



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

*Michael F. Easley*  
Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY PRESENTS INNOVATOR AWARD TO CUMBERLAND  
COUNTY *LEARN AND EARN* HIGH SCHOOL**

**Raleigh** - Gov. Mike Easley today presented the inaugural Innovator Award to Cross Creek Early College High School in recognition of its success preparing all students for college, careers and life. The school, located in Cumberland County on the campus of Fayetteville State University, was one of the first *Learn and Earn* high schools to open in North Carolina. Easley made the presentation as leaders from government, business and education gathered at the 2008 School Innovation Leadership Retreat to consider ways to improve science, technology, engineering and math education and accelerate high school innovation.

"Cross Creek Early College High School is a perfect example of what the *Learn and Earn* initiative is all about," said Easley. "Cross Creek students are staying in the school, making better grades and will graduate more prepared to meet the demands of college and a career in the 21st century."

Since it opened three years ago, Cross Creek has not had one student drop out of school. Its passing rate on state end-of-course exams was 77 percent last year, compared to a 60.8 percent rate in its school district. In particular, black male students at Cross Creek had an 83 percent passing rate, compared to a 44 percent passing rate for black males statewide. The school's students recorded an overall 2.6 GPA last year, topping the average for the freshman class at Fayetteville State University, its partner higher education institution. These results have come while nearly three-quarters of the school's students are disadvantaged, a proportion that exceeds the overall average in Cumberland County's schools. Most of the high school's 209 students are also the first in their families to attend college.

Launched by Easley in 2004, the *Learn and Earn* Early College High School Initiative has created 42 new high schools across the state. A total of 75 *Learn and Earn* high schools will be open by 2009. These schools are located on the campus of a community college or university and offer students the chance to earn an associate's degree or two years of college credit at no cost.

The North Carolina New Schools Project, which supports the development of early colleges and other innovative high schools, developed the Innovator Award. The New Schools Project reviewed data from those schools to determine which ones demonstrated the earliest success in raising all students to higher levels of performance. After finalists were selected, the New Schools Project evaluated those schools' efforts to prepare students for college and careers then they selected the Innovator Award recipient. For more information about the N.C. New Schools Project, visit [www.newschoolsproject.org](http://www.newschoolsproject.org)

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