



Holy Cross Academy in Stafford wins national award

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BY LINDLEY ESTES

Holy Cross Academy in southern Stafford has been named one of the nation's 2012 Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

The program honors public and private K–12 schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement. It's one of 269 schools across United States to earn the honor.

Principal of Holy Cross, Sister Susan Louise Eder, said the award "affirms what we are trying to do."

The two goals at Holy Cross, she said, are to lead children to Christ and academic excellence.

Other Virginia schools recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools are: Arlington Traditional Elementary School in Northern Virginia, Clearbrook Elementary in Roanoke County, Grundy High in Buchanan County, Norfolk Highlands Primary School in Chesapeake, Nuckols Farm Elementary in Henrico County, South River Elementary in Rockingham County, West Point High in West Point and St. Edward–Epiphany in Richmond.

"Each of these schools is at the center of a community where students, parents, teachers, the principal and everyone else at the school—from the office staff to the bus drivers—share high expectations for learning and achievement," Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia Wright said in a press release.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools are selected based on one of two criteria: performance on state assessments, or in the case of private schools, performance on national standardized tests; or schools with at least 40 percent of students from disadvantaged backgrounds that raise achievement as measured by state assessments or national standardized tests.

Holy Cross, the first school in the Fredericksburg area to receive the award, turned in its scores from the TerraNova tests, and information on its academic programs. The curriculum the school highlighted was its health program.

"We do a lot to help students develop healthy lifestyles," Eder said. But what makes it an exceptional school is its academic community.

Holy Cross celebrated the news Friday by treating students to ice cream. Eder said that the PTO

was able to quickly rally parents together to help with an ice cream truck.

The U.S. Department of Education will honor all of the nation's 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools during a conference and awards ceremony Nov. 12–13 in Washington, D.C.

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