



Cherry Creek Schools

Kim Kenyon

Principal

Homestead Elementary School

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Dear Parents,

We have very exciting news to share with you! Homestead is one of five schools in the state of Colorado to be selected as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence! We are all so honored and proud of this hard-earned recognition. The partnership of our Homestead community, hardworking students and remarkably dedicated staff is the reason Homestead is such an exceptional school. Thank you, parents, for being such an integral part of our school!

The National Blue Ribbon Ceremony will be held in Washington, D.C. in November. Following the ceremony, we will be making preparations for a Homestead community celebration that will take place after winter break. Below is the district's press release that will be shared with the media and posted on our school and district websites. Congratulations to the entire Homestead community on this spectacular achievement!

Respectfully,

Kim Kenyon

District Press Release

Homestead Elementary School has been named a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today. It is one out of only five in the state and a total of 337 across the country to receive the U.S. Department of Education's prestigious honor celebrating academic achievement.

Every year, the Department of Education awards the National Blue Ribbon School designation to schools based on academic achievement and progress in closing the achievement gap among student subgroups. Since 1981, the program has recognized more than 7,500 public and private elementary, middle and high schools.

"These great schools are fulfilling the promise of American education – that all students, no matter their name or zip code, can flourish when schools provide safe, creative and challenging learning environments," Duncan said in a press release. "National Blue Ribbon Schools are models of consistent excellence and a resource for other schools and districts."

Homestead Elementary received the National Blue Ribbon School honor as an Exemplary High Performing School. This title recognizes schools that are among their state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.

"We are so honored. Being in the upper 90th percentile of academic achievement for many years is a validating experience," said Homestead Principal Kim Kenyon. "It was reaffirming for us to

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be able to articulate what we do. We have a common focus and feeling about who we are as a school.”

In January 2014, the Colorado Department of Education contacted Homestead and requested that they apply for the National Blue Ribbon Award based upon exceptional student achievement. A team composed of Homestead Elementary teachers and staff members started working on the school’s application in January. Through collaborative reflection, the team captured the essence of the school. In addition to detailed information regarding the demographics of Homestead’s student population, an analysis of assessment results, and the school’s focused curriculum and instruction, the 36-page application also highlighted the positive impact of the Integrated Arts Program on the school.

The school’s continual focus on developing a “culture of learning” for all students beyond the classroom was a key theme in Homestead’s application process, Kenyon said. She added that the Homestead community played a key role in the accomplishment.

“This parent community is absolutely phenomenal, and that’s woven into this,” Kenyon said. “We are so appreciative of them and feel a special partnership with them. They share in this recognition.”

Student accomplishments are at the heart of the award, Kenyon added. “The students are hard workers and dedicated, and they are the ones who contribute to this entire award,” Kenyon said. Combined with the incredible work of the Homestead staff and the contributions of the larger community, the students’ achievements helped complete the “three-legged stool” that was so instrumental in the National Blue Ribbon title.

Homestead will be honored along with the 337 public and private schools from across the country during a recognition ceremony from Nov. 10 to 11 in Washington D.C. Homestead Elementary joins eight other schools in the Cherry Creek School District to receive the National Blue Ribbon School honor since the award’s inception in 1981.