



#312-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #312-21**

DATE: November 19, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., 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 schools in Virginia to be recognized through the [U.S. Department of Education \(USED\) 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 student groups. The Virginia Department of Education will select Virginia nominees for the 2022 award year in the categories of *Exemplary High Performing Schools* and *Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools* based on the eligibility criteria required by USED. Minimum eligibility requirements for these recognitions can be found on the [National Blue Ribbon Schools Program website](#).

Virginia is permitted seven nominations across both recognition categories. If multiple schools meet the minimum requirements, final nomination selections are at the discretion of the superintendent in each state. **It is important to note that the 2022 awards will be based on student data and achievement targets from the 2018-2019 school year.**

All nominated schools must also meet the federal targets from school year 2018-2019 in reading, mathematics, and graduation rate (if applicable), and must have reading and

mathematics assessment participation rates of at least 95 percent. 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, and/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 2022 nominee from Virginia, please send an email indicating the division and full name of the school to Accountability@doe.virginia.gov by **Friday, December 3, 2021**. Please include the wording "2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools" in the subject of the email.

For more information

Questions should be directed to Amy Siepka, Director, Office of Accountability, at Amy.Siepka@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

JFL/SLR/as