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# Press Release

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## ***Celebrating Leadership in Stark County: Stark Education Partnership Awards \$70,000 for Exceptional Education Leadership in Stark County, Ohio.***

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The Stark Education Partnership is pleased to announce that it will recognize two outstanding instructional leaders in Stark County – Kim Redmond, Principal of the Timken Campus in the Canton City School District, and Gay Welker, Principal of H.R. Walker Elementary School in the Canton Local School District – with awards of \$35,000 each. The awards are made from a grant to the Partnership by the Timken Foundation for the purpose of encouraging recognition of extraordinary leadership.

Instructional leaders in highly successful schools have much in common. They set a vision that clearly matches the desired outcomes with high, rigorous standards, create strategies to reach the vision, check the data, and make corrections to be sure that all students achieve at high levels. Most importantly, these leaders stay the course and keep working to increase the student achievement gains.

In Stark County, student achievement is rising and we are fortunate to have many fine instructional leaders. Kim Redmond and Gay Welker are indeed remarkable. Both faced situations where students in general were not achieving well. Both created a vision where students would be achieving at very high levels and using different strategies, both have accomplished the goal. Both of these leaders would tell you that they didn't do it alone, teachers worked hard to raise the achievement levels. Both would tell you that they are not satisfied yet—they want to have 100% of the students hit top goals. We know that they will continue to work at their goals. We know that others will join them, replicate, and extend the work.

Kim Redmond has worked in the Canton City Schools as a special education teacher, special education supervisor, creator and first leader of two alternative high school programs – Passages and Choices – and

most recently she is serving as Principal of the Timken Campus. Timken Campus' population currently has 73% of the students in the economically disadvantaged category and 22.2% of the students in the disability category. In the past two years there has been a 17.6% increase in the reading, and a 24.3% increase in the math OGT scores. The graduation rate is steadily climbing and the number of students going on to college is rising dramatically, particularly from the Tech Prep programs where the rate has risen from 19.5% in 2001, to 45.7% in 2005.

Dianne Talarico, Superintendent of Canton City Schools said, "Kim Redmond is a visionary, innovative, and a critical, reflective thinker! The Canton City School District could not be more proud. What an incredible tribute to an outstanding leader!"

Kim Redmond has a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education from Florida State University, a Master of Arts in Special Education from Kent State University, and Supervision and Administrative Certifications from Ashland University. She and her husband, Chris, are the parents of John and Danny.

Gay Welker is the principal of the Walker Elementary School in the Canton Local School District. In 2002, under her leadership Walker Elementary received the HIGH FLYING SCHOOL award from the Washington D.C. based Education Trust. This award is given to schools with more than 50% of students at or below poverty level, and with more than 75% of the students passing the state mandated tests. The Ohio Department of Education has also twice recognized Walker Elementary as a "School of Promise." This award is given to schools with more than 40% of students at poverty level and below and more than 75% of the students passing the state mandated proficiency tests. Walker Elementary School has a rating of excellent. Gay Welker and her staff have earned a wide variety of grant funds including Venture Capital because they have demonstrated the capacity to lead change and significantly impact student achievement.

"Gay Welker is an exemplary educational leader who has created a school environment that consistently produces extraordinary results," Teresa Purses, Superintendent of Canton Local Schools, declared. "She holds herself, her entire staff, and the students accountable for learning every day. She knows all 475 students by name and writes personal words of encouragement on every report card every 9 weeks. She has an incredible way of getting her staff and students to reach even higher in their expectations than they dreamed possible...and they do it!"

Gay is married to Tim Welker, principal at Faircrest Middle School in Canton Local. She is enjoying her 22nd year of education. After attending Miami University of Ohio, Gay taught grades 3, 4, and 7 in the Cuyahoga Falls and Nordonia Hills school districts. During this time, she pursued her Masters Degree and Certification in Elementary Administration at Kent State University. After working as an assistant principal for two years in Canton Local, Gay has assumed the principal duties at Walker Elementary for the last 12 years.

These awards were given to Brenda Neel, then Freshman Academy Leader, Canton City Schools and Rick Hull, then Principal, Fairless High School in 2002.

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