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## **U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN RECOGNIZES 269 SCHOOLS AS 2012 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today recognized 269 schools as 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools based on their overall academic excellence or for making progress in improving student academic achievement levels. Secretary Duncan was joined by Arlington Public Schools Superintendent Patrick Murphy for the announcement at Arlington Traditional Elementary School in Arlington, Va.

The Department will honor approximately 219 public and 50 private schools at a recognition ceremony on Nov. 12-13 in Washington, D.C. In its 30-year history, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed this coveted award on nearly 7,000 of America's schools.

"Our nation has no greater responsibility than helping all children realize their full potential," Duncan said. "Schools honored with the National Blue Ribbon Schools award are committed to accelerating student achievement and preparing students for success in college and careers. Their work reflects the conviction that every child has promise and that education is the surest pathway to a strong, secure future."

The National Blue Ribbon Schools award honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' levels of achievement.

The program recognizes schools in one of two performance categories. The first category is "Exemplary High Performing," in which schools are recognized among their state's highest performing schools, as measured by state assessments or nationally-normed tests. The second category is "Exemplary Improving," in which schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds demonstrate the most progress in improving student achievement levels as measured by state assessments or nationally-normed tests.

To select National Blue Ribbon Schools, the Department requests nominations from the top education official in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, 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 417 schools nationwide may be nominated, with allocations determined by the numbers of K-12 students and schools in each jurisdiction. The Secretary of Education invites nominated schools to submit an application for possible recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** A list of the 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools is available at <http://www.ed.gov/nationalblueribbonsschools>. Nominated schools from some states will be included at a later date following final certification by the state's chief state school officer.

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