



MEDIA RELEASE
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WILMETTE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL GETS NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON RECOGNITION

(Wilmette, Illinois...) Wilmette Junior High School has been named one of 304 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. The announcement was made last week by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The school was previously honored with the Blue Ribbon award in 1991.

Wilmette Junior High is one of six schools in District 39. It serves all of the District's approximately 880 7th and 8th grade students. The Blue Ribbon Schools – 254 public and 50 private – will be honored at an awards ceremony on November 15-16 in Washington, D.C. A celebration at Wilmette Junior High will be scheduled soon after the ceremony. Dr. Dave Palzet, principal of Wilmette Junior High, will travel to Washington to accept the award. District 39 Superintendent Dr. Raymond Lechner also hopes to be there.

Principal Dave Palzet was thrilled with the news. "I am so proud that WJHS is being recognized in this way," said Dr. Palzet. "Our students, faculty, staff, and parents all are part of what makes this school so great. We have a wonderful team!"

District 39 Superintendent Ray Lechner commended Wilmette Junior High. "Every member of the team – faculty, staff, principal, and assistant principal, as well as all the WJHS students and their parents – deserve to be recognized for their part in this achievement," commented Dr. Lechner. "To win this award once is an accomplishment; to win it twice is a testament to excellence. It is most well-deserved!"

The award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels or who have made significant progress and helped close gaps in achievement, especially among disadvantaged and minority students. The program is part of a larger Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about best school leadership and teaching practices. Each year since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has sought out schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals.

A total of 413 schools nationwide can be nominated, based on the number of K-12 students and the number of schools in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The Chief State School Officer (CSSO) nominates public schools, and the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) submits private schools' nominations. The schools are invited by the Secretary of Education to submit an application for possible recognition as a Blue Ribbon School.

NOTE TO EDITORS: A list of the 2010 Blue Ribbon Schools is available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html>.