

School leaders soaring on wings of second state award

■ *Evening Street and Worthington Estates are among 16 Ohio schools to earn SOAR awards.*

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Worthington Estates and Evening Street Elementary schools are the only schools in Ohio to be awarded the Battelle for Kids SOAR Award for High Progress in two consecutive years.

The two elementary schools were among 16 Ohio schools that received 2007 SOAR (Schools' Online Assessment Reports) awards Monday, Nov. 12, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center.

Evening Street Principal

Chris Collaros said Gov. Ted Strickland was on hand to present the awards, along with Battelle CEO Carl Kohrt and Executive Director Jim Mahoney.

"Two of my teachers, Sue O'Rourke and Kellie Ehlers, went with me to receive the award," Collaros said. "It was nice to be recognized in that fashion and to be sitting among so many fine educators."

Battelle representative Carol Greentree said the award was designed to acknowledge Ohio schools participating in SOAR for "their high academic progress in multiple grade levels and subjects."

"These schools are among approximately the top 3.5 percent of schools, out of 435 eligible SOAR schools, making exceptional growth with their stu-

dents," she said.

Greentree said Battelle for Kids launched Project SOAR in 2002 as a statewide pilot initiative to provide value-added analysis of student academic data and professional development to school districts throughout Ohio.

The pilot began with 46 schools and grew to include more than 100 school districts by 2005, she said.

Collaros said the data collected by the SOAR program is valuable.

"It helps us to better understand how high our levels of achievement are and how far we are moving students in growth within a particular school year," he said. "It gives us a definite set of facts to help us improve our educational practices."

Collaros said his school

may have made "exceptional growth" due to its "research-based instructional practices and outstanding teaching staff."

"We also have a wonderful parent community," he said. "The partnership between home and school is strong here at Evening Street and that helps our students keep achieving growth."

Worthington Estates

Principal Dan Williams said his school is "very active."

"We work with all of our students to help them achieve academic growth, especially students who may be having difficulty," he said. "We have a team of teachers guiding our school portfolio effort, so that we identify any students needing extra help and design a continuous-improvement plan for

those students. We work with all their teachers and try to make sure no one slips through the cracks."

Williams said he was happy to hear his school had won the SOAR award for the second year in a row.

"We were all elated by the award," he said. "It's a good feeling to know you are helping kids grow and that their time spent at Worthington Estates is time