



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: October 20, 2017
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **United States Department of Education (USED) National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce an opportunity for recognition of certain schools in Virginia through the [USED National Blue Ribbon Schools Program](#).

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes: 1) schools whose students achieve at very high levels; and 2) schools making significant progress in closing academic achievement gaps among different groups of students. Beginning with the 2018 award year, states may choose to nominate Exemplary High Performing Schools, or Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools, or both types of schools. The Department will select Virginia nominees for the 2018 award year in the category of Exemplary High Performing Schools based on the eligibility criteria required by USED.

Exemplary High Performing Schools: "High Performing" is defined by the superintendent of each state, but at a minimum means:

- a. The school must be in the top 15 percent of all public schools in the state when schools are ranked on the performance of all students who participated in the most recently administered state assessments in reading and mathematics;
- b. For each of the school's reporting groups (i.e. subgroups), the school must be in the top 40 percent of all public schools in the state when schools are ranked on the performance of all students in the subgroup who participated in the most recently administered state assessments in reading and mathematics; and
- c. For high schools, the school must be in the top 15 percent of all public high schools in the state when high schools are ranked on the most recently available graduation rate.

At least one-third of the public schools nominated by each state must enroll at least 40 percent of traditionally underserved students as defined by the superintendent of each state. The definition must include economically disadvantaged students and may include students with disabilities, students who are English learners, migrant students, or students receiving services under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended.

School divisions are not required to determine eligibility before nominating schools. If you would like a school from your division to be considered as a 2018 nominee from Virginia, please send an email indicating the division and full name of the school to Christopher.Kelly@doe.virginia.gov by Friday, November 10, 2017. Please include the wording "2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools" in the subject of the email.

Questions should be directed to Dr. Christopher Kelly, Education Coordinator, by email at Christopher.Kelly@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2122.

SRS/LS/ck

Links:

Virginia Department of Education © Commonwealth of Virginia, 2018