

NEWS RELEASE

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Four Mississippi schools named national Blue Ribbon schools

Jackson, MS – Center Hill Elementary, DeSoto County School District; D'Iberville Elementary, Harrison County School District; Rankin Elementary, Tupelo Public School District and Long Beach Middle School, Long Beach School District were named 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools today by Arne Duncan, United States Department of Education Secretary.

"To be named a Blue Ribbon School is truly an honor," Interim State Superintendent of Education Dr. John W. Jordan said. "These schools have worked extremely hard and their selection as a Blue Ribbon school is well deserved and recognizes them as among the best in the nation."

The schools – 264 public and 50 private – will be honored at an awards ceremony on November 3 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. For the past 27 years, more than 6,150 of America's schools have received this coveted award.

The *No Child Left Behind*-Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior in their states or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

"These Blue Ribbon Schools have shown that all children can learn with appropriate supports," US Education Secretary Arne Duncan said. "They are producing outstanding results for their students. Some have shown dramatic improvements in places where students are overcoming the challenges of poverty, and others serve as examples of consistent excellence that can be a resource for other schools."

The program requires schools to meet either of two assessment criteria. It recognizes schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance in accordance with state assessment systems; and it rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent on state assessments.

Of the schools submitted by each state, at least one-third must meet the first criterion of having 40 percent of the students from disadvantaged. A complete list of the 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools is available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html>.



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