

Crystal Star Award Winners 2016



Mr. Terry Pickeral
Distinguished Leadership and Service

Mr. Terry Pickeral, president of Cascade Educational Consultants (CEC) in Bellingham, WA, is making invaluable contributions through his research and policy leadership in youth engagement, school climate, service-learning, civic development, education policy, state and district leadership, and other practices to sustain quality education reform focused on equitable student and community engagement.

Through CEC, work with the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N), and his other affiliations, Terry challenges education and community leaders to establish a team approach to engaging youth, creating policies, increasing effective school practice, and including all stakeholders in improving education and student success.

Terry's professional development work in service-learning and civic development has helped many schools achieve their civic missions. He facilitates training and technical assistance forums, authors articles, and represents CEC and NDPC/N throughout the U.S. and internationally.

Terry shares with NDPC/N and its networks his extensive connection to high-caliber researchers, practitioners, and paradigm-shifters, and resources related to school climate and youth engagement.

Terry received his undergraduate degree from the University of Hawaii and his graduate degree from the University of British Columbia (Canada). Terry is a grandfather and lives with his wife in Bellingham, WA.

Since 2008, **Dr. Lateshia Woodley** has worked as a transformational leader in some of the lowest-performing schools in the State of Georgia. Dr. Woodley has collaborated with the district, state, and the local community to implement a community school model; to assist students in overcoming barriers that hinder success in completion of their goals to graduate from high school. This



Dr. Lateshia Woodley
Individual Award of Excellence

comprehensive model includes the implementation of initiatives, which include increased learning time for flexible learning options, and advisory/mentoring, medical, and social/emotional services.

Dr. Woodley's passion and purpose is driven by her own personal experience as an alternative school graduate and also a

individual winners

teen parent. She is the author of two books titled *Why Did You Choose to Get Pregnant* and *Transforming Alternative Education*, that detail her journey.

Under Dr. Woodley's Leadership, McClarin has been recognized as a best practice school by the National Alternative Education Association, received four- and five-star culture ratings from the Georgia Department of Education, and has doubled its graduation rate within one school year. The overall completion rate for students attending McClarin is 80%. Dr. Woodley has proven to be a true advocate for education. She continues to live up to her personal mission, which is to ignite, motivate, and encourage individuals to reach their full potential.

Over the last 25 years, **buildOn** has grown to become a vast network of global citizens who believe in the transformative power of service and education to create positive change locally and globally. Their mission is to break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and low expectations through service and education. Engaging more than 4,000 inner-city high school students each month, buildOn empowers youth from underresourced neighborhoods to make a positive difference in their communities while helping people of developing countries increase their self-reliance through education.

Founder, President, and CEO Jim Ziolkowski's inspiration to start buildOn



buildOn
Program Award of Excellence

was born from his travels to some of the most impoverished countries in the world and from his experiences living in Harlem. Jim derailed his fast-track career in corporate finance at GE to dedicate his life to the organization.

buildOn's Service Learning Program focuses on three core activities: Service, Education, and Building Schools. These activities occur

during the school day in classrooms as well as during out-of-school weekends and breaks.

In 2010, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, identified impacting outcomes from the buildOn Service Learning Program such as Empowerment, Civic Engagement, Self-Worth, Academic Engagement, Leadership and Teamwork Skills, Empathy and Compassion, and Personal and Social Development.

buildOn students have completed nearly 1.8 million hours of community service, and each day, 124,000 children, parents, and grandparents attend classes at 953 buildOn schools around the world.



Oakland Opportunity Academy
Program Award of Excellence

Oakland Opportunity Academy (OOA) provides over 200 at-risk students the chance to earn their high school diplomas each year. OOA is Oakland Schools' Shared Educational Entity (SEE) for alternative education. Students make up classes and credits at OOA while earning their sending school diploma.

Housed in Oakland Schools Career Technical Campus, students take hands-on Career Technical programs while also completing their academic classes. A blended learning model allows self-paced learning, direct teacher and tutor support, and integrated projects to engage learners. Attention to Social Emotional Learning for students is an essential component of every strategy. Most OOA students enter behind in credits and at risk of dropping out. OOA recognizes each student's risks in a personalized instructional model. Teachers and tutors work individually to coach learning without failure. OOA's positive school culture ensures students get rewards at each step, learn new success strategies, and complete their high school diploma on time for future college and careers.

Approximately 80% of OOA students

program winners

have multiple dropout risk factors, yet the school's 423 graduates since 2010 have beaten the odds.

This highly successful program at OOA is based on a positive and safe school culture, career and academic self-paced learning, recognition of individual student needs, a unified and dedicated instructional staff, and a proven strategy for student engagement and success.

In 2005, with a high school graduation rate of 56%, the Hart County School System in rural north Georgia engaged the National Dropout Prevention Center to conduct a Program Assessment and Review (PAR) to determine the best strategies for improving the system graduation rate. Following the review and recommendations, the system organized a community task force to address the issue and mobilized teams of educators and stakeholders to develop and implement strategies.

In collaboration with the community, the Hart County School System implemented multiple strategies to change the culture and graduation expectations of the schools and the community. Acting on a suggestion from the community, a school



Grad Dog Initiative
Program Award of Excellence

system mascot program called **Grad Dog Initiative**, a bulldog dressed in a cap and gown, holding a diploma was created. The Grad Dog's image with his motto, "Finish What You Start," is now posted throughout the community and in all schools. A group of local businesses give t-shirts to all incoming first graders with the Grad Dog, his slogan, and the first

graders' projected year of graduation.

The "Grad Cup Challenge" is an annual event that celebrates friendly

competition between rival schools in Hart and Franklin Counties. The school system with the highest past year graduation rate is awarded the trophy at half time during the season's rival football game, with leaders of both school systems on the field.

The Grad Dog Initiative raised the system graduation rate of Hart County from 56% in 2005 to 94% in 2015. This unique initiative demonstrates how a school system and a community can cooperatively, creatively, and persistently improve graduation rates over time.