

ASCD Selects Newport News, Va. Principal as 2010 Outstanding Young Educator

San Antonio, TX (03/07/10)—Brian Nichols, principal of Hidenwood Elementary School in Newport News, Va., is a winner of ASCD's 2010 Outstanding Young Educator Award (OYEA). ASCD honored Nichols on March 6, 2010, at its Annual Conference and Exhibit Show in San Antonio, Tex.

Nichols has a history of turning around low-performing schools through a mix of strategic use of data, collaborative leadership, and innovative education practices. He has transformed Hidenwood from a school facing federal sanctions to one that has exceeded AYP benchmarks for two consecutive years.

Nichols says, "Hidenwood has progressed from a school on a federal watch list, to a school that everyone wants to watch. We began our transformation by building a strong sense of what we're about, which is to motivate, advocate for, and educate all children. And we've followed through on that mission by implementing a multi-faceted, whole child approach to education."

Nichols and his staff have created a virtual data wall that teachers can access at all times to track student progress. The wall includes academic data for each student – such as formative and assessment benchmark results – as well as attendance and behavior information, student participation in afterschool activities and leadership groups, and historical data on interventions and resulting performance. Moreover, the wall drives regular data-focused and collaborative conversations during which teams develop individualized instruction and support plans for students who aren't meeting benchmarks. Hidenwood's virtual data wall has now been adopted by the entire district.

"Brian Nichols is an innovative leader who has embraced technology as a way to improve instruction and effectively communicate with his school's various stakeholders," said ASCD Executive Director Gene R. Carter at the awards ceremony. When Nichols became principal of Hidenwood Elementary, none of the school's classrooms were equipped with 21st century learning technologies. Now 100 percent of the school's classrooms have tools such as interactive whiteboards, projectors, and document cameras. Hidenwood's Technology Academy merges project-based learning with technology integration to help students become problem solvers and global citizens. In addition, Nichols maintains a Hidenwood twitter feed ([link](#)) and produces video updates ([link](#)) to keep parents and community members engaged and informed.

Nichols' approach as a professional development leader at his school models what he expects of his teachers. His staff members never receive the exact same professional development. Instead, they participate in differentiated professional development opportunities that take into account their current knowledge and skill levels and are tailored to meet student needs. Nichols also empowers his educators to become professional development leaders themselves by conducting observations and walkthroughs of each other's classrooms and sharing their strengths.

ASCD, an international educational leadership association, created the OYEA Program in 2002 to recognize creative and committed teachers and administrators under the age of 40 who are making a

difference in the lives of children. A panel of diverse education professionals selected Nichols as one of the two 2010 OYEA winners from a large pool of candidates nominated by educators across the globe. He will receive a \$10,000 cash award and an ASCD Institutional membership for his school.

ASCD's OYEA Program provides winners and a cadre of honorees with opportunities for leadership skill building, professional development, and networking and sharing of best practices with one another and the ASCD community.

Michael Powell, assistant principal at Patuxent Elementary School in Maryland's Prince George's County Public Schools, is co-winner of the 2010 Outstanding Young Educator Award. The other 2010 OYEA honorees are John C. Canter, English and journalism instructor, Pope High School, Cobb County School District, Marietta, Ga.; Kurtis Hewson, principal, West Meadow Elementary School, Livingstone Range School Division No. 68, Claresholm, Alberta, Canada; and Yim Tam, history and social studies teacher, Franklin High School, Los Angeles, Calif.

Nominations are currently being accepted for next year's award. Learn more about the OYEA Program.

Contact ASCD to schedule an interview with or obtain a photograph of the OYEA winner.

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Founded in 1943, ASCD is a nonprofit educational leadership association that develops programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead. We provide expert and innovative solutions in professional development, capacity building, and educational leadership. ASCD's membership comprises more than 170,000 principals, teachers, superintendents, professors of education, and other educators from 136 countries. Our association also has nearly 60 affiliates throughout the world.