**Perth Amboy Campus Named National Blue Ribbon School**

**PERTH AMBOY — U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today that Perth Amboy Vo-Tech has been designated a National Blue Ribbon School based on its progress in improving student achievement**.



One of the seven schools of the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School District, Perth Amboy Vo-Tech was one of 269 recognized nationally, one of 17 in New Jersey and the only one in Middlesex County.

MCVTS Board of Education President John F. Bicsko credited Principal Robert Fuller, the faculty and staff, students and parents. He said the honor recognizes a decade-long commitment to improve every aspect of the school program and environment.

“We raised the expectations and the kids met them,” Fuller said. “Our biggest thing is the personal touch. We get involved in the lives of these kids.”

Seventy-five percent of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged and 86 percent come from minority groups. Many students enter “partially proficient” in math and language arts but progress to fully meet state standards while at Perth Amboy Vo-Tech.

The core curriculum ensures graduates are ready both for college and career, with 69 percent of graduates continuing their educations in college or post-secondary vocational training.

Fuller, who is in his sixth year as principal, said the changes instituted in the school included lowering the student-teacher ratio, adding guidance counselors, new professional development programs for teachers, before-school tutoring, engaging parents and closely monitoring student progress.

“It was a collaborative effort,” he said. “It’s a credit to everyone who works at the school.”

“This award is testimony to the dedicated efforts of the entire school community,” said MCVTS Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Loughlin. “The Perth Amboy campus is a perfect example of a successful community-based career and technical education program. They key components are high expectations, community involvement, parental involvement, and a commitment over time to a sustained effort to implement best practices.”

“My Freeholder colleagues and I are incredibly proud of the administration, faculty, staff, and of course, the students of all of our Vocational Technical Schools,” said Freeholder Charles E. Tomaro, chair of the County’s Business Development and Education Committee. “But it is a special honor for the Middlesex County Vocational School, Perth Amboy campus to have been recognized by The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program.”

“Our nation has no greater responsibility than helping all children realize their full potential,” Duncan said. “Schools honored with the National Blue Ribbon Schools award are committed to accelerating student achievement and preparing students for success in college and careers. Their work reflects the conviction that every child has promise and that education is the surest pathway to a strong, secure future.”

The 295-student school offers eight career majors in traditional and emerging fields: construction technology, computer and business technology, automotive technology, culinary arts. Agreements with a number of colleges allow students to receive college credit for PAVT courses.

Perth Amboy Vo-Tech is part of the oldest vocational school district in the nation, established in 1914. The school was opened in 1927, and a new state-of-the-art school was finished in 2004.

Middlesex County Vo-Tech schools also have been recognized recently by several publications. The Middlesex County Academy for Science, Mathematics and Engineering Technologies in Edison was singled out as one of the nation’s best high schools by U.S. News & World Report for the fourth consecutive time, receiving Bronze Medal honors in the magazine’s ranking of the nation’s best public high schools for 2012. In addition, New Jersey Monthly magazine ranked the Edison Academy fourth in New Jersey in its first survey of the state’s vocational high schools. The Edison Academy and the Academy for Allied Health and Biomedical Sciences in Woodbridge were ranked first and second among all Middlesex County public high schools by Inside Jersey magazine, a publication of the Star-Ledger.

“The Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders has always and will continue to be steadfast in its commitment to offering the best educational opportunities possible,” said Freeholder Director Christopher D. Rafano. “We applaud the innovation and ingenuity displayed daily in our schools and congratulate the students and staff of our Perth Amboy school for this fantastic achievement.”