

BRAGGING RIGHTS

Ideas for celebrating and leveraging the NBRSS Blue Ribbon School Award collected from past and current ceremony participants



National Blue Ribbon Schools show they're Blue in lots of ways, organized here into ***School Parties and Celebrations, Community Involvement and Showcases, Media Outreach, School Displays, Blue-Themed Items, "Branding" Your School, Student Engagement/Sustaining Momentum,*** and ***Sharing Your Success.***

School Parties and Celebrations

- Hold an elementary school pep rally with middle and high school students, with drumline and cheerleaders.
- Middle and high school students participate in a flag-raising ceremony with elementary students.
- Student assembly with videos: a montage of the year overview, a video of our students sharing why our school is special.
- Concert for the students during school.
- School-wide dances by grade level.
- Host a student carnival.
- Take a school field trip.
- A.D.S. Club provides whole school picnic; student and staff picnic with games.
- Parades to middle school (horses in blue ribbons) and with feeder schools.
- Party, multiple activities for all students, lots of free (kid-chosen) food.
- Blue Ribbon week of events; student-centered; different activity each day.
- Catered lunch for children and faculty/staff.
- Blue Ribbon lunch honoring teachers.
- Prior to annual Open House, held a formal assembly with cookies and coffee for our parents to announce the award.
- Have a Blue Ribbon Night for students, parents, and faculty.
- Couple an evening celebration with a holiday concert. Allow students to wear blue hats on day or evening celebration (hats not usually allowed).

- Celebration Day breakfast (staff & guests) ceremony (with videos from DC), celebration lunch for students.
- Invite recent alumni students/staff to celebrate as part of our success.
- Created an electronic book, “Blue Ribbon Day,” written by librarian, illustrated by students, read during assembly, and posted on website.
- “Blues Brothers” Halloween party.

Community Involvement and Showcases

- Big program in gym with K-12 and community.
- Congratulations posted on our Town’s booster board.
- Community open house; media coverage of open house.
- Invite the public in to visit the school and celebrate its success.
- Invite local, state, national leaders to celebrations.
- Hold a Superintendent’s dinner.
- School board held its meeting at school on the official announcement day and held a reception for our faculty and staff prior to the meeting.
- Having a legislator present the plaque.
- Board of Education recognition, for example a beautiful plaque.
- Local library displays Blue Ribbon School pictures materials.
- Ceremony with a local TV personality as host, making it a community event
- City council/Mayor issued a Proclamation.
- Formal assembly/ceremony with dignitaries.
- Pep Rally, high school band, football players, cheerleaders, parade with banners/shakers—everyone in blue. State Superintendent and First Lady for an awesome school assembly.
- Community parades: parade featuring former principal, retired teachers, mayor, representatives, and state reps; led the Harvest Parade dressed as Blue Ribbons; floats for Homecoming and holiday parades; Blue Ribbon parade to local park, lunch at the park, with police and fire, middle and high school band.
- Flag-raising ceremony with congressional and board representatives.
- Invite local college faculty, admin, and board to a celebration.
- Seat for elementary students at varsity basketball games, their seats designated by blue ribbons.
- Parent speakers at community nights share an experience that makes us blue.
- Celebrate with entire community one evening.
- We believe this is a community award so we are having a community celebration. We have invited political, education and business leaders, our community, staff, and staff of our feeder schools to an evening event.

- We celebrated our Blue Ribbon award with a mass of thanksgiving with our Bishop. Invited superintendent, past principal, alumni, and parish community.
- Downtown billboard features
- Blue Ribbon Board Meeting: have superintendent and board members dress in blue, wear wigs and cheer or lip sync a song.
- Blue Ribbon banner across town train station.
- Blue Ribbon sign at city limits: "Welcome to XXX, Home of NBR School XXX."
- Sending thank you letters to businesses that have supported the school.
- Banner flying behind a plane/blimp.
- Wrap trees in parents' neighborhoods with blue ribbons (blue plastic tablecloth strips).

