



200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

THE BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Fact Sheet
57

Revised January 2010

What is the Blue Ribbon Schools Program?

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program is a national and state program that recognizes and honors elementary, middle, and high schools that exhibit high performance and/or significant improvement in student achievement. Up to six Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools are identified each year by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). These schools become Maryland honorees and are recommended to the U.S. Department of Education for National Blue Ribbon School Awards.

Schools cannot apply for the National Blue Ribbon School Program unless they have been selected by MSDE based on the categories below.

What are the three selection categories?*

1. Schools in the top 10% statewide compared against all schools at the specific level (elementary, middle, high), as measured by Maryland assessments (MSA's/HSA's) in reading and mathematics. Schools must demonstrate high achievement over a five-year period.
2. Schools with at least 40% economically disadvantaged students (as measured by free and reduced price meals or other determiner) that demonstrate dramatic improvement on state assessments over the past five years. These must be in at least the top 40% of schools statewide as measured by Maryland assessments in reading and mathematics.
3. Schools with at least 40% economically disadvantaged students that are in the top 10% statewide compared against all schools as measured by Maryland assessments in reading and mathematics.

* Based on federal requirements, achievement data for 1,2, and 3 above are analyzed for the last year of assessments for elementary and middle schools, i.e., fifth grade for elementary and eighth grade for middle schools.

**One-third of schools submitted for National Blue Ribbon Awards must represent categories 2 or 3. For Maryland, two of the six schools submitted must represent categories 2 or 3.

What is the application process?

Each year MSDE selects six Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools. These schools are automatically designated as Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools. They then receive an invitation from the U.S. Secretary of Education to apply for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award. At that time, each school must complete a National Blue Ribbon School Application. Since 2003, every public Maryland Blue Ribbon School has been awarded National Blue Ribbon status.

***What do
Blue Ribbon
Schools receive?***

A Blue Ribbon School is recognized as a highly effective school in Maryland and in the nation. This recognition means significant prestige in the community and the state and often results in increased values in neighborhood housing as well as other prizes and honors.

Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools are honored by the Maryland State Department of Education and the General Assembly at a dinner in Annapolis followed by a General Assembly tribute. Winners receive a Governor's Proclamation, State Department of Education citation, General Assembly honors, and Maryland Blue Ribbon Flag of Excellence. Each school is visited by the State Superintendent of Schools and other dignitaries. Monetary prizes are typically awarded to each school by MSDE and its corporate sponsors.

Substantial gifts and prizes are also donated to each Maryland Blue Ribbon school. For example, Smart Technologies donates a "technology classroom" valued at over \$13,000 to each school.

National Blue Ribbon School winners attend a two-day conference in Washington, D.C. hosted by the U.S. Secretary of Education. They receive the Blue Ribbon flag and an inscribed plaque.

***How many schools
can be selected?***

Up to six Maryland schools can be identified as Blue Ribbon Schools by the Maryland State Department of Education on the basis of state assessment data. At least two of these schools must represent high numbers of disadvantaged students.

***Who are the
supporting partners
in this program?***

The Maryland State Department of Education administers this program with support from the following corporations:

Platinum Sponsors:

Comcast
EduTrax
Smart Technologies
Sylvan Learning
Verizon, Maryland

Gold Sponsor:

Joe Corbi's Pizza

Silver Sponsor:

Scholastic, Inc.