



BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

September 15, 2009

"Blue Ribbon Schools are models of improved student achievement from which others can take inspiration."

— U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan

To give national attention and recognition to schools that have achieved and attained higher levels of performance and shown improvements in student achievement especially among disadvantaged students. Each year since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has sought out schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals. Using standards of excellence evidenced by student achievement measures and the characteristics known from research to exemplify school quality, the Department celebrates schools, including those that beat the odds. The U.S. Department of Education directs the **Blue Ribbon Schools** program. The program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that either:

- Have placed in the top 10 percent on state or national assessments; or
- Have shown dramatic improvement in student performance to high levels on state or national assessments.

314 public and private schools achieved this status, out of more than 120,000 public and private schools in the nation.

Blue Ribbon Schools are models of improved student achievement from which others can take inspiration. There are no "one-size-fits-all" approaches, but these schools provide ideas and strategies that other schools may be able to adapt to their own unique needs.

Applying and Qualifying For Blue Ribbon School Status

- The Chief State School Officer nominates schools for the Blue Ribbon Schools award. Each state may nominate a set number of public schools based on the number of schools and students in the state. The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) nominates 50 private schools.
- Once nominated, a school must fill out a brief application to be considered for the award. The application process focuses on academic results and research based instructional programs in order to identify educational practices that are successful at closing the achievement gap.
- Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, schools must achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past two years, including the award year, in order to receive the award.
- A student from a "disadvantaged background" is defined by the CSSO of each state. The definition includes students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals and may include students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient, migrant, or receiving services under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

A list of 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools is available at www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/2009/index.html. For more information about the program, including each school's application, visit www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html.