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### **U.S. Education Secretary John B. King Jr. Recognizes 329 National Blue Ribbon Schools**

[U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr.](#) today announced the 329 National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2016. The award is based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

“National Blue Ribbon Schools are proof that we can prepare every child for college and meaningful careers, King said in a [video message](#) to honorees. “Your schools are on the cutting edge, pioneering innovative educational practices—professional learning communities, project-based learning, social and emotional learning, positive behavior systems—making you shining examples for your communities, your state and the nation.”

The [National Blue Ribbon Schools Program](#) honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap. The award affirms the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging content. The National Blue Ribbon Schools flag gracing a school’s building is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning. National Blue Ribbon Schools are an inspiration and a model for schools still striving for excellence.

Now in its 34th year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed this coveted award on fewer than 8,500 schools. On Nov. 7 and 8, the Department will formally recognize the 279 public and 50 private schools at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

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.
- 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.

The Department invites National Blue Ribbon School nominations from the top education official in all states, 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 each year.