

# BRAGGING RIGHTS

*Ideas for celebrating and leveraging the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award*



National Blue Ribbon Schools share their success in several ways. Some of their ideas are summarized below and organized by *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.
- National Blue Ribbon School week of events; student-centered; different activity each day.
- Catered lunch for children and faculty/staff.
- National Blue Ribbon School 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 National Blue Ribbon School 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, “National Blue Ribbon School Day,” written by librarian, illustrated by students, read during assembly, and posted on website.
- Host a “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 National Blue Ribbon School pictures and 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 a blue ribbon; floats for Homecoming and holiday parades; National Blue Ribbon School 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 a National Blue Ribbon School.
- 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 National Blue Ribbon School award with a mass of thanksgiving with our Bishop. Invited superintendent, past principal, alumni, and parish community.
- Downtown billboard features.
- National Blue Ribbon School Board Meeting: have superintendent and board members dress in blue, wear wigs and cheer or lip sync a song.
- National Blue Ribbon School banner across town train station.
- National Blue Ribbon School sign at city limits: "Welcome to XXX, Home of NBRS XXX, [year of award]."
- 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.

### ***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 National Blue Ribbon School.
- A photo collage of the NBRS 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.
- Display Case includes the letter of congratulation in a beautiful frame.
- Create National Blue Ribbon School sign to be placed above school sign.

- Aerial picture of students, staff, and flag.

### ***Blue-Themed Items***

- Blue carpet for kids to walk on.
- National Blue Ribbon School Jackets.
- Blue ribbons on lockers.
- Blue t-shirts.
- Blue necklace beads. Pencils, badges, ribbon, bracelets.
- Blue coffee mugs: a National Blue Ribbon School.
- National Blue Ribbon School pencils given out for state tests.
- Car magnet bumper stickers.
- National Blue Ribbon School honor cards for graduation.
- Sports teams wear blue ribbon.
- School Mascot in blue.
- National Blue Ribbon School bracelets for all students, staff, and central administration.
- Teddy Bear Parade: each bear wears a blue ribbon.
- National Blue Ribbon School 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 National Blue Ribbon School tee-shirts (polos for staff) monthly; on special occasions.
- Staff picture for yearbook with NBRS t-shirts.
- Wrote a National Blue Ribbon School 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 National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards in the school’s newsletter.
- Dedicate yearbook to National Blue Ribbon Schools.
- Acknowledge National Blue Ribbon School 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 in the area to let them know we are a National Blue Ribbon School.
- Distribute business cards with National Blue Ribbon School 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 a National Blue Ribbon School 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 National Blue Ribbon School success in a K-8 building.
- Created a mural of dreams and accomplishments; Pride Wall.
- National Blue Ribbon School 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 National Blue Ribbon School.”
- Students read/share poems or essays on being a National Blue Ribbon School.
- Free-writing/prompt/goal-setting: What makes a National Blue Ribbon School champ? How will you continue to be a National Blue Ribbon School 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.