

## **CONCORD ACADEMY-PETOSKEY NAMED MICHIGAN'S NEWEST SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE**

LSSU has offered a new contract to Concord Academy-Petoskey for ten years to operate as a School of Excellence. Concord Academy-Petoskey is a K-12, fine arts-integrated charter school authorized by LSSU that has been in operation for 17 years. The school received a copy of a letter from State Superintendent of Instruction, Mike Flanagan on June 1 notifying LSSU that Concord Academy-Petoskey has met the criteria established by the legislature and is Michigan's newest **School of Excellence**. Only one other K-12 charter school in the state (Ridge Park Charter Academy in Grand Rapids) had previously received the School of Excellence designation.

### Background

In order to increase the cap on the number of public school academies (PSA's) allowed to operate in the state of Michigan, state legislators statutorily established the criteria whereby the charter authorizer might reauthorize the highest academically performing charter schools in a new class of PSA's -- called **Schools of Excellence**. For each newly designated School of Excellence (SOE), the charter authorizer would be able to authorize a new public school academy to take the place of the SOE. The new PSA would need to be located, though, in a designated poverty zone in a district with a high school graduation rate less than 71%.

To date, only eight PSA's in the state had achieved the School of Excellence status (five from charter authorizer, Grand Valley State University and three from charter authorizer, Lake Superior State University). The Michigan Department of Education must review each SOE application and verify that the school has met the rigorous criteria before receiving a new designation of School of Excellence. Only when the application has received a satisfactory MDE review and the State Superintendent of Instruction has approved the application does the school receive the new designation as a **Michigan School of Excellence**.

### SOE Criteria

#### **For public charter schools operating grade K-8 programs:**

On average for the most recent three-year period, at least 90% of students in the public school academy have achieved a score of proficient or better on the MEAP reading and math assessments.

#### **For public charter schools operating grade 9-12 programs:**

1. At least 80% of the school's students graduate or are determined to be on track to graduate from high school. (Last year, 100% of Concord Academy-Petoskey's students graduated.)
2. Average annual attendance rate of 80% or better; and
3. At least 80% of school's graduates attend postsecondary school.

State aid does not change for a public school academy that is newly designated as a School of Excellence. For Concord Academy-Petoskey, its annual grant of \$10 per student from LSSU will increase to \$20 per student.

Concord Academy-Petoskey's Executive Director David R Hill notes:

"Our newly achieved School of Excellence status is a huge and fitting award for the school, its staff, parents, and students. It's a testimony to the incredible efforts of the teaching and support staff to integrate a fine arts curriculum with traditional academics in a way that leads to consistently high academic student achievement. It's also verification that our fine arts-integrated focus produces superior academic achievement as measured by the state and leads to the development of lifelong learning skills that every parent wishes for his or her child. We're definitely barking up the right tree! It's nice to be in such rare company along with the other eight Michigan Schools of Excellence."