FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2009

Contact:
Lynette Loomis
Greater Rochester Health Foundation
585-258-1717 (office)
585-730-0278 (cell)
lloomis@thegrhf.org

Jean-Claude Brizard, Rochester Superintendent of Schools, has been chosen as a Healthy Hero by Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) for his role in advocating for healthier cafeteria food for the district’s more than 34,000 students.

The Board of Education approved Brizard’s 2009-2010 budget that includes $1 million to begin major renovation work at the central kitchen to provide quality, nutritious food to students. A long-term goal under consideration is to establish kitchens at each elementary school. The budget will also increase the amount the district spends per meal to obtain a higher quality product for students.

“Good nutrition and healthy eating are key components of students’ readiness to learn,” Brizard said. “In partnership with the Greater Rochester Health Foundation, we have taken initial steps to improve our food service operations and our work continues. The investment we made in the 2009-2010 budget is an investment in the health of our children.”

According to John Urban, president and CEO of the Foundation, “The quality of food served at City schools is particularly important as 88 percent of students in the district qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches. Superintendent Brizard was very open to members of the HEALTHi Kids Project, led by Wade Norwood, to participate in the development of the Request for Proposal to select a new food vendor for the City schools.” The HEALTHi Kids initiative is a community-based coalition advocating for five policy and practice changes — with better school food being the No.1 issue — funded by the Foundation.

GRHF wants to recognize people who are helping kids stay healthy. These are individuals or groups that have gone above and beyond their normal duties to successfully impact children's nutrition and/or physical activity. Healthy Heroes are awarded $500 that is to be donated to the organization of their choice in the spirit of improving the health of children through increased physical activity and improved nutrition. People interested in nominating Healthy Heroes may visit www.beahealthyhero.org.
The mission of the Greater Rochester Health Foundation is to improve the health status of all residents of the Greater Rochester community, including people whose unique healthcare needs have not been met because of race, ethnicity or income. Three major areas of focus for the Foundation are prevention, health care delivery and neighborhood health improvement. Within the prevention realm, helping children maintain a healthy weight is a major focus of the Foundation.

-30-