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LOS ANGELES PRINCIPAL SHARON WEIR SELECTED “CHARTER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR”

New West Charter’s Weir Among Five California Charter School Award Recipients Honored Today

Long Beach, CA — The California Charter Schools Association today recognized Dr. Sharon Weir as “Charter School Principal of the Year” annual *Hart Vision Award* recipient. Dr. Weir, principal of New West Charter Middle School in West Los Angeles, accepted her award at the 16th Annual California Charter Schools Conference in Long Beach.

“Sharon is a shining example of what is possible in public schools when the right person is in the position to lead,” said Jed Wallace, president and CEO of the California Charter Schools Association. “She is a model leader, a fierce advocate for charter school equity and an inspiration for educators nationwide.”

During Dr. Weir’s four years of leadership, New West Charter Middle School has experienced a positive increase in student achievement boasting an Academic Performance Index (API) growth score of 867, a total gain of 115 points since its opening year. In addition, Dr. Weir was responsible for eliminating 82 percent of the school’s debt in three short years. She is a champion of charter school facilities rights. In 2008, Weir won a lawsuit against the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) ordering the District to provide space for 285 students in conformity with Proposition 39.

The following recipients were also recognized today and received *Hart Vision Awards* at the Annual California Charter School Conference:

Christina Hoppe, Teacher of the Year Award Recipient, Granada Hills Charter High School

Hoppe was recognized for implementing innovative teaching models and programs at Granada Hills Charter High School, including the Global History of Ideas Program, which has become the strongest writing program on campus, preparing students for the demands of rigorous college coursework.

California State Senator Gloria Romero, Legislator of the Year Award Recipient, D- Los Angeles, District 24

Senator Romero currently serves as Chair of the Education Committee and Chair of the Senate Budget



& Fiscal Review Subcommittee on Education. She has authored numerous pieces of legislation seeking to restore accountability in the public school system and enhance learning opportunities for all students. With the sponsorship of the Association, Senator Romero authored SB-658, a bill that phases out the Year Round Grant Program and redirects nearly \$100 million over the next five years to the SB-740 Charter School Facility Grant Program.

Rose Gilbert, Legacy Award Recipient, Palisades Charter High School

At 91 years old, Rose Gilbert is an inspiration, teaching Advance Placement and honors courses in English at Palisades Charter High School. With forty-eight years of teaching experience, Rose has mentored countless students and colleagues, including more than a dozen current staff members who were once her students. Rose is also a philanthropist, annually providing generous scholarships to Palisades Charter High School's students. Her recent contribution of \$2 million will be used to build an aquatic center on her school's campus, in honor of her late daughter who was a champion swimmer.

San Francisco Unified School District, Authorizer of the Year Award Recipient

This past year, San Francisco Unified School District Superintendent Carlos Garcia and his staff were instrumental in including charter schools in Proposition G, the San Francisco City Rainy Day Fund, which granted locally authorized charters more than \$800,000 to help weather the current economic downturn. Superintendent Garcia also played a key role in including charter schools in last year's "San Francisco Quality Teachers and Education for All Act," a teacher salary focused parcel tax measure. To this end, San Francisco charter schools will receive their fair share of the tax -- \$1 million per year for the next 20 years.

To learn more about today's award recipients, visit www.myschool.org/pressroom.

Established in 1995, the *Hart Vision Awards* were created in honor of retired California Senator and former California Secretary of Education Gary Hart. During his tenure as legislator, Hart authored California's charter school legislation. For this reason, the California Charter Schools Association honors his legacy by presenting annual awards to charter educators for their contributions to educational reform and improved student achievement. Since its inception, the Association has presented over 40 *Hart Vision Awards* to California charter schools.

About the California Charter Schools Association

The California Charter Schools Association is the membership and professional organization serving 750 charter public schools that serve over a quarter million charter school students in the state of California. The Association's mission is to improve student achievement by supporting and expanding California's quality charter public school movement. www.myschool.org.