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**TWO PREDOMINANTLY HISPANIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN FLORIDA NAMED AMONG  
“AMERICA’S BEST HIGH SCHOOLS” BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT**

*Mater Academy and Doral Academy Charter High Schools  
were the **only charter schools in Florida** to make the magazine’s top 500 list*

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Miami-Dade County, FL -- Two Miami-Dade County public charter schools, **Mater Academy Charter High School** and **Doral Academy Charter High School**, are listed among the nation’s top 500 high schools in U.S. News & World Report’s ranking of “America’s Best High Schools,” published in the magazine’s December 5, 2008 issue.

Forty-eight Florida public schools made the list, which included Mater Academy and Doral Academy Charter High Schools – the **only public charter schools in the state recognized by the magazine**. This is the second year that these two public charter schools make the Top 500 list. In 2007, Mater Academy was also recognized as a top high school by Newsweek magazine.

Both Mater and Doral have strong academic track records -- having been recognized by the Florida Department of Education and Miami Dade County Public Schools for continued high academic achievement.

Located in the predominantly Hispanic municipality of Hialeah Gardens, Mater Academy Charter High School continuously defies expectations. For the past three years, the school’s graduation rate has exceeded 90% -- surpassing current state and national graduation averages. In May 2008, approximately 80 Mater Academy students participated in Dual Enrollment classes offered at the school. Thirteen of those students graduated high school having earned a 2-year college degree from Miami Dade College. Doral Academy Charter High School, an “A” school located in the City of Doral, currently serves more than 900 students in grades 9-12, with 91.5% enrollment of minority students. In 2007 the school received the *Superintendent’s Performance Award* in recognition of its high scores on state standardized exams.

Charter Schools are tuition-free public schools that are permitted more freedom within the classroom and are held strictly accountable for student academic achievement, as well as the school’s financial performance. They are required to participate in federal and state accountability programs, such as FCAT and No Child Left Behind. For more than twelve years, public charter schools have been a vital component of Florida’s K-12 public education system. There are currently more than 104,000 students enrolled in more than 380 public charter schools throughout the state.