



# *News Release*

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## **Fifteen Reward Schools Recognized, Presented Best Practices at School Improvement Conference**

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LANSING – Fifteen schools performing at a high level academically were recognized at this week’s 2015 Spring School Improvement Conference, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) announced.

The high-performing Reward Schools, recognized at the 2015 AdvancED Michigan/MDE Spring School Improvement Conference, also presented their best practices at the event in Lansing. They are:

- West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science, Kent Independent School District
- South Lyon East High School, South Lyon Community Schools
- Ruth Fox Elementary School, North Branch Area Schools
- Moraine Elementary School, Northville Public Schools
- Wines Elementary School, Ann Arbor Public School
- Seven reward schools, Dearborn Public Schools
- New Buffalo High School, New Buffalo Area Schools
- Webberville High School, Webberville Community Schools
- Airport Community Schools
- Marvin L. Winans Academy of Performing Arts
- Westdale Elementary, Saginaw Township Community Schools
- Creekside Middle School & Quincy Elementary School, Zeeland Public Schools
- Dailey Elementary School, Beecher Community Schools

“These schools have made great progress academically, as part of the more than 325 Reward Schools in 2014-15,” State Superintendent Mike Flanagan said. “They shared their best practices for becoming Reward Schools and in some cases closing the academic achievement gap that is such a high priority for myself and the MDE.”

Westside and Dailey elementaries also were identified as Michigan’s Title 1 Distinguished Schools. They will receive further recognition at the National Association of Title I Directors’ annual conference. Two schools from every state are recognized.

Reward Schools are in the top 5 percent of schools on the MDE’s annual Top-to-Bottom (TTB) Ranking.

Of the 331 Reward Schools in 2014-15, 140 also are Beating the Odds Schools whose achievement exceeded expectations based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the schools and their students.

Beating the Odds Schools educate some of the state’s most-challenged students, including those learning English as a second language; those with learning disabilities; and those from economically-disadvantaged environments.

“Our annual Accountability Scorecards and TTB Rankings at large do not factor in student background because we believe every child can learn and have high expectations for all kids,” Flanagan said. “Beating the Odds is where we account for student demographics and challenges as a way to get a picture of the achievement gap.

“We still have a heavy lift in closing the achievement gap, especially among African-American young men, and at the same time I hope all stakeholders, including educators, parents and students, celebrate this academic accomplishment.”

The achievement gap for all Michigan schools represents the unique gap between the highest and lowest 30 percent of each school’s student achievement. This calculation is required under the state’s approved federal flexibility waiver.

Besides Beating the Odds Schools, the MDE uses two other designations, High Performing Schools and High Progress Schools, to recognize schools for their students’ academic achievements. In 2014-15, there are 136 High Performing Schools, which show high achievement in all five core subjects of state assessments, and 131 High Progress Schools, which show significant, sustained improvement in student achievement over several years. The five core subjects are reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies.

<b>2013-15 Reward Schools Overview</b>			
<b>School Year</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
<b>Reward</b>	342	330	331

“We strive to have all of our schools making improvements in student achievement and to meet expectations that all students be career- and college-ready and successful in life,” said Flanagan.

In 2013-14, there were 137 High Performing Schools and 138 High Progress Schools.

Reward Schools include the top 5 percent of schools on the annual TTB Rankings, as well as the top 5 percent of schools making the greatest academic progress over the previous four years.

Reward School information can be found at [www.mi.gov/rewardschools](http://www.mi.gov/rewardschools); Focus School information is available at [www.mi.gov/focusschools](http://www.mi.gov/focusschools); Priority School information is at [www.mi.gov/priorityschools](http://www.mi.gov/priorityschools); and Top to Bottom ranking information is at [www.mi.gov/ttb](http://www.mi.gov/ttb).

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