



Wyoming Department of Education

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

September 25, 2013

Contact:

Tom Lacock

307-777-5399

tom.lacock@wyo.gov

edu.wyoming.gov

Three Wyoming Schools named Blue Ribbon Schools

CHEYENNE - The United States Department of Education (WDE) has honored three Wyoming Schools with the prestigious Blue Ribbon School Award. The announcement was made this morning in Washington DC.

The winners of the Blue Ribbon School award from the Cowboy State were Coffeen Elementary in Sheridan; Jackson Hole High School in Jackson; and Lovell High School in Lovell. All three were honored in the category of High Performing School.

“Being named a Blue Ribbon School is a great honor,” said WDE Federal Programs Division Administrator, Dr. David Holbrook. “In Wyoming only three schools a year are identified as Blue Ribbon Schools and it is a national award, so this is very prestigious.”

All three schools will receive a plaque presented by representatives of the WDE next week during ceremonies at their schools.

The times and places for those ceremonies are:

- Sept. 30 - Jackson Hole High School (8:55 a.m.)
- Oct. 1 - Lovell High School Gym (10:0 a.m.)
- Oct. 2 - Coffeen Elementary in Sheridan (9 a.m.)

The National Blue Ribbon Schools award honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students’ levels of achievement.

“The hard work, the commitment throughout the district from our kindergarten teachers all the way through our bus drivers has made a significant impact on our students,” said Teton 1

Superintendent Pam Shea. “This is a great achievement award and without all the hard work and excellent teaching by our teachers, we would not have been able to sustain such high achievement for so many years in a row.”

“We are very proud of Lovell High School being named a National Blue Ribbon School,” said Big Horn District 2 Superintendent Dan Coe. “This award recognizes the hard work and commitment to excellence by board members, administrators, staff, students and parents providing the best quality education for each student.”

Sheridan District 2 Superintendent Craig Dougherty said, “Coffeen wasn’t always at the top of the heap, as a matter of fact they were at the bottom of the heap and they just decided they were a great school and in order to be a great school, those teachers had to get after it with the parents and the kids. The bottom line is, they did it. It is an astounding feat by those guys and it isn’t a one-year blip but a multi-year process of accelerated learning. Hats off to the Coffeen community. It is just a tremendous honor for our school district as well.”

The program recognizes schools in one of two performance categories. The first category is “Exemplary High Performing,” in which schools are recognized among their state’s highest performing schools, as measured by state assessments or nationally-normed tests. The second category is “Exemplary Improving,” in which schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds demonstrate the most progress in improving student achievement levels as measured by state assessments or nationally-normed tests.

“In order to be a Blue Ribbon School in the categories that were named this year, you have to be an exemplary high performing school, which means you have to have some of the top scores and be ranked as one of the top schools on the statewide assessment in Wyoming,” Holbrook said.

This year the US Department of Education honored 286 schools nationwide.

“Excellence in education matters and we should honor the schools that are leading the way to prepare students for success in college and careers,” said Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan in a statement from the US Department of Education. “National Blue Ribbon schools represent examples of educational excellence, and their work reflects the belief that every child in America deserves a world-class education.”

Last year’s cohort of Blue Ribbon Schools featured three Wyoming schools as Parkside Elementary in Powell; Meadowlark Elementary in Sheridan, and Star Valley High School in Afton were all honored.