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NATIONAL CENTER ANNOUNCES EXCELLENCE IN URBAN EDUCATION AWARD FINALISTS

The National Center for Urban School Transformation announces the finalists for the 2009 National Excellence in Urban Education Award.

SAN DIEGO – (Wednesday, December 3, 2008) —San Diego State University’s National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) announced today the finalists for the 2009 National Excellence in Urban Education Award. The 24 finalists were selected from among a field of applicants that includes National Blue Ribbon School Award recipients, National Title I Distinguished Schools, and many that have been recognized among the best schools in their states.

“These schools represent America’s best hope for a strong future,” stated Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., Executive Director of NCUST. He continued, “These schools prove that achievement gaps can be eradicated and that children in urban centers can achieve academic excellence.”

In order to be eligible to compete for the award, urban elementary, middle and high school applicants were required to meet 11 rigorous criteria, including proficiency rates on state assessments that exceeded state averages, high achievement for all of the demographic groups served, high attendance rates, low suspension and expulsion rates for all demographic groups served, high graduation rates, the attainment of NCLB adequate yearly progress, and other indicators of academic excellence. Additionally, the majority of students served at the schools must meet low-income criteria and the schools must have non-selective admissions policies. Only

42 applicants from across the nation met these lofty criteria. All 42 of them are listed as NCUST's 2009 National Honor Roll.

Among the Honor Roll schools the 24 finalists presented the strongest evidence of high levels of achievement for all of the students they serve. These 24 schools will receive on-site visits that will lead to the selection of ten winners that will be recognized at the 2009 NCUST Symposium May 7-8 in San Diego. Winners will receive an award check for \$1,000 and a large banner for their school, as well as a commemorative photo album, a profile on the NCUST website, and complimentary travel and registration for two people to the symposium.

The 24 outstanding finalist schools include:

- Bursch Elementary School, Compton Unified School District, Compton, CA
- Camellia Elementary, Sacramento Unified School District, Sacramento, CA
- Fallon Park Elementary, Roanoke City Public Schools, Roanoke, VA
- Franklin Towne Charter High School, Philadelphia Public Schools, Philadelphia, PA
- Glen Cove Elementary School, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Golden Empire Elementary School, Sacramento, CA
- Hambrick Middle School, Aldine Independent School District, Houston, TX
- Highland Elementary School, Montgomery County School District, Silver Spring, MD
- Highlands Elementary School, Prairie Hills School District, Hazel Crest, IL
- Ira Harbison Elementary, National School District, National City, CA
- James B. Bonham Elementary, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, TX
- Johnson Elementary School, Jackson Public Schools, Jackson, MS
- Johnson Elementary Magnet School, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA
- Joseph Stockton Specialty School, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL
- Kearny International Business High School, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA
- KIPP Adelante Preparatory Academy, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA
- Lawndale High School, Centinela Valley Union High School District, Lawndale, CA
- Montebello Gardens Elementary, Montebello Unified School District, Pico Rivera, CA
- REL Washington Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Scotsdale Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Stell Middle School, Brownsville Independent School District, Brownsville, TX
- Twin Lakes Elementary, Miami-Dade Public School District, Hialeah, FL
- Virgil Grissom School, Rochester City Public Schools, Rochester, NY
- World of Inquiry School, Rochester City Public Schools, Rochester, NY

Representatives from each winning school—along with several finalists—will present their strategies for success at the 2009 symposium. For further information on the National Excellence in Urban Education Award or the NCUST Symposium, please visit <http://www.ncust.org/> or call (619) 594-7905.

An additional 18 schools are being recognized with placement on NCUST's Honor Roll, signifying that they have met all 11 of the National Excellence in Urban Education eligibility criteria. The following Honor Roll schools will be listed on the NCUST website and will receive a certificate acknowledging their accomplishment:

- Branch Brook School, Newark Public Schools, Newark, NJ
- Desertaire Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Eastwood Heights Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Edgemere Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Frank Fowler Dow Elementary, Rochester City Public Schools, Rochester, NY
- Glen Iris Elementary, Birmingham, AL
- Grant Elementary School, San Jose Unified School District, San Jose, CA
- Hacienda Heights Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- Hemphill Elementary School, Birmingham, AL
- John Bidwell Elementary School, Sacramento Unified School District, Sacramento, CA
- International Elementary School, Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach, CA
- MacArthur Elementary School, Las Cruces Public Schools, Las Cruces, NM
- McKinley Park School, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL
- Nathaniel Hawthorne Elementary, Rochester City Public Schools, Rochester, NY
- National City Middle School, Sweetwater Union High School District, National City, CA
- Virginia Heights Elementary, Roanoke City Public Schools, Roanoke, VA
- Vista Hills Elementary, Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX
- William Lewis Cabell Elementary, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, TX

NCUST is a component of the QUALCOMM Institute for Innovation and Educational Success at San Diego State University. The organization was founded for the support of urban schools nationwide, aiding the transformation of urban schools into highly successful institutions which promote enthusiastic learning, student success and the preparation for a positive future.