



Pennsylvania Department of Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2025

PDE Contact: Erin James, erinjames@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Congratulates 13 Schools Selected as 2025 Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools

The Shapiro Administration created the Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools program to continue the work of the federally disbanded National Blue Ribbon Schools program

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) congratulated 13 schools in the Commonwealth that have been selected as [Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools](#). Formerly known as National Blue Ribbon Schools, an initiative run by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), schools are recognized for their overall academic performance and/or the progress made to close the achievement gap among students. The Commonwealth created the [Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools](#) initiative after the Trump Administration ended the 40-year-old federal program in August.

“Pennsylvania’s schools deserve to have their hard work recognized, and that’s exactly what we’re doing,” **said Acting Secretary of Education Dr. Carrie Rowe**. “While Washington may have stepped back from the Blue Ribbon program, the Shapiro Administration is stepping forward to shine a light on schools that are showing real progress in closing the achievement gap. These schools prove that with commitment, creativity, and care, we can ensure that every student has the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed. That’s something worth celebrating, and Pennsylvania is proud to lead the way.”

Before being disbanded by USDE, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program gave approximately 10,000 awards to more than 9,700 schools across the nation in its more than 40 years of operation. This year, Pennsylvania developed this statewide program to continue recognizing the efforts made by schools to create safe and welcoming spaces where students can master challenging and engaging content.

The following schools were named Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools:

- **Avona Elementary School, Wilson Area SD, Northampton County**
 - During the 2022–2023 school year, 14% of students demonstrated growth in reading proficiency, and third and fourth graders exceeded the state average on the PSSA assessments in Math, English Language Arts, and Science.
- **Charleroi Area Elementary Center, Charleroi Area SD, Washington County**
 - The school’s Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program, ROARS—Respect, Ownership, Attitude, Responsibility, and Safety—has played a key role in reducing discipline referrals and increasing student attendance, creating a safe and engaging environment where all students can thrive. The school fully implemented Multi-Tiered System of Supports across all grade levels, from

Kindergarten through 5th grade, to provide timely academic and behavioral interventions that meet each child's needs.

- **Hartman Intermediate School, Ellwood City Area SD, Lawrence County**
 - Hartman embraces the philosophy that interest builds achievement and success breeds success. Students engage in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that connect them to their community and spark real-world thinking. Programs like Shark Tank, where students pitch creative business ideas to local professionals; and Pizza Apprentice, which blends financial literacy with culinary fun, promotes collaboration, innovation, and confidence.
- **Highland Elementary School, Ephrata Area SD, Lancaster County**
 - The school's robust PBIS program models and explicitly teaches good behavior using the Highland Expected Behavior Matrix, shared classroom vision statements, and a monthly focus on the Ephrata Area School District Life Ready Graduate (LRG) Profile dispositions. Weekly and monthly celebrations—anchored by the end-of-month Game Show Day—honor all students while spotlighting Highland Heroes who exemplify the monthly disposition.
- **James Burd Elementary School, Shippensburg Area SD, Cumberland County**
 - The dedicated faculty and staff are committed to creating a safe, nurturing environment where every student feels valued, supported, and empowered to reach their fullest potential. The school uses evidence-based instruction and student-centered decision making, emphasizes character development, and fosters resilience and strong values. Additionally, James Burd prioritizes personalized learning, community engagement, and supporting students' social and emotional well-being.
- **Lakeside Elementary School, Wayne Highlands SD, Wayne County**
 - Lakeside fosters a disciplined, supportive, and structured learning environment where students feel safe, respected, and empowered to succeed. At Lakeside, we are committed not only to academic achievement but also to developing the whole child, with a strong focus on leadership development and character education.
- **Lionville Elementary School, Downingtown Area SD, Chester County**
 - Lionville believes that learning thrives when relationships are strong, expectations are clear, and every student is engaged in meaningful growth. Staff is deeply committed to both the heart and mind of every learner, fostering a culturally responsive environment where all students feel a true sense of belonging. Through intentional instructional practices, the school empowers students to think critically, take ownership of their learning, and rise to high expectations. Lionville strives to prepare students for success in a global society by cultivating curiosity, character, and confidence.
- **Main Street Elementary School, Titusville Area SD, Venango County**
 - Guided by the school's mission, teachers and staff strive to provide every student with high-quality academics and rich social experiences that prepare them for lifelong success. Through multi-tiered systems of support, they address the needs of all learners, ensuring personalized guidance and encouragement. The school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system focuses on the whole child, nurturing social-emotional growth while maintaining consistent, building-wide expectations. This program promotes a positive school climate, encouraging students to value manners, responsibility, and respect.
- **Parkside Elementary School, Penn-Delco SD, Delaware County**
 - The school's educators are dedicated to continuous improvement and actively refine their practices through professional development. This commitment,

combined with strong partnerships between students, teachers, and families, creates a nurturing environment where high expectations are balanced with a focus on both academic and social-emotional well-being. Parkside meets students at their instructional level, providing differentiated instruction for intervention and enrichment.

- **Richland High School, Richland SD, Cambria County**
 - Richland High School has a distinguished record of excellence in Academics, Fine Arts, and Athletics. Richland High School operates under the philosophy, ‘A student is never an interruption of our work—he or she is the purpose of our work.’ Richland believes that learning is a lifelong process, and that every individual has the potential to learn and succeed. The school promotes an environment of mutual respect and compassion, emphasizing cooperation and celebrating success to foster self-confidence.
- **Saint Elizabeth Parish School, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Chester County**
 - The school offers a broad-based curriculum in which our staff strives to meet the needs of every student. We are committed to fostering in our students a lifelong love for learning and the development of the skills needed to become well-informed, accomplished, and dedicated leaders. Realizing that children learn best when they are actively engaged, faculty strives to provide learning experiences that are rich in meaning and applicable to daily living.
- **Southmoreland Middle School, Southmoreland SD, Westmoreland County**
 - At SMS, learning is supported by a carefully designed daily schedule that makes room for robust, tiered systems of support. Dedicated time is built into the day for academic interventions, enrichment, student services, and arts access, ensuring all learners receive what they need to grow and thrive. This structure also allows students to explore a rich rotation of electives in areas such as STEM, financial literacy, the arts, wellness, and digital media.
- **Wrightsville Elementary School, Eastern York SD, York County**
 - Wrightsville Elementary staff ‘teach to the edges’, seeking to connect with each and every student because there is no ‘average’ student. The school strives to provide learning experiences that prepare students for life in the 21st Century and creating learning environments where children can learn to be socially, emotionally, and academically literate in a rapidly evolving world. Personalized learning is a staple where learning is the constant and time is the variable, as students have opportunities to share their voice and have choice and ownership in their learning as modeled by the school’s student-centered staff.

Under the program, schools are recognized in both or either of two performance categories: Exemplary High Performing Schools—the top performers in their state as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests; and/or Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools—those that excel in narrowing achievement gaps between different student groups and the overall student body.

Pennsylvania’s Blue Ribbon Schools will be recognized at an award ceremony during the [2025 SAS Institute](#) held in Hershey this December.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Education, [please visit the Department’s website](#) or follow PDE on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [Pinterest](#).

###

