

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FOR RELEASE
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**EDUCATION SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN
DESIGNATES 314 SCHOOLS AS 2009 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS
INCLUDED IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS:**

**MARK TWAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BRENTWOOD, MO**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today announced 314 schools as 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools. These schools achieved this status out of more than 120,000 public and private schools across the nation. Secretary Duncan was joined by Maryland State Superintendent Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, Montgomery County Board of Education President Shirley Brandman, and Montgomery County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Jerry Weast for the announcement this morning at Highland Elementary School, a 2009 Blue Ribbon School in Silver Spring, Md.

“These Blue Ribbon Schools have shown that all children can learn with appropriate supports,” Duncan said. “They are producing outstanding results for their students. Some have shown dramatic improvements in places where students are overcoming the challenges of poverty, and others serve as examples of consistent excellence that can be a resource for other schools. They are places where improved teaching and learning benefits every student, and where students are challenged to meet high expectations with the active support of teachers, parents and the community.”

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. 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 schools – 264 public and 50 private – will be honored at an awards ceremony on November 3 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. For the past 27 years, more than 6,150 of America’s schools have received this coveted award.