

Elgin Middle School
Elgin Public Schools
Elgin, Oklahoma



Putting Schools on the Map: Benefits of the Blue Ribbon Schools Award

Angela Cordes, Guidance Counselor and Assistant Principal

So many things have happened to us after becoming a Blue Ribbon School. The main thing is our growth. We are 11 miles from the military base and in the past the people have chosen where they want to live, whether it is Elgin or surrounding communities, and now to them there is no choice – it's Elgin.

Sammy Jackson, Principal

One thing that being a Blue Ribbon School is it seems that we've gotten more publicity beforehand with the newspapers and things, when we'd have a great idea, we could hardly get anybody to come out and cover it. It was really hard to convince someone to come see this. *Now* that we're a Blue Ribbon School, if we sneeze, they want to come out and watch what we're doing. You'd think we invented the wheel the way some of the people talk to you and treat you now, and it's funny because, like I said, we don't do anything any different than anyone else did.

It's not just our teachers—our parents, we have wonderful parents. Our parents will help us at any time and that makes it very easy. Our community is very supportive, be it our local banks to the Comanche Nation. They all support us immensely in whatever we want. Our administration support system, they don't micromanage us, they let us go even though, like I said, sometimes they look at me crazy, but they let us go and do what we want to do.

One thing I really got out of the Blue Ribbon thing is when we went to the Blue Ribbon Ceremony, it was absolutely wonderful talking to other Blue Ribbon Schools and seeing the similarities and the differences. Like I had never been around charter schools and that amazed me listening to them. I mean, I was in awe. I learned a lot from them, but also more than learning from them, not saying I didn't because I did, I always do, but it confirmed what you're doing. I think that was a big relief because when you talk to everybody because when it boils down to it all of these schools are basically got the same thing going on. They got the relationships, you know. They have the programs and stuff but everyone is different. But the basis of their deal is that they have a caring faculty and staff that work diligently to educate their kids.

Angela Cordes

Since becoming a Blue Ribbon School we've been asked to share our best practices with other schools and we've done that; we've gone to other schools and presented and given them everything in our tool box, and it's really great to be able to share like that. We've had schools write us back and send pictures and say, "hey, look what we did, look at what you taught us and we did this...." And, I don't know, it's kind of another affirmation that what we are doing is right, and that we can help more people than just our kids here at school.