

Oprah Winfrey Charity Gives \$1 Million to Recovery School District Charter School

Department of Education Recovery School District | ABC26 News
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NEW ORLEANS – Hundreds of New Orleans Charter Science and Math Academy students could barely contain themselves while watching a special screening of the Oprah Winfrey Show.

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During a segment on exceptional charter schools, the school's principal Ben Marcovitz accepted a check for \$1 million from Oprah's Angel Network.

The school, also known as Sci Academy, is one of six in the nation to receive the \$1 million donation, which was announced during Winfrey's show on education reform. The donations recognize incredible efforts by schools, against seemingly insurmountable odds, to achieve academic excellence.

"Sci Academy is enormously grateful for the support from Oprah's Angel Network. This substantial funding will support our sustainability and growth to serve more New Orleans scholars," Marcovitz said. "We are excited and honored to be nationally recognized for the outstanding academic success of our scholars."

Sci Academy, which is a Recovery School District (RSD) charter school, is the highest-performing, non-select admission public high school in New Orleans. About 85 percent of the student body is eligible for free or reduced-price meals—an indicator of poverty. Since 2009, the school has improved its School Performance Score by 7.6 points.

"This school is a shining example of how an exceptional program can dramatically improve student achievement, RSD Superintendent Paul Vallas said. "I couldn't be more proud of what Sci Academy has accomplished. This donation is well deserved."

In 2008–2009, the average Sci Academy ninth-grade student began the school year at a fourth grade reading level. In less than one year, the average reading levels improved by 3.5 grades and the school was ranked first in the Recovery School District and third in the city on the English portion of state exams.

In the 2009–2010 school year, Sci Academy replicated this achievement – the school's Graduate Exit Exam (GEE) scores in both English and Math were the highest in the district and 3rd in the city, only outranked by two of the most academically selective public high schools. Eighty percent of Sci Academy scholars scored Basic and above in English and 88 percent scored Basic and above in Math, while an impressive 43 percent of scholars achieved Advanced or Mastery in Math on the GEE.

"The staff, scholars, and families at Sci Academy have generated an exceptional achievement that the entire community can celebrate," Marcovitz said.

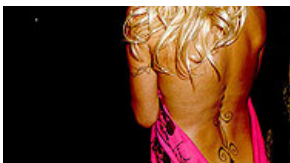
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