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California Business for Education Excellence Names 1,304 Public Schools to the 2009 Honor Roll

Business Community Recognizes Outstanding Public Schools for Superior Student Academic Achievement and Reducing Achievement Gaps

Sacramento -- California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE) announced today the schools named to the 2009 Honor Roll.

The 2009 Honor Roll includes 1,304 California public elementary, middle and high schools that have been recognized by California's business community for having demonstrated consistent high student academic achievement and have made significant progress toward closing achievement gaps among all their students. The Honor Roll is made up of two different awards, the Star Schools Award (395 schools) and Scholar Schools Award (909 schools). A full list of the Honor Roll schools can be found at www.cbee.org.

"These schools are the bright spots of hope in efforts to raise student academic achievement and close persistent achievement gaps," said Kirk Clark, executive director of CBEE. "By highlighting them, recognizing their achievement and giving them a voice we hope other schools can learn from these proven practices and we can begin to take their success to scale throughout the state."

"So often schools like ours are not talked about or discovered outside our local community," states Dane Hansen, Principal of Los Molinos Elementary School in Tehama County. "The fact that the Honor Roll award comes from the business community makes it that much more of an honor to be recognized for our accomplishments."

No other school recognition program in California uses hard data, individual school and student subgroup performance data based on the California Standards Tests and the California High School Exit Exam, to evaluate school academic performance. It's only by looking at this accurate data and evaluating students and schools based on grade-level proficiency of the California standards, that educators, parents and the public can thoroughly understand what is happening in our schools and ensure that schools are on track to get all students to grade-level proficiency.

“Our school is relentless in our focus to get all students to grade level proficiency, states Francisco Velasco, principal of Otay Elementary School in Chula Vista. “The Honor Roll, with its focus on achievement data over time, validates our teachers’ hard work and results. We look forward to sharing our best practices with other schools.”

“Schools on the Honor Roll dispel the myth that certain students can’t reach grade-level proficiency and that schools with a challenging student population won’t be able to succeed,” said Greg Jones, CBEE Chair. “Honor Roll schools are overcoming challenges every day to raise student achievement. CBEE continues to be impressed by the growing number of California public schools that make the Honor Roll each year and that are exceeding high expectations for their students.”

Overview of the Honor Roll

Using data from EdResults.org, a free and accurate source of longitudinal student academic performance data (www.edresults.org), CBEE has identified and will honor the highest performing public schools in California. Schools making up the Honor Roll are consistently raising academic achievement and making significant progress toward closing achievement gaps for all students. These schools are being recognized not only for their achievements, but so that other schools can learn the successful strategies or “best practices” of these Honor Roll schools.

Since its beginning in 2006, the Honor Roll list has grown from 304 schools in 2006 to 569 schools in 2007 to 911 schools in 2008 to now 1,304 in 2009.

Star Schools (395 schools) are those with significant populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students that have shown a significant increase in grade-level proficiency and achievement gap reduction over four years.

Scholar Schools (909 schools) are schools that are showing significant academic achievement levels, but do not have a significant socio-economically disadvantaged student population.

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California Business for Education Excellence

The mission of California Business for Education Excellence (www.cbee.org) is to raise student academic achievement and close achievement gaps in California public schools by ensuring every student reaches a minimum of grade level proficiency. This is accomplished by providing a voice to high performing, high poverty public schools so that all schools can replicate their best practices. Since 1998, CBEE has worked to focus businesses around a common agenda for better public schools and serves as the business community’s leading voice in education.