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**Contact:** Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420  
Julie C. Grimes, Communications Manager, (804) 225-2775

## Nine Virginia Schools Earn National Blue Ribbon Honors

US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan visited Arlington Traditional Elementary School in Arlington County today to announce that it and six other Virginia public schools and two private schools were named 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

The public schools being recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools are as follows:

- Arlington Traditional Elementary School in Arlington County
- 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

Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright, who was not able to attend the announcement, offered her congratulations to each 2012 National Blue Ribbon school. "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," Wright said.

Five of the seven public 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools earned awards earlier this year through the Virginia Index of Performance program. Arlington Traditional, Clearbrook Elementary, Norfolk Highlands Primary and Nuckols Farm Elementary earned the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. West Point High earned the Board of Education Excellence Award.

The Council for American Private Education nominates private schools for Blue Ribbon awards each year. The following two PK-8 private schools in the commonwealth were designated as National Blue Ribbon Schools:

- Saint Edward-Epiphany in Richmond
- Holy Cross Academy in Fredericksburg

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.

The US Department of Education will honor all of the nation's 2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools during a conference and awards ceremony November 12-13 in Washington, DC.

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