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## **CBEE ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF ITS INAUGURAL GOLD STANDARD AWARD FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

*Ten High Schools Awarded \$10,000 College Scholarships Each for Academic Achievement and  
Preparing Students for College or the Workforce*

**(Sacramento, CA)** – California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE), in conjunction with the California State University (CSU) system, will award the inaugural CBEE Gold Standard Award for Academic Achievement. The award recognizes 10 high schools that have demonstrated measurable gains in strong academic performance by getting students ready for college and the workforce while showing evidence of reducing achievement gaps over time.

The CBEE Award is significant because it analyzes only hard data – student test scores from the California Standards Test and the California State University Early Assessment Program (EAP) test – to award schools and students with academic achievement prizes.

**Winning school principals and staff will be presented with their awards at a luncheon on Thursday, November 3, 11:30 a.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel at Beverly Hills, 300 S. Doheny Drive, Los Angeles, 90048.**

The \$100,000 in scholarships provided by the California business community is being given to ten high-poverty, high-minority California high schools which have achieved a high level of academic performance and have shown evidence in reducing achievement gaps over time in both reading and mathematics. Winning schools also have sustained that high performance and improvement over time, a strong indication that students are graduating with the skills necessary to succeed in college or the workforce without needing remedial training. Five thousand dollar (\$5,000) scholarships will be awarded over a two year period to two graduating high school seniors selected by each school site who have exemplary academic achievement and financial need and who have a demonstrated record of improvement during their high school career.

The winning schools are: **Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School**, Los Angeles; **Granada Hills Charter High School**, Granada Hills; **Lakewood High School**, Lakewood; **Moorpark High School**, Moorpark; **San Rafael High School**, San Rafael; **San Mateo High School**, San Mateo; **Silver Creek High School**, San Jose; **Valencia High School**, Placentia; **Van Nuys High School**, Van Nuys; and **Westminster High School**, Westminster.

“California’s businesses are profoundly affected by the state’s public school system,” said CBEE Chair Gregory W. Jones. Jones is senior vice president of State Farm Insurance Companies operations in California and a board member of the Los Angeles Urban League and Operation Hope. “There are few things more important to the business community and our state’s economy than our future workforce. Without a well-trained workforce, the state’s future well-being is in serious jeopardy.”

Continued Jones: “Too often, businesses spend time and money providing additional training to new workers, skills that they should have mastered in high school. It’s a drain of precious resources and we need to ensure our students are exiting high school ready to succeed in the workplace or continue with their education.”

Current research estimates that mitigating the lack of basic skills among students and employees cost billions of dollars to institutions of higher education and businesses each year. In 2001, 34 percent of job applicants tested by major U.S. firms lacked sufficient reading and math skills to do the jobs sought. In California alone the California State University (CSU) system provides remedial training in reading, writing, or mathematics to two-thirds of its incoming freshmen at an estimated cost of \$30 million/year.

To address this problem, the Early Assessment Program (EAP) was developed. It is a cooperative effort between California State University, California Department of Education, State Board of Education, and Educational Testing Service (ETS). CSU faculty, facilitated by ETS test development specialists, augmented the 11<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts and mathematics portions of the California Standards Tests to produce tests that cover the full set of entry-level reading, writing, and quantitative reasoning skills expected of CSU freshmen. All high school juniors must take the English Language Arts and mathematics California Standards Tests. Taking the CSU augmentations is optional.

"The EAP uses California's state testing data to provide high school students with an early indication of whether or not they are ready for college level courses," said Les Francis, vice president, Communications and Public Affairs, Educational Testing Service. "The EAP program helps to reduce the number of students who enter CSU needing remediation courses and to reduce the testing burden -- and overall testing costs for students. ETS is proud to partner with CSU, the California Department of Education and State Board of Education this unique and innovative program."

When reviewing schools for the Gold Standard Award for Academic Achievement, CBEE researchers found that each of the ten schools followed similar results-oriented best practices to teaching. All of the schools focus their curriculum around the California Content Standards and regularly use assessment data, like the CST and EAP data, to make better decisions about instruction, professional development and student interventions. While the winning schools benefit from strong principals, they have more importantly created systems and supports for teachers to regularly work together to look at data and best practices and to improve their teaching to meet the needs of their students. In addition to the cash award, all winning schools' instructional best practices will be showcased throughout the year, so that other school systems can learn about and adopt their successful practices.

Ruth Green, president of the California State Board of Education stated that "It is important to use scores from the state assessment to evaluate what works and what needs changing, especially if we can use that data to help those students who may be falling behind. This hard data also helps us identify whether a school is a real success, a failure or simply treading water. The ten schools recognized here are clearly real successes."

#### **About the Award:**

The annual CBEE Gold Standard Award for Academic Achievement supported and funded by California businesses and foundations and is designed to:

- **Regain California's confidence** in public schools by spotlighting districts and schools making significant gains in student achievement.
- **Create an incentive** to dramatically increase student achievement in California's public schools.
- **Reward public school systems** that are successfully using results-oriented approaches and techniques to better educate children.
- **Demonstrate the business community's commitment** to public education by highlighting and rewarding excellence to those schools that deliver on the promise of educating kids to world class standards and in preparing them for the workforce.

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*California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE) was founded in 1999 by major business and business organizations to represent the business community in state education policy making and restore excellence to California public schools. For more information visit [www.cbee.org](http://www.cbee.org)*