Media Outreach

- Press releases and interview offers to local radio and regional, television, press, university campus paper.
- Tape and televise ceremony on local access channel.
- Social media (FB, Twitter, etc.).
- Local businesses announce award on marquees.
- Pictures of teachers wearing their college tee-shirts/sweatshirts sent to their college or university notifying them that an alumnus is part of a National Blue Ribbon School.
- State Dept. of Education is paying for a professional film crew to feature our school and interview selected people.

School Displays

- Cafeteria mural with blue ribbon.
- A photo collage of the NBR ceremony.
- Blue Ribbons tied around trees.
- Wrapped school in blue ribbon.
- Plant blue flowers around school in the spring.
- Blue balloons tied all around the walking track; blue balloons hung in hallways; released at celebration or commencement.
- Each child tied a blue ribbon on school fence.
- Created banners for school interior and exterior.
- Photo of all kids on playground in shape of ribbon in blue t-shirts.
- Ribbon Display Case includes the letter of congratulation in a beautiful frame.
- Create Blue Ribbon sign to be placed above school sign.
- Aerial picture of students, staff, and flag.

Blue-Themed Items

- Blue carpet for kids to walk on.
- Blue Ribbon Jackets.
- Blue ribbons on lockers.
- Blue t-shirts.
- Blue necklace beads. Pencils, badges, ribbon, bracelets.
- Blue coffee mugs: a National Blue Ribbon School.
- Blue Ribbon pencils given out for state tests.
- Car magnet bumper stickers.
- Blue honor cards for graduation.
- Sports teams wear blue ribbon.
- School Mascot in blue.
- Blue Ribbon bracelets for all students, staff, and central administration.
- Blue Ribbons on each
- Teddy Bear Parade: each bear wears a blue ribbon.
- Blue Ribbon shirts for students & staff.
- Blue ice cream and blue cupcakes (local ice cream company, parent bakery).
- Blue cupcakes, cookies, juice, Jell-O.
- Blue Plate” lunch for kids.
- Street signs for our school.
- Wear Blue Ribbon tee-shirts (polos for staff) monthly; on special occasions
- Staff picture for yearbook with NBRS t-shirts.
- Blue Ribbon Song.

“Branding” Your School

- Create Blue footprints that lead to the school’s door.
- Paint a bus Blue and add a banner that says “Follow Me to a National Blue Ribbon School.”
- Add NBRS logo to letterhead and website.
- Highlight the Blue Ribbon Schools Awards in the school’s newsletter.
- Dedicate yearbook to Blue Ribbon.
- Acknowledge Blue Ribbon status on email signatures and student/faculty resumes.
- Send announcement letters to parents.
- Post video clip of the awards on school website.
- Create poster/brochure to market school.

- Contact realtors.
- Distribute business cards with Blue Ribbon logo to all staff.

Student Engagement/ Sustaining Momentum

- Create and share a “3-word” video about what makes our school special.
- Students made class posters; incorporated into a video.
- Student-created video discussing why we are Blue from their POV.
- Video: what makes our school great? Students/teachers comment.
- Morning announcement includes one sentence motivator read by a student.
- Responsive classroom kick off to Blue Ribbon success in a K-8 building.
- Created a mural of dreams and accomplishments; Pride Wall.
- Blue Ribbon tile project: 800 2 x 2 clay tiles students painted blue; fired and hung on exterior wall.
- Graffiti wall.
- Primary students do art on “Being a Blue Ribbon School.”
- Students read/share poems or essays on being a Blue Ribbon School.
- Free-writing/prompt/goal-setting: What makes a Blue Ribbon champ? How will you continue to be a Blue Ribbon champ? Display in office.
- Current students sent letters of recognition to former students (last 5 years).
- Students write success/thank you letters to teachers and staff.

Sharing Your Success

- Hold school tours for school board members, parents, education officials, administrators.
- Continue to let other schools come in to observe best practices.
- Reach out and share with other district schools.
- Participate in conferences.
- Participate in/facilitate regional principals’ meetings.
- Participate in state and district improvement efforts—common core/RtI/ PBIS/ VIP.
- Help other schools write applications for NBRS program.
- Share practices on school website.
- Create a video with teachers telling our story and sharing best practices.