



For Immediate Release
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For more information, contact:
Lynn Norman-Teck
305-216-6208

LOCAL CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL WINS PRESTIGIOUS BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOL AWARD

Miami-Dade County, FL -- **Mater Academy Charter Middle School** in Hialeah Gardens has been named a **Breakthrough School** by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and MetLife Foundation. The MetLife Foundation-NASSP Breakthrough Schools program recognizes middle level and high schools that are high achieving or are dramatically improving student achievement and serve large numbers of students living in poverty.

Located at 7901 NW 103 Street in Hialeah Gardens, Mater Academy is among just 10 schools nationwide that received this prestigious honor. Mater Academy's strong academic track record has been recognized by the Florida Department of Education and Miami Dade County Public Schools, and in 2008 was named one of the nation's top 500 high schools by U.S. News & World Report's ranking of "America's Best High Schools" for the second consecutive year.

According to the Breakthrough School review team "The energy that transformed a vacant store and garbage dump into a thriving, multi-building campus for a grades 6-12 school is apparent in every classroom. Students, parents, community members, and staff all speak of the "magic" that is Mater. Striking as the physical transformation was, the continuing academic transformation-championed by Principal Judith Marty-is what draws people to the school." Ms. Marty will receive an award on behalf of the school at the 2010 NASSP Convention in Phoenix, AZ, on March 12-14.

From the NASSP website: The diverse set of schools recognized by share the common trait of having an economically diverse, high-achieving student population. Not surprisingly, the schools also share common strategies--collaborative leadership; alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and a highly personalized, caring environment. These factors reflect the priorities of NASSP's Breaking Ranks school-improvement framework. Selection criteria are based on a school's documented success in implementing strategies aligned with the three core areas of NASSP's Breaking Ranks framework for middle level and high schools. Success in implementing the strategies is documented and verified through school site visits. For more information about the program and the selected schools, visit www.principals.org/breakthrough.

Breakthrough Schools:

High Schools

- * Brentwood High School, Brentwood, NY
- * Franklin Towne Charter High School, Philadelphia, PA
- * Park View High School, Sterling, VA
- * San Diego Met High School, San Diego, CA
- * San Miguel High School, Tucson, AZ

Middle Schools

- * Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School, Collinsville, VA
- * Mater Academy Charter Middle School, Hialeah Gardens, FL
- * Menominee Indian Middle School, Neopit, WI
- * Ravenswood Middle School, Ravenswood, WV
- * Tefft Middle School, Streamwood, IL