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Pine Tree Elementary Named National ESEA Distinguished School

Avon Community School Corporation elementary school earns national honor for closing student academic achievement gap for two consecutive years

Avon, Ind. – <u>Pine Tree Elementary School</u>, one of six elementary schools in <u>Avon Community School Corporation</u> (ACSC), is one of two Indiana schools that have earned the National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished School award for the 2020-21 school year. Pine Tree is recognized by the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators (NAESPA) for excellence in closing the achievement gap between student groups in a Title I school.

Karie Mize, long-time Pine Tree Principal, transitioned into the Principal role in ACSC's newly opened White Oak Early Learning Center this summer. "We celebrate all who were involved in earning this honor," said Mize. Noting professional-development efforts and a staff-wide commitment to building a more culturally responsive culture, Mize said, "As we continued our journey, we observed the change in ourselves and in our teaching. Subsequently, we observed the learning gap closing."

"The success of our students was a direct reflection of a significant change in adult priorities over the last three years," said Karmesha Molton, who now serves as Assistant Principal at ACSC's Sycamore Elementary. She was formerly Instructional Coach at Pine Tree. "Our staff committed to studying culturally responsive teaching strategies. During a traumatic, divisive time, we were united to keep one another safe, healthy, and learning, and—most importantly—to ensure that everyone knew they had a significant role to play in our success."

"We are proud of this award and for the incredible work of Pine Tree's administrators, educators, and students that the award represents," said ACSC Superintendent Dr. Scott Wyndham. "Our mission is 'all belong, learn, and grow'. This award is an affirmation of the results we can achieve when we work together to help all students succeed."

Pine Tree Elementary and fellow recipient Edgelea Elementary School of Lafayette School Corporation "are examples of schools that recognize our collective opportunity to innovate, collaborate, and continue to challenge the status quo in order to improve educational outcomes for our most vulnerable students," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education.

More information about the program is available on the <u>National ESEA Distinguished Schools website</u>. More information on Indiana's Title I schools is available on the <u>Indiana Department of Education website</u>.

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About Avon Schools: Avon offers students high-quality educational instruction with a keen focus on improving student achievement. We serve 10,300 students from preschool to graduation in 12 schools (one early learning center, six elementary schools, two intermediate schools, two middle schools, and one



high school). Our 1,400 employees dedicate themselves to the success of our diverse student population. Learn more at <u>avon-schools.org</u>.

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