
National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1982

LINDSAY DOUGLAS, NBRS LIAISON, FLORIDA
Interview Transcript

I was hired as a program specialist in the Bureau of School Improvement about 3 years ago and the role of state liaison was given to me as one of the responsibilities of that position.

I see the NBRS program as a complement to Florida's School Recognition Program since the development of the annual nomination plan allows us to marry elements of our state accountability system with Blue Ribbon's rigorous eligibility requirements. It's another opportunity to celebrate whole school success and given how only 13 can be nominated in Florida there's a lot of prestige and pride that comes along with receiving that Blue Ribbon flag.



Lindsay Douglas, Florida NBRS Liaison

I think a benefit of the NBRS and others like it is that it encourages schools to not only take time to celebrate their successes but also to collaborate and learn from each other. Continuous improvement is a valuable concept that's promoted through the Blue Ribbon awards ceremony - that is something that I have observed over the years - challenging participants to celebrate, but then look ahead and decide what's next.

So the role of state liaison in Florida spans all stages of the program cycle, nominations, the support of applicants and the celebration stage. The nomination plan is developed in collaboration with others in my bureau and then I apply the methodology in that plan to determine the eligible schools. That list of schools is then replicated by our data office before the nominees are circulated internally for approval by our leadership.

When working with the data to identify the schools eligible for nomination they're names on a page. So the work takes on a different feeling when the application review begins and I start to learn about the great things happening in these schools. Participation in the awards ceremony has also been very rewarding. The amount of dedication and enthusiasm these teachers and principals show for their students and their school communities is... immeasurable.

It actually means something a little different to me personally. I actually graduated from a school that later earned a BRS award, and I understand the quality of education and opportunities that that afforded me. I believe that all students deserve that same experience and that's a belief that also drives the work of our bureau and the Department as a whole. So it hits close to home.