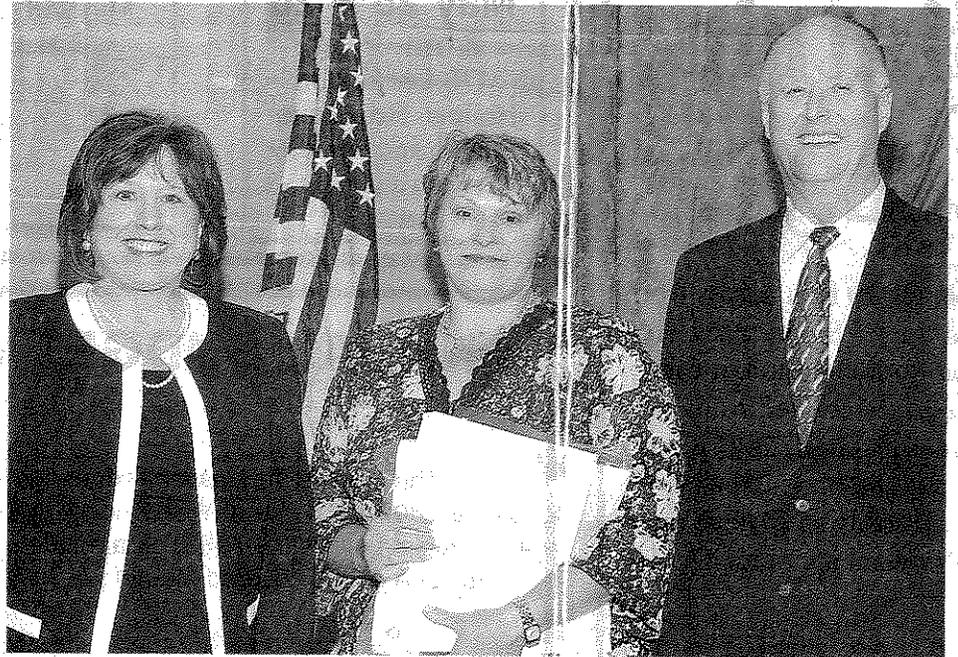
Grasty said that the secret to her continued success is in her teachers and staff, who, along with herself, pay attention to the details.

"Little things make a difference," she said. "We try to pay attention to those. For example, we try not to interrupt class time, and we try to go through the channels to make sure there are special accommodations during testing for children who need it.

"We also try to test the children all year long the way they will be tested for TVAAS. Even though K-second grade does not have to take TCAP tests, our children do, and by the third grade, they know what to do.

"This gives us a lot of data, too, and I spend a lot of time looking at test scores," she continued. "I look at the various aspects, the obvious and the underlying things, and I make decisions based on that.

"We try to make the children feel good about themselves, and we try to give them



Pictured from left at the recent awards ceremony are Commissioner Seivers, NSES Principal Deborah Grasty and Dr. John Stone.

high expectations as well," she concluded.

"Educating our children is the most important thing we do," said Governor Phil Bredesen. "The principals and teachers of these schools are doing an excellent job in helping their students learn, and in raising standards and expectations. Their record of performance attests to the hard work and dedication."

Tennessee's value-added assessment system measures achievement gain in a way that permits schools to be compared regardless of the makeup of the student body.

Schools whose students make the greatest annual gains in achievement earn the highest value-added scores; and superior school-wide performance reflects superior teaching, teamwork, and leadership.

"We are very pleased to have seven repeat winners from last year," said Dr. J. E. Stone, President of the Foundation. "They, along with the 11 principals that are first time winners, embody the qualities we hope will become the standard for all Tennessee schools."

Tennessee Education Commissioner Lana

Seivers, representing Governor Bredesen, took part in the presentations once again this year.

"It's a distinct pleasure to honor the educators and schools that are doing such an excellent job of advancing the knowledge and skills of their students," said Education Commissioner Lana Seivers. "Tennessee is the only state to have an assessment system that permits educators to gain a truly accurate picture of how their efforts are impacting students."

"The leadership shown by the principals at these 18 schools is remarkable and it illustrates what can be accomplished regardless of the wealth or poverty of the student body.

With TVAAS, people are able to see exactly what each school contributes to the success of its students, not just the test score averages that are so heavily influenced by demographic and socioeconomic differences," said Stone. "These are the schools that do the best job of helping students 'be all they can be,' regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, their advantages and disadvantages."