

1999

## Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Institute

Nova Southeastern University

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## Winners' Words

*"The National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence process was the most incredible school-improvement tool I have ever used. What a sensational feeling it was to be named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. With this award comes a feeling of pride that instills a work ethic to continue to be the best."*

Katherine H. Howard, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent,  
Spartanburg District # 5  
National Blue Ribbon Principal  
South Carolina Administrator of the Year 1998  
National Distinguished Principal  
Spartanburg, South Carolina

*"The Blue Ribbon School application and review process has been by far the most thorough and helpful self-reflection/auditing tool for a school I have ever come across as a principal. It is a 'win-win' opportunity."*

Rocky Wallace  
Catlettsburg Elementary School  
National Blue Ribbon Principal  
Catlettsburg, Kentucky

*"Blue Ribbon Schools Program has elicited, through 'effective schools research,' an impressive body of educational practices which has led the way in identifying 'what works' and 'what doesn't work' in schools. Schools that are awarded Distinguished School, Blue Ribbon Recognition, have a rich curriculum and dynamic teaching practices."*

James G. Zoll, Ed.D., Superintendent,  
Julian Union School District  
National Blue Ribbon Review Panelist  
Julian, California

*"The Blue Ribbon process helped us better understand all the good things we were doing. It helped us develop a stronger sense of teamwork and collaboration. Whether we once again receive the official recognition or not, the Blue Ribbon process has helped us to stay focused on our goals, and to celebrate our accomplishments."*

Edward Bernetich  
Beachwood Middle School  
National Blue Ribbon Principal  
Beachwood, Ohio

*"The Blue Ribbon Schools Program has provided the perfect tool for teachers and school communities to reflect upon the teaching and learning that occurs in their school. With this opportunity comes the impetus to focus on what still needs to be done in order to further improve the quality of education delivered in your own unique environment."*

Lynne D'Agostino, Ed.D.  
Mandalay Elementary School  
National Blue Ribbon Principal  
Wantagh, New York

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## Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Institute

*The Blue Ribbon Schools award is one of the most prestigious academic honors in the United States.*

- Adopt practical and proven programs that have worked in our nation's best schools
- Build a school of excellence by using ideas, concepts, and programs from National Blue Ribbon Schools
- Analyze all parts of your school and measure them against the best
- Move your school to the next level by using the National Blue Ribbon process



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Nationally Recognized  
Schools of Excellence

*How to become  
one of the most  
outstanding schools  
in the world by using the  
National Blue Ribbon Process*

Nova Southeastern University's Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services has established the Institute for Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence to drive an international school-improvement movement. This initiative uses practical programs, concepts, and ideas that have been successful. The National Blue Ribbon Process is a comprehensive approach that works for:

- Schools that have reached a high level of success and desire to fine-tune their programs to serve as national models
- Schools that plan to use the criteria from the Blue Ribbon Schools process as a comprehensive framework for identifying areas that need improvement
- Schools that have challenging demographics, and need a starting point and a climate of assessment, discussion, and problem solving
- Districts and states that desire to reenergize their school community, bringing a sense of pride, confidence, focus, and shared agenda for change and improvement.

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ervices:

- An on-site analysis of your school and a plan to create an exemplary school
- A clearinghouse of experts that have developed highly successful programs in National Blue Ribbon Schools
- Assistance for districts and schools in developing a long- and short-term strategic plan for needs assessment and school improvement
- Development of a plan for states to use the Blue Ribbon Process to create state and national models, and to be an instrument for school improvement
- Regional and national conferences to model and replicate exemplary programs from Blue Ribbon Schools
- An analytical service designed to provide a plan for schools that have challenging demographics
- Graduate-level courses for schools or districts, intended to provide specific academic information
- Careful study of culture, student needs, and each local environment to ensure a plan that meets the needs of each school

ABRAHAM S. FISCHLER

Graduate School of Education  
& Human Services

The Institute for Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence is a service of the Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services of Nova Southeastern University.

Some features of the framework that produces a Blue Ribbon School:

- Safety
- Technology
- Leadership
- Fine arts
- School to career
- Peer mediation
- Conflict resolution
- Professional development
- Business involvement
- Parent involvement
- Team-building concepts
- Many additional programs

The Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Program promotes and supports the improvement of education in America by:

- Identifying and recognizing schools that are models of excellence and equity, schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence for all students
- Making research-based, self-assessment criteria available to schools looking for a way to reflect on how they are doing
- Encouraging schools, both within and among themselves, to share information about best practices based on the standards that demonstrate educational success

The Blue Ribbon process carefully examines itself by studying the criteria and standards found within these eight categories:

- Student focus and support
- School organization and culture
- Challenging standards and curriculum
- Active teaching and learning
- Professional community
- Leadership and educational vitality
- School, family, and community partnerships
- Indicators of success

Since 1982 the U.S. Department of Education has celebrated many of America's most successful schools. A Blue Ribbon flag waving overhead has become a trademark of excellence, a symbol of quality recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities.

The emerging secret of the Blue Ribbon Schools Program is its power to stimulate and focus school-improvement initiatives. "The Blue Ribbon nomination package pulls together what is cutting-edge in education today," said one educator. "The school that goes through the process is examining itself in terms of what works in the best schools in the country."

"Regardless of the direction you're going in school improvement, the Blue Ribbon Program gives you a vehicle to get on track," said one principal. "It gives you a framework and standard, so you know where you stand." Schools are finding that the richness and scope of the Blue Ribbon nomination process allows them to reflect, "not just on the surface level, but down deep." One educator said, "If you want a tool for school improvement, there's nothing out there better than the Blue Ribbon Schools Program. It's the best you can find."

