

Peter Middleton named Charter School Teacher of the Year

Teaches at Black River Public School

By **LISA ERMAK**
The Holland Sentinel

Posted Nov 12, 2011 @ 10:42 PM

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Holland — Peter Middleton, visual arts teacher at Black River Public School, said he was planning to clap for, and congratulate, one of the other four teachers nominated for Charter School Teacher of the Year during the Michigan Charter School Conference on Tuesday.

Instead, Middleton, a 10-year veteran at Black River, took home the honor.

“It was pretty amazing,” Middleton said. “I haven’t ever received any recognition like that before.” Dan Quisenberry, president of the Michigan Association of Public School Academies, said Middleton received the honor because of how he engages his students.

Middleton was nominated and selected to win the award after past winners performed site visits and evaluations.

“You’ve got 3,000 charter schools in the state and to be recognized out of those kinds of numbers is a pretty special honor,” Quisenberry said. “The process is very thorough and comprehensive. It’s truly a distinct honor.”

Middleton started his career in education in 1993 in Florida, teaching adult education. He came to Black River in 2001.

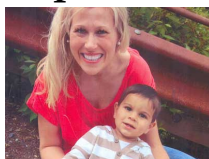
“I think it’s a calling. It’s something I realized I wasn’t in it for the money. It’s something I can do and be proud of,” he said of teaching.

Black River Head of School Shannon Brunink said Middleton is an excellent teacher who is loved by his students, not just because he’s a great guy, but also because they learn so much from him.

“He’s one of those teachers that students are just drawn to. Whenever there’s a free period in his room, kids are drawn to him, they seek him out. He allows them to be artists at a young age. It’s inspiring to watch him.” The Black River Public School jazz band was selected to entertain the crowd and was on stage while Middleton received his honor.

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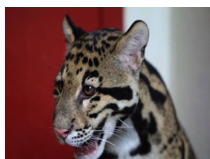
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