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## **HEAD OF THE CLASS**

***Schools Honored for Excelling in the Basics***

May 7, 2007 – Eighteen principals from across the state of Tennessee are being recognized for being the best in Tennessee at advancing students academically. Each of their schools has been exceptionally effective in lifting the achievement of students as measured by Tennessee's value-added accountability system. The awards were presented by the Education Consumers Foundation at a ceremony in the State Capitol.

“The principals and teachers of these schools have done an excellent job in helping their students learn,” said Governor Phil Bredesen. “Their record of performance attests to the hard work and dedication of the principals, teachers, students, and parents.”

Tennessee's value-added assessment system measures achievement gain in a way that permits schools to be compared regardless of the makeup of the student body. Schools whose students make the greatest annual gains in achievement earn the highest value-added scores; and superior schoolwide performance reflects superior teaching, teamwork, and leadership.

“We are very pleased to have seven repeat winners from last year,” said Dr. J. E. Stone, President of the Foundation. “They, along with the 11 principals that are first time winners, embody the qualities we hope will become the standard for all Tennessee schools.”

Tennessee Education Commissioner Lana Seivers, representing Governor Bredesen, is taking part in the presentations once again this year.

“It's a distinct pleasure to honor the educators and schools that are doing such an excellent job of advancing the knowledge and skills of their students,” said Education Commissioner Lana Seivers. “Tennessee is the only state to have an assessment system that permits educators to gain a truly accurate picture of how their efforts are impacting students.”

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In all, 18 winners were selected from Tennessee's over 1300 public elementary and middle schools. Awards based on 3-year value-added gains in Reading/Language Arts and Math were given for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in grades 4-6 and grades 6-8 within each of Tennessee's 3 regions--East, Middle, and West.

Because the awards were given in recognition of high quality leadership, only schools where the principal has served for 5 or more years were considered.

"The leadership shown by the principals at these 18 schools is remarkable and it illustrates what can be accomplished regardless of the wealth or poverty of the student body. With TVAAS, people are able to see exactly what each school contributes to the success of its students, not just the test score averages that are so heavily influenced by demographic and socioeconomic differences" said Stone. "These are the schools that do the best job of helping students 'be all they can be,' regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, their advantages and disadvantages."

Additional information about the winners, including their "recipe for success" is available at [www.education-consumers.com](http://www.education-consumers.com).

The winning principals received a certificate and a cash award: \$3,000 for first place, \$2,000 for second place, and \$1,000 for third place. A complete list of the winners is included with the news release. Complete details of the selection process are available via the Foundation's website: [www.education-consumers.com](http://www.education-consumers.com).

The Education Consumers Foundation is a nonprofit consumer organization. It gathers and disseminates information about education policy and practice on behalf of parents, taxpayers, and their elected representatives.