



Ted Strickland, Governor  
Deborah S. Delisle, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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**Outstanding Middle Schools Recognized for Accomplishments, Success**  
*Ohio and National Schools to Watch Announced*

Columbus – The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) today announced the 2008-09 designated middle schools being recognized by the Ohio Schools to Watch (OSTW) *Reaching for the Stars* and National Schools to Watch (STW) programs. The following schools are being recognized by the OSTW *Reaching for the Stars* program:

**Bellbrook Middle School**, Sugarcreek Local School District (Greene County);  
**New Albany Middle School**, New Albany-Plain Local School District (Franklin County); and  
**Teays Valley Middle School**, Teays Valley Local Schools (Pickaway County).

“It is a great honor to recognize the hard work and dedication of the students, staff and parents of these outstanding schools,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Deborah S. Delisle. “These schools demonstrate what can be achieved by recognizing the unique challenges of adolescence and supporting students during this stage of their lives. This recognition program allows these schools to share what works in their situation with the rest of the middle schools in the state.”

The recently-named schools will be formally recognized at the 2009 Ohio Middle School Association Annual State Conference, Thursday and Friday, Feb. 19-20, 2009, at the Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, Ohio. A recognition ceremony will take place to honor the OSTW awardees at 8:15 a.m. on Feb. 19.

Developed from the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform (National Forum), the OSTW program identifies high-performing, middle-grade schools that are:

- Academically excellent—challenge all students to use their mind well;
- Developmentally responsive—sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence;
- Socially equitable—democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources and supports; and
- Organizational structure is in place to enable aforementioned three characteristics.

The National STW program engages a standards-based evaluation process. Schools must complete an extensive application and are evaluated against 37 characteristics established by the National Forum. Schools must meet Adequate Yearly Progress or Value-Added and contain 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and/or 8<sup>th</sup> grade. After the applications are reviewed, selected schools are visited by a team of trained evaluators.

Through a partnership among ODE, Ohio Middle School Association, Ohio Federation of Teachers and Otterbein College, the practices of OSTW are available for replication by other middle-level educators. ODE has been developing video profiles of OSTW which focus on the four criteria of a high-performing middle school. The videos will be available to view through ODE’s Web site in spring 2009.

The three schools earning recognition during the 2009 OSTW program join the following 14 schools which have already earned OSTW designation:

**Beachwood Middle School (MS)**; Beachwood City Schools (Cuyahoga County);  
**Bridgetown MS**; Oak Hills Local Schools (Hamilton County);  
**Canaan MS**; Jonathan Alder Local Schools (Madison County);  
**Erwine MS**; Coventry Local Schools (Summit County);  
**Kilbourne MS**; Worthington City Schools (Franklin County);  
**Monticello MS**; Cleveland Hts.-University Hts. City Schools (Cuyahoga County);  
**Orchard MS**; Solon City Schools (Cuyahoga County);  
**Rapid Run MS**; Oak Hills Local Schools (Hamilton County);  
**Solon MS**; Solon City Schools (Cuyahoga County);  
**Spinning Hills MS**; Mad River Local Schools (Montgomery County);  
**St. Henry MS**; St. Henry Consolidated Local Schools (Mercer County);  
**Van Wert MS**; Van Wert City Schools (Van Wert County);  
**Wantz MS**; Miamisburg City School (Montgomery County); and  
**Willard Grizzell MS**; Dublin City Schools (Franklin County).

Additional information about the OSTW program can be found at [www.education.ohio.gov](http://www.education.ohio.gov) by searching for keyword: *OSTW*.