PRESS RELEASE
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MAYOR’S CHARTER SCHOOLS WIN NATIONAL AWARDS

INDIANAPOLIS – (April 3, 2008) Two Mayor-sponsored charter schools received the Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC) National Charter School Consortium award from New Leaders for New Schools. The Southeast Neighborhood School of Excellence (SENSE) and the Charles A. Tindley Accelerated Charter School ranked among 99 charter schools nation-wide with the highest annual student achievement gains.

EPIC, a $90 million nationwide initiative, boosts student achievement by identifying high-performing principals and teachers in the nation's public charter schools and providing them with financial incentives and leadership opportunities to share their effective practices with other principals and teachers in public schools nationwide. Using ISTEP+ data and comparing gains made in the 2006-2007 school year over 2005-2006 scores, Mathematica Policy Research, an independent and nationally-recognized research firm, identified 22 schools with the strongest gains based on the one-year period. EPIC awards are based on a school’s annual gains rather than overall proficiency rates for their students. In this way, EPIC identifies and rewards schools that still may be on their journey toward high achievement. The award-winning schools provide a unique opportunity for educators to learn from their peers in order to strengthen their own practices. From this, EPIC will create a community of school leaders and practitioners learning from one another as they strive to drive student achievement.

“Indianapolis’ Mayor-sponsored charter schools continue to be a national example for successful education reform,” said Mayor Greg Ballard. “I hope that schools both locally and nationally can learn from proven successful practices that increase student achievement.”

Karega Rausch, Assistant Director of the Mayor’s charter school initiative, added, “Giving educators the opportunity to learn from one another about practices that have contributed to student achievement gains is a critical component of improving and strengthening our educational system. We thank New Leaders for New Schools for selecting SENSE and Charles A. Tindley to be involved in this groundbreaking initiative.”

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About the Southeast Neighborhood School of Excellence (SENSE)
SENSE is a community-driven and neighborhood-based elementary school that nurtures academic excellence, social development, and civic responsibility in every individual. SENSE seeks to build a strong foundation for learning and living by creating in its students a thirst for knowledge and an enthusiasm for learning. SENSE is a “back to basics” elementary school, offering full day kindergarten and art, music, physical education, and Spanish language instruction to all students beginning with kindergarten. To its most academically needy students in grades three through six, SENSE provides the Sylvan Learning Center Academic Reading Program during the regular school day at no cost to the students’ families. Currently in its fourth year of operation, SENSE serves grades kindergarten through six.

About the Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School
Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School, which serves grades 6 through 12, offers powerful learning opportunities and innovative classroom structures to keep students interested, engaged, and enrolled in school. It offers a rigorous college-preparatory program that seeks to challenge each student to pursue education beyond high school. This early college program requires Tindley students to attempt college courses while enrolled in high school. This school, based on the nationally successful Accelerated Schools PLUS model, is one of the first accelerated high schools in the country and a pilot school for the National Center for Accelerated Schools. In the Accelerated model, every student is treated as gifted; high expectations are set for every student, meaning no student is placed in tracked or remedial classes. Tindley has made Adequately Yearly Progress for two years in a row (Federal Accountability) and has made Exemplary Progress this year (State Accountability).

About EPIC
Primarily funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Incentive Fund program, New Leaders for New Schools (New Leaders) and an 80-member coalition of leading education organizations designed and launched the Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC). EPIC is a unique program that identifies schools, leaders, and teachers who are producing significant student achievement gains and are willing to share what they are doing with the greater educational community. Through EPIC, effective education practices are identified and documented on an online knowledge platform that is accessible to all schools in the EPIC grants, and eventually to all educators nationwide.

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