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Charter students do well on MEAP tests

Thursday, February 15, 2007

By Kym Reinstadler The Grand Rapids Press

Six of Michigan's top 10 performing charter schools are in West Michigan, according to a ranking based on standardized test scores done by the Michigan Association of Public School Academies.

Walden Green Montessori School in Spring Lake, which enrolls 170 students in kindergarten through eighth grade, posted the highest charter school scores in the state, based on the 2006-07 Michigan Educational Assessment Program scores.

Six K-8 academies managed by Grand Rapids-based National Heritage Academies cracked the top 10, including Chandler Woods, Eagle Crest, Vanguard and Cross Creek in West Michigan.

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Black River Public School in Holland, an independent school, was the highest-ranked charter that also offers high school. Black River enrolls first to 12th grades, but plans to add kindergarten next year. Applicants already exceed the number of slots.


"It brings a smile to the faces of students, parents and staff to be recognized for high scores on the MEAP," said Tom Hicks, who has directed Walden Green for a decade. "But there's a lot of learning, behavior, and life activities that also put smiles on faces at Walden Green every day."

Walden Green opened as a private Montessori school in 1983. It became a publicly funded academy in the 1994-95 school year, when Michigan adopted charter school legislation.

The school is poised to move out of the building that has housed it since 1987 and into a \$4.3 million facility designed for Montessori education in the next week or two.

Other West Michigan charters cracking the top 20 ranking include NHA's Walker Charter Academy in Walker, Excel Charter Academy in Grand Rapids and Paramount Charter Academy in Kalamazoo. West Michigan Academy of Arts and Academics in Spring Lake also made the list.

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