

NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the National Blue Ribbon School Program?

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program is a program of the US Department of Education and has honored America's most successful public and private elementary, middle, and high schools since 1982. Since 2003, the program has recognized exemplary schools where students achieve at very high levels and/or where the school is narrowing subgroup achievement gaps or show substantial improvement with high poverty populations. (There was no set student achievement standard prior to 2003.) Selected schools must be "truly exemplary model schools, not just good schools or strong schools."

How does a school become eligible for consideration?

There are two categories of eligibility – (1) *Exemplary High Performing* and (2) *Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing*. In *high performing* schools, standardized test performance in each grade on mathematics and reading must place the school among the top 15% of schools nationally for private schools and in the state for public schools (the standard was 10% in 2003-2010). *Achievement gap closing* schools must have at least 40% disadvantaged population and must have made the greatest advances (top 15% in state) in closing subgroup standardized test achievement gaps over 5 years. School divisions within K-12 schools may be considered separately as long as each division has a separate administrator and it is clear to the public which division is being awarded. Schools must also be regionally accredited, have at least 100 students, and meet various other criteria.

Who nominates schools?

The state departments of education nominate public schools and the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) nominates private schools. Private schools who believe they meet the eligibility requirements must inform CAPE and submit all required documentation.

What criteria are used to award the National Blue Ribbon School designation?

Once a school is considered eligible as an exemplary high performing or achievement gap closing school and are selected for nomination by CAPE or the state DOE, the USDOE evaluates the areas below. The schools must be evaluated to be "truly exemplary model schools, not just good schools or strong schools." These areas have been essentially consistent since 2003 but change somewhat with each new presidential administration –

- The school's overall curriculum and learning standards, particularly –
 - Core curriculum – Mathematics, reading and language arts, science social studies and history
 - Pre-school program, if present
 - Other curriculum areas
- Instructional methods and interventions

- The school’s use of assessment results
- How the school engages families and community
- School climate and culture
- Professional development
- How the school shares success with other schools
- School leadership
- Financial and demographic data
- In the case of repeat awardees – how the award has affected the school and how the school has assisted other schools

How many schools are nominated and how many are granted the designation each year?

Each state is limited to a set number of public school nominations based on student population. CAPE may nominate up to 50 private schools nationally. A total of 417 schools may be nominated. There is no set number of awardees, but the total has ranged from 250 to 350.

What Middle Georgia schools have earned Blue Ribbon School status?

Exemplary Improving/Achievement Gap Closing Schools

Shirley Hills Elementary School	2011
Alexander II Magnet School	2006

Exemplary High Performing Schools

First Presbyterian Day School - Middle School	2012
First Presbyterian Day School - Elementary School	2003

Previous Program (1982-2002)

Centerville Elementary School	1999
Linwood Elementary School (Robins AFB)	1999
Houston County High School	1996
Mount de Sales Academy	1991
Warner Robins High School	1991
Southside Elementary School (Milledgeville)	1986

What Georgia private schools are National Blue Ribbon Schools?

Blessed Trinity Catholic High School	2014	Holy Spirit Preparatory School	2009
Brandon Hall	1985	The Howard School	1986
Christ the King School	1986, 2007	Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School	2009
The Epstein School	2004	Marist School	1987
First Presbyterian Day School Elementary School	2003	Mount de Sales Academy	1991
First Presbyterian Day School Middle School	2012	Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic School	2011
Greater Atlanta Christian Schools	1987, 1989, 1999	Our Lady of Victory Catholic School	2009
Hebrew Academy of Atlanta	1986	Pace Academy	2004
Holy Innocents’ Episcopal Lower School	1999	Pincrest Academy	2014
Holy Redeemer Catholic School	2009	Queen of Angels Catholic School	2007

St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School	2013	Savannah Christian Preparatory School - Lower School	2011
St. Francis Xavier Catholic School	2009	Savannah Christian Preparatory School - Middle School	2014
St. John the Evangelist Catholic School	1994, 2010	Savannah Country Day School	1992
St. John Neumann Regional Catholic School	1994	Torah Day School of Atlanta	2008
St. Joseph Catholic School (Marietta)	2003	Valwood School	2004
St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School	2003, 2014	Yeshiva High School	1985
St. Thomas More Catholic School	1988		

Can schools earn the designation multiple times?

The USDOE allows schools to be nominated again after 5 years. CAPE, however, gives priority to schools who have not received the award or are in the exemplary improving category since there are a large number of deserving private schools nationally. Once awarded, schools may continue to use the designation indicating the year the award was earned. In K-12 schools (as is the case with FPD), divisions may be considered separately as long as the school has separate administrators for each division and it is clear to the public which division is being recognized by the award.

Where can I learn more about the National Blue Ribbon School Program?

US Department of Education <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/>
<http://www.nationalblueribbonschools.com/home/about-us/>
 Council for American Private Education <http://www.capenet.org/brs.html>

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