



Christel House®  
*Transforming Lives*

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## **Indianapolis Charter School Distinguished as 'Breakthrough School' by MetLife Foundation-NASSP**

*Christel House Academy one of 10 high-poverty schools in the nation to receive award*

**For Immediate Release**

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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – Christel House Academy (CHA), a charter school located in Indianapolis, Ind., is one of 10 high-poverty schools in the nation to be recognized for academic success through the 2013 MetLife Foundation-NASSP Breakthrough Schools program. CHA is the first charter school in Indiana to receive this distinction.

"We are thrilled and honored to have received this award," said Carey Dahncke, Christel House Academy principal. "NASSP's endorsement of the work we are doing is a huge feather in our cap. The staff and faculty work tirelessly to transform the lives of urban students in Indianapolis by providing a first class education."

The MetLife Foundation-NASSP Breakthrough Schools program recognizes middle level and high schools that serve large numbers of students living in poverty and are high achieving or dramatically improving student achievement.

CHA houses over 600 inner-city students. Enrollment in the K-11 school is open to all district students and selection occurs through a lottery process. CHA has a 93 percent economically disadvantaged population and a nearly equal representation of Hispanic, Black, and White students; 30 percent of the students are English language learners; and 16 percent receive special education services.

"This year's class of Breakthrough Schools represents how an uncompromised focus on the things that really matter leads to sustained school improvement," said NASSP Executive Director, JoAnn Bartoletti. "Collaborative leadership, a personalized environment, and careful attention to what is taught and how it is assessed – hallmarks of the Breaking Ranks Framework – apply in all school contexts, and Christel House Academy and the other 2013 Breakthrough Schools provide us success stories that illustrate that diversity."

CHA uses the International Primary Curriculum for grades K-6; incorporates project-based, experiential learning as a transition in grades 7-8; and employs the Expeditionary Learning curriculum at the high school level. After a challenging start, the academy has achieved AYP each year, received an 'A' grade from the state three years in a row, and was designated as a "School to Watch" in 2012.

"Effective education depends on collaboration," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "In distinctive ways, the principals of the Breakthrough Schools have demonstrated the type of leadership that helps teachers, parents, students, and communities work together to succeed."

CHA will be honored at NASSP's Ignite 2013 Conference in National Harbor, MD on February 28 - March 2.

"We are proud of the accomplishments our students have made, and thank MetLife for this opportunity to share our work and practice with other schools across the nation," said Dahncke.

Selection criteria for the award are based on a school's documented success in implementing strategies that are aligned with the three core areas of NASSP's *Breaking Ranks* Framework including collaborative leadership; personalization; and curriculum, instruction, and assessment. These schools have demonstrated continuous growth on state assessments over at least three years and made progress toward reducing the achievement gap. Success in implementing the strategies is documented and verified through school site visits.

For more information about the program and schools, visit [www.nassp.org/breakthrough](http://www.nassp.org/breakthrough).

#### **About NASSP**

NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) is the leading organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and all school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. The association provides research-based professional development and resources, networking, and advocacy to build the capacity of middle level and high school leaders to continually improve student performance. Reflecting its longstanding commitment to student leadership development as well, NASSP administers the National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, National Elementary Honor Society, and National Association of Student Councils. For more information about NASSP, located in Reston, VA, visit [www.nassp.org](http://www.nassp.org).

#### **About MetLife Foundation**

MetLife Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide, through a focus on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. In education, it seeks to strengthen public schools through effective teaching and collaborative leadership, and to prepare students for access to and success in higher education, particularly during the crucial first year. The Foundation's grantmaking is informed by findings from the annual [MetLife Survey of the American Teacher](#). More information is available at [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org).