

Sarah Dittmer
District Communications Director
512 Philip Avenue
P.O. Box 139
Norfolk, NE 68701-0139



Phone: (402)644-2500, ext 1174
Fax: (402)644-2506
sarahdittmer@npsne.org
www.norfolkpublicschools.org

For immediate release – 9/29/2015

Washington Elementary School has been honored as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School. This highly prestigious honor is awarded to schools considered “Exemplary High Performing” by national standards. (see page 2) The school applications are evaluated in an extensive review process among public and private schools throughout the nation.

On 9/29/2015, U.S. Secretary of Education, Mr. Arne Duncan, announced via video press release (see link below) that 335 schools in the United States are being recognized for their outstanding performance in student achievement in 2014-2015. Washington Elementary School was one of these 335 schools recognized nationally.

Washington Elementary School was built in 1960 and serves an average 250 Norfolk Public Schools students grades K-4. The elementary school demographics include a 78% free and reduced lunch population and 21% English Language Learners. The staff and students of Washington Elementary have made great strides in student achievement over the past 5 years and are very deserving of this high honor.

	2010-11 WA average scores	2014-15 WA average scores	2014-15 State average
NeSA Reading Scores	73%	98%	80%
NeSA Math Scores	71%	91%	72%

“Congratulations to the teachers, staff, and students of Washington Elementary School on being named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School. They have worked tirelessly over the last several years to increase student learning and ensure that all students are achieving well beyond the state average. I am confident that no one at Washington – students, teachers, or staff - was motivated by winning an elite award, but it is a wonderful opportunity to publically recognize their hard work and accomplishments. We are very proud of the student achievement levels at Washington Elementary and are thrilled to see them honored with this prestigious award!”

- Dr. Jami Jo Thompson, Superintendent of Schools, Norfolk Public Schools.

“We are ecstatic at being named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School, but humbled by it as well. Not one of us in this building did it by ourselves. We all worked together, as a team, to create this high achieving environment. The students engaged and worked hard. Teachers and staff continually looked for ways to make sure that every student was learning these fundamentals of education and that they could learn in a safe, positive, clean environment. Parents supported their students and teachers, and made sure learning continued at home. Each person involved worked hard to make Washington Elementary School a place to be proud of. Washington is a great elementary school and we are honored to accept this award.” – Mr. Michael Andreasen, Principal, Washington Elementary School.

US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announces 2015 National Blue Ribbon School recipients:
www.ed.gov/nationalblueribbonschools

For additional information please contact:

Sarah Dittmer, Communications Director, Norfolk Public Schools, 402-644-2500 sarahdittmer@npsne.org,
Dr. Jami Jo Thompson, Superintendent of Schools, Norfolk Public Schools, 402-644-2500 jamiiothompson@npsne.org
Mr. Michael Andreasen, Principal, Norfolk Public Schools, 402-644-XXXX or michaelandreasen@npsne.org

Sarah Dittmer
District Communications Director
512 Philip Avenue
P.O. Box 139
Norfolk, NE 68701-0139



Phone: (402)644-2500, ext 1174
Fax: (402)644-2506
sarahdittmer@npsne.org
www.norfolkpublicschools.org



Eligibility and Performance Award Criteria

taken from the U.S. Department of Education website: www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/eligibility.html

Eligibility for Public Schools: The Department invites Chief State School Officers (CSSOs) for all states and the District of Columbia, the territories, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) to nominate schools for recognition as National Blue Ribbon Schools. In submitting nominated schools, the CSSO of each state and these entities must certify that the nominated schools meet the minimum requirements established by the Department for nomination. As described below, states and nominating entities must rely on their accountability and assessment systems to identify schools for submission to the Secretary. Each state's nomination criteria must pertain equally to all schools nominated by the state.

Performance Award Criteria for Public Schools: Public schools nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Schools award must meet one of two eligibility criteria:

1. **Exemplary High Performing Schools:** "High performing" is defined by the CSSO of each state, but at a minimum means:
 - a. The school must be in the top 15 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked on
 - i. the performance of all students who participated in the most recently administered state assessments in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, or
 - ii. a composite index that includes these assessment results and may also include assessment results in other subject areas and/or other student performance measures, such as attendance or graduation rates.
 - b. For each of the school's subgroups, the school must be in the top 40 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked on
 - i. the performance of all students in the subgroup who participated in the most recently administered state assessments in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, or
 - ii. a composite index that includes these assessment results and may also include assessment results in other subject areas and/or other student performance measures, such as attendance or graduation rates for high schools.
 - c. For high schools, the school must be in the top 15 percent of all high schools in the state when high schools are ranked on the most recently available graduation rate.
2. **Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools:** "Achievement gap closing" is defined by the CSSO of each state, but at a minimum means:
 - a. For each of the school's subgroups, the school must be in the top 15 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked on the school's progress in closing the gap between the performance of the school's subgroup and the state's all-students group over the past five years, comparing the most recent year to the earliest of the five years, on
 - i. the state assessments in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, or
 - ii. a composite index that includes these assessment results and may also include assessment results in other subject areas and/or other student performance measures, such as attendance or graduation rates.
 - b. For each of the school's subgroups, the school must be in the top 40 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked on
 - i. the performance of all students in the subgroup who participated in the most recently administered state assessments in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, or
 - ii. a composite index that includes these assessment results and may also include assessment results in other subject areas and/or other student performance measures, such as attendance or graduation rates.
 - c. For high schools, the school must be in the top 40 percent of all high schools in the state when high schools are ranked on the most recently available graduation rate for each subgroup.
 - d. The change in the performance of all students in the school over the past five years, comparing the most recent year to the earliest of the five years, must not be less than the change in the performance of all students in the state on
 - i. the state assessments in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, or
 - ii. a composite index that includes these assessment results and may also include assessment results in other subject areas or other student performance measures, such as attendance or graduation

In addition to meeting the above performance criteria, a nominated school must have at least 100 students enrolled and have assessment data for at least 10 students in each tested grade for both reading (or English language arts) and mathematics. States with a large percentage of schools with fewer than 100 students enrolled may include up to a similar percentage of these schools in their nominations. However, each school must have assessment data for at least 10 students in each tested grade for both reading (or English language arts) and mathematics.

Sarah Dittmer
District Communications Director
512 Philip Avenue
P.O. Box 139
Norfolk, NE 68701-0139



Phone: (402)644-2500, ext 1174
Fax: (402)644-2506
sarahdittmer@npsne.org
www.norfolkpublicschools.org

One-third of the public schools nominated by each state must have enrollments that include at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, all nominated public schools must meet their state's accountability requirements for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent and meeting performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination (2014-2015). Finally, all nominated public schools must also meet their state's accountability requirements based on the most recent accountability results available for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016).