



## **REALTOR® ASSOCIATION OF PIONEER VALLEY, INC.**

*The Western New England Center for Real Estate Services*

221 Industry Avenue Springfield, MA 01104

413-785-1328 phone 877-854-6978 toll-free 413-731-7125 fax

<http://www.rapv.com>

<http://ims.rapv.com>

<http://pvrealtor.wordpress.com>

### **Springfield (MA) St. Michael's Academy 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Win "School of the Future" State Competition**

February 28, 2012, Springfield, MA - On February 16, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from St. Michael's Academy presented their "School of the Future" in the Council for Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) competition. In conjunction with the National Association of Realtors®, CEFPI sponsors an annual competition challenging middle school students to design their version of a school of the future which will enhance student learning, include green technologies, while encouraging community involvement.

The idea to enter this competition came from Brian Sears, President-Elect of the REALTOR® Association of Pioneer Valley, and a member of the St. Michael's Academy school board. Students were presented with this project in mid-October by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teaching team: Mr. Buldrini, Ms. Kaimi, and Mrs. Lund. The teachers felt this would be a positive way to encourage students to express themselves after the devastating loss of their middle campus after the F3 tornado struck the Springfield area on June 1, 2011. St. Michael's Academy Main Campus on Eddywood Street now houses grades K-8 until rebuilding plans can be completed on the Surrey Road sight. The students looked at this project as a way to be involved with the rebuilding of a school campus that had been an important part of their lives for the past two years.

Initially each student in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade was asked to identify a key stakeholder in the rebuilding process and become an in house expert by researching, interviewing, and gathering as much information as possible. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class consisting of 69 students broke into smaller teams comprised of a variety of "experts" focused on the task of creating a portion of this school of the future. For the next two and a half months student teams focused on creating three grade level wings and all of the amenities needed for a new school. Students designed individual classrooms, created detailed blue prints, researched a variety of educational topics, construction techniques, and green technologies. An in house competition was held on January 21 where student teams presented their complete grade level wings and all the amenities to a local 5 person panel.

Team leaders from each of the large groups then worked tirelessly to compile, summarize, and put together one final model to be used at the state competition which would showcase the hard work the entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade had put in to their school of the future. Only four members of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class were allowed to present the summary project to the state jury. All schools in the state are given the opportunity to participate in this annual competition but the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of St. Michael's Academy can be proud to call themselves the 2012 Massachusetts State Winners of the School of the Future Design Competition.

The national jury and awards ceremony will be held in April in Washington, DC. The 2012 national winners will be announced at that time.