

Pinellas Principal Wins \$10,000 Award!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Council for Educational Change Bestows Prestigious 5th Annual Leonard Miller Principal Leadership Award to Elementary School Leader

Peggy Pearson, Principal of Mt. Vernon Elementary School, been selected as the winner of the **\$10,000 Leonard Miller Principal Leadership Award** presented by the Council for Educational Change, Florida's Educational Think Tank. The award, which recognizes superior school leadership, is presented annually to an outstanding Florida school principal selected from a list of nominees from throughout the State.

The award honors the late Leonard Miller, a well-known advocate for public education. Mr. Miller was the Council founder and former chair of its predecessor organization, the South Florida Annenberg Challenge. It recognizes exemplary school leadership in three areas: student achievement, parent/community involvement and empowering school-based leadership. It is sponsored by the **Cobb Family Foundation, John and Selene Devaney, Edward W. Easton, Richard and Susan Finkelstein and the Lennar Foundation.**



Ms. Pearson was one of three finalists for this year's award. Her selection as the winner was announced by Steven Saiontz, Council Chairman, who presented her with the check in front of family members and dignitaries from throughout the state attending a gala event held at the Miller home on Miami Beach. A special congratulatory video with messages from Pinellas Superintendent, Clayton Wilcox, St. Petersburg Mayor, Rick Baker, and students and district staff was shown at the event.

"Peggy Pearson is an instructional leader. The Council believes that Principal Leadership is the key to unlocking a school's potential and raising student achievement. That is exactly what Peggy has done and we are proud to recognize her." said Saiontz.

Under Ms. Pearson's leadership, first as an assistant principal at the school and as its principal for the past four years, Mt. Vernon, a school with 73% of its students on free or reduced price lunch, has risen from a "D" school for four years in a row to an "A" school for the past three years. The school has not had any staff turnover for two years. Mt. Vernon awarded the St. Petersburg Mayor's Top Apple Award for the past three years.

The two other finalists, Dr. Jean Teal, Principal of Miami-Edison Senior High, Miami Dade County, and Randall Jud Strickland, Principal of S. A. Hull Elementary in Duval County, each received \$5,000. Award nominations came from a pool of principals who have been involved in Council for Educational Change programs. Ms. Pearson has participated in several CEC programs including its **Partnership to Advance School Success (PASS)** and the **Wachovia Teachers and Teaching Initiative.**

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