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## Three Lake County schools named Blue Ribbon winners

By Vincent Pierri | Daily Herald Staff

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Three Lake County schools were named National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education on Tuesday.

St. Joseph Catholic School in Libertyville, Woodlawn Middle School in Long Grove and Deerfield High School were among the 314 schools chosen from across the nation.

"This is so exciting. News like this says we're doing the right things," said Woodlawn Principal Greg Grana.

Grana credits the success to an attitude that permeates through staff, teachers, administrators and the 620 students in attendance.

"From the district office down to the students, our goal is to work together for the common good," Grana said. "This award validates our efforts."

Blue Ribbon judges use two criteria when selecting the winners. First, students, regardless of background, must achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state

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tests. Private schools must achieve in the top 10 percent of the nation on "nationally normed" tests, according to officials. Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that demonstrate dramatic improvement of student performance on state tests are also eligible.

St. Joseph Principal Charles Lynch said the school takes a wholistic approach to education.

"We look at the spiritual, emotional and academic aspect of our children," Lynch said. "We have a sense of that mission in everything we do."

Lynch said teachers, parents and staff have fostered a familial feeling among the 520 students. He believes that has a positive effect on academic outcomes.

"We have cultivated a sense of family in this place," Lynch said. "We have parish families, staff and parents all working together to create that sense of community."

The winning schools, 264 public and 50 private, will be recognized at an awards ceremony on Nov. 3 in Washington, D.C., education officials said.



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