



NEWS RELEASE

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EDITORS' NOTE: This U.S. Department of Education news release has been revised to include Nebraska information.
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FIVE NEBRASKA SCHOOLS NAMED 2015 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

Five Nebraska schools have been named 2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student groups.

The five Nebraska schools were among 335 schools nationwide recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels.

The Nebraska schools that were honored are:

- Arapahoe Elementary School, Arapahoe Public Schools, in Arapahoe
- Bancroft-Rosalie Elementary School, Bancroft-Rosalie Community Schools in Bancroft
- Douglas County West Elementary School, Douglas County West Community Schools, in Valley
- St. Robert Bellarmine School, an elementary school in Omaha
- Washington Elementary School, Norfolk Public Schools, in Norfolk

"This honor recognizes your students' accomplishments and the hard work and dedication that went into their success," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in a [video message](#) to the awardees. "Your journey has taught you collaboration, intentional instruction, and strong relationships in school and with your community. You represent excellence—in vision, in implementation, and in results—and we want to learn as much as we can from you."

The Department will honor 285 public and 50 private schools at a recognition ceremony on Nov. 9-10 in Washington, D.C. In its 33-year history, the [National Blue Ribbon Schools Program](#) has bestowed this coveted award on more than 8,000 of America's schools.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students either achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap. The award plaque affirms the hard work of students, educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging content. The award flag gracing a school's building is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning.

All schools are recognized in one of two performance categories, based on all student scores, subgroup student scores and graduation rates:

- *Exemplary High Performing Schools* are among their state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests. Student subgroup performance and high school graduation rates are also at the highest levels.
- *Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools* are among their state's highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school's subgroups and all students over the past five years. Student subgroup performance and high school graduation rates for each subgroup are at high levels.

The Department invites National Blue Ribbon School nominations from the top education official in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Department of Defense Education Activity and the Bureau of Indian Education. The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) nominates private schools. A total of 420 schools nationwide may be nominated, with allocations determined by the numbers of K-12 students and schools in each jurisdiction. The U.S. Secretary of Education invites nominated schools to submit an application for possible recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photographs and brief descriptions of the 2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools are available at <http://www.ed.gov/nationalblueribbonschools>.