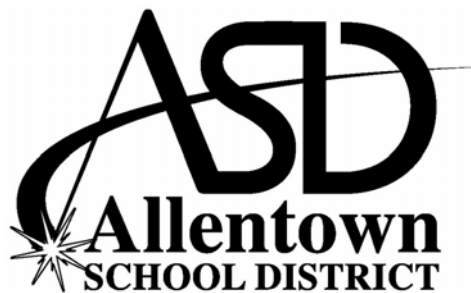


For Immediate Release

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**ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAM TO  
DEMONSTRATE BEST PRACTICES AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

(February 22, 2005– Allentown, PA) – Allentown School District’s Civic Education program has been cited for success through an invitation to present and participate in “Civic Education in Divided Societies” conference entitled “Using Civic Education Materials to Build Democratic Political Culture.” The conference will be held March 12- March 16 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The conference will welcome attendees from countries around the world to identify and study ways in which civic education is and can be used to assist nations in building a successful, participatory democracy. Allentown School District’s civic education program was asked to present its best practices to the attendees.

Allentown School District Curriculum Coordinator for Social Studies, Myron Yoder, will present for ASD. Yoder commented, “We are excited, as a district, to present our model before other countries who are trying to build better nations, just as we are trying to help build a better Allentown.” Allentown School District’s civic education is a K-12

program and part of the School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program. There are three programs in the civic education initiative. Grades K-5 use the *Foundations of Democracy* program that focuses on issues of authority, justice, privacy, and responsibility. Selected classes in grades 8-12 participate in the *We The People* program and the *Project Citizen* program.

Allentown School District's fifth graders also participate in the *We The People* program as well as Project Citizen in which students choose a project involving public policy, brainstorm a solution, and advocate the solution to public officials. It is in this arena that ASD has earned national attention. During the 2003-2004 school year, Terry Haas' Muhlenberg Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade class won the state competition and proceeded to finish second at the national competition. Their project was in regard to school uniforms. This year, Sue Kandianias' Ritter Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade class won the state competition and also finished second in the national competition. They derived the program, "Ritter Against Litter." Both years ASD swept the state competition. Not to be outdone, Dieruff teacher, Keith Ronald's AP Government class is among the final six teams in the state competing in the "We the People" mock Congressional hearing. The state finals will be held March 3 at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. The first-place team will earn a trip to the national finals in Washington, DC.

"Allentown School District's students excel with their innovative ideas and intelligent approach to civic engagement," says Yoder. "Our students are learning about participatory democracy and are taking an active approach to making Allentown a better place to live and work. We are all tremendously proud of our students and I am proud to have the opportunity to literally tell the world about the great students here in Allentown."

### **About Allentown School District**

As the fourth largest of 501 districts throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Allentown School District educates approximately 17,521 students in 23 pre-school,

elementary, middle and high schools located throughout the City of Allentown, and employs over 2,000 administrators, professionals, staff members and employees. The District has successfully completed a three-year Empowerment Plan. 2004 PSSA scores revealed 64 percent of all students were in the basic, proficient or advanced PSSA categories. Just fewer than 70% of ASD's students take part in a district-wide free or subsidized lunch program.

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