



FOR RELEASE
Sept. 15, 2011

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**U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN RECOGNIZES 304 SCHOOLS
AS 2011 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS**

The U.S. Department of Education named 304 schools as 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools based on their overall academic excellence or for their success in closing achievement gaps. The Department will honor the entire 255 public and 49 private schools with their National Blue Ribbon School awards at a conference and awards ceremony Nov. 14-15 in Washington, D.C.

Among the honorees for overall academic excellence is Mary, Seat of Wisdom School in Park Ridge. MSW School is the parish school of Mary Seat of Wisdom Catholic Church. The school opened in 1958, and today serves 467 students from preschool to eighth grade. The application was a collaborative effort of the school's faculty led by Principal Judy Schutter. "The Blue Ribbon award is a public validation of what we know is excellence at Mary, Seat of Wisdom School. Our school offers a superb education in the context of Catholic faith and values," said Mrs. Schutter.

Father Gerald Gunderson, Pastor of Mary, Seat of Wisdom Church expressed his pride. "Our parish has invested in our Catholic school since its opening in the nineteen fifties. Catholic education has been a parish priority at MSW, and we have graduated over three thousand five hundred of our parish children from Mary, Seat of Wisdom School. Congratulations to the school faculty and staff on this well deserved award."

America's long-term economic prosperity and civic engagement depends on our children receiving a world-class education," Duncan said. "National Blue Ribbon Schools are committed

to accelerating student achievement and preparing students for success in college and careers. Their success is an example for others to follow.”

The National Blue Ribbon School award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students achieve at high levels or where the achievement gap is narrowing. Since 1982, more than 6,500 of America’s schools have received this coveted award.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, honors public and private schools based on one of two criteria: 1) Schools whose students are high performing. These are schools ranked among each state’s highest performing schools as measured by their performance on state assessments or, in the case of private schools, that score at the highest performance level on nationally normed tests; or 2) Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that improve student performance to high levels as measured by the school’s performance on state assessments or nationally-normed tests.

Before selecting National Blue Ribbon Schools, the Department asks for nominations from the top education official in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, 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 413 schools nationwide are nominated, based on the number of K-12 students and the number of schools in each jurisdiction. The schools are invited by the Secretary of Education to submit an application for possible recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School.

A list of the 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools is available at <http://www.ed.gov/nationalblueribbonsschools>.