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The Algiers Charter Schools Association Honors Principals and Teachers for Significant Student-Achievement Gains

ACSA's Implementation of TAP System Achieves a Second Year of Strong Academic Growth

New Orleans, La., Dec.8, 2009 — The Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA) and National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) today announced strong student-achievement gains in Algiers' charter schools. The accomplishments reflect use of the nationally proven TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, and they build on similar progress made last year.

In the 2008-2009 school year, seven of the schools achieved more than a year's academic growth compared to similar Louisiana schools; the eighth school achieved a solid year's growth.

- Five of the schools – Alice M. Harte Charter School, Edna Karr Charter High School, Harriet Ross Tubman Charter School, Martin Behrman Charter Academy and O. Perry Walker College and Career Preparatory High School and Community Center – each recorded a value-added student-achievement growth score of five, the highest score possible and signifying “far above average” results.
- Two of the schools, Dwight D. Eisenhower Academy of Global Studies and McDonough #32 Literacy Charter School, each recorded a value-added student-achievement growth score of four, signifying “above average” results.
- One school, William J. Fischer Accelerated Academy, recorded a value-added student-achievement growth score of three, signifying a solid year's growth.

TAP measures student performance based on *value-added* student-achievement growth — gains a student makes during the school year. By measuring student learning gains, Algiers schools implementing TAP can recognize and reward teachers for making significant strides toward closing achievement gaps and moving toward proficiency for all students.

“I am proud of the consistent student-achievement gains driven by TAP,” said ACSA CEO Andrea Thomas-Reynolds, Ed.D. “Our principals and teachers have embraced TAP as part of our culture and it’s enabling us to continue our goal of closing the achievement gap.”

The effectiveness of the TAP system in ACSA has contributed to the growth of TAP throughout Louisiana. Today there are 41 TAP schools in Louisiana and 27 others piloting one-year, pre-TAP initiatives.

“We are thrilled to see significant student learning gains in ACSA for the second year in a row,” said Gary Stark, Ed.D., senior vice president and chief operating officer at NIET, the non-profit organization that administers the TAP system nationwide. “We’ve seen the positive results in TAP schools throughout Louisiana and across America when principals and teachers are given a leadership structure to support school-based professional development, rigorous evaluation and feedback, and competitive compensation.”

“TAP gives principals a proven process and tools to structure and drive instructional change at our schools,” said Jonathan Williams, principal at Harriet Ross Tubman Charter School. “In addition, opportunities for school-based professional development and professional advancement enable us to attract and retain better teachers.”

Teacher turnover in ACSA schools dropped to below six percent in the 2008-2009 school year from more than 20 percent in 2006-2007.

“TAP enables teachers like me to grow professionally, better serve my students, and be rewarded for my efforts,” said Margaret Leaf, teacher at Edna Karr Charter High School. “Our entire staff consistently collaborates on effective strategies that target *individual* student needs, so that all students—and teachers—are able to progress together.”

During an event earlier today at Algiers Technology Academy, principals and teachers were honored and celebrated the release of this year’s value-added scores of eight of the association’s network schools: Martin Behrman Charter Academy for Creative Arts and Sciences, Dwight D. Eisenhower Academy of Global Studies, William J. Fischer Accelerated Academy, Alice M. Harte Charter School, Edna Karr Charter High School, O. Perry Walker College and Career Preparatory High School and Community Center, Harriet Ross Tubman Charter School and McDonogh #32 Literacy Charter School.

The educators at these eight schools were eligible to receive performance awards because they have three years of value-added student-achievement data. The teachers and principals received bonuses totaling nearly \$900,000. Teacher awards are calculated based on objective evaluations of teacher performance as well as classroom and school-wide student-achievement growth. Principal awards are determined based on school-wide academic achievement growth, how well they are implementing the TAP system, and an evaluation of their job performance centered on research-based, effective practices. TAP in ACSA network schools is funded in part by a projected, multi-year \$17.6 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant awarded to NIET.

About TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement

Launched in 1999, the national TAP™ model offers powerful opportunities for teachers and principals to excel in order to improve student-achievement: *multiple career paths* for teachers to pursue new roles and responsibilities with commensurate pay; *ongoing applied professional growth* to provide strong job-embedded development targeting individual student needs; *instructionally focused accountability* to ensure a fair, transparent system with observations several times a year; and *performance-based compensation* tied to responsibilities, instructional performance and student-achievement growth. TAP now impacts 85,000 students and 7,500 teachers nationwide.

About The Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA)

The Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA) is a non-profit charter school management organization. In conjunction with the Orleans Parish School Board, the ACSA has elected to establish charter schools to address the needs of families living on the West Bank and East Bank of New Orleans. There are nine schools in the Algiers Charter Schools Association: six elementary schools and three high schools. The ACSA is led by a seven member Board of Trustees and works to make the schools within the association free from the burdens of conventional education structures, and that each school is open by choice to all students without admissions tests, is not religiously affiliated, and have high accountability standards.

To learn more about TAP in the Algiers Charter Schools Association, visit www.algierscharterschools.org.

For information about TAP nationwide, visit www.tapsystem.org.

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