

Nixon Elementary Named A Blue Ribbon School

Superintendent Dr. Dave Benson asks a student what a blue ribbon means.

When asked by the Superintendent to describe what winning a blue ribbon means, third grader Lily replied, "It means you did a good job on something. That you got it all done and you did it right." Well, Lily's school did a good job, got it right and earned that ribbon. Nixon Elementary School has been named a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education! Only 314 schools nationwide received the recognition.

"I could not be prouder to work with these students and this staff," said Kay Coe, Principal.

Each year since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has sought out schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals. Using standards of excellence, as evidenced by student achievement measures and the characteristics known from research to exemplify school quality, the Department celebrates schools, including those that beat the odds. The award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior, or have made dramatic gains in student achievement and helped close gaps in achievement among minority and disadvantaged students.

Dr. Dave Benson, Superintendent, recognized the many adults who support the students and the school, from teachers and staff members to bus drivers, parents and District leaders. "Nixon is producing outstanding results for their students and serves as example and a resource for other schools," Benson noted.

The announcement was made Tuesday morning at a surprise assembly also attended by school board members and other District representatives.

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private schools based on one of two criteria: 1) Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests or in the case of private schools in the top 10 percent of the nation on nationally-normed tests; and 2) Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that demonstrate dramatic improvement of student performance to high levels on state tests or nationally-normed tests. In addition, public schools must meet Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, in reading (language arts) and mathematics. Each state -- not the federal government -- sets its own academic standards and benchmark goals. Nixon was recognized both as an elementary school in the top 10% and as a school with less than 40% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds demonstrating academic improvement. The school was nominated for the honor by Judy Jeffrey, Director of the Iowa Department of Education.

The honored schools -- including six from Iowa -- will be recognized at an awards ceremony on November 3, 2009, in Washington, DC. For the past 27 years, more than 6,150 of America's schools have received this coveted award