

September 15, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am honored to announce that the U.S. Department of Education today has named *Helen Keller Middle School* a recipient of the 2011 Blue Ribbon Schools Award. This prestigious accolade recognizes our students' high level of achievement as measured by the Connecticut Mastery Test.

The Blue Ribbon Schools program is part of a larger U.S. Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge of best practices in school leadership and teaching. We are one of only *four* Connecticut public schools to receive this distinction, and among 255 public schools nationwide.

Our school will be honored at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. in November, where each Blue Ribbon School will receive a plaque and flag to signify its Blue Ribbon School status. Blue Ribbon Schools serve as models for other schools throughout the nation, and details of their achievements are shared on the U.S. Department of Education's website.

The Blue Ribbon Schools award sets a standard of excellence for all schools striving for the highest level of achievement. Each year since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has sought out schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals. For many schools, a Blue Ribbon School flag waving overhead has become a mark of excellence, a symbol of quality recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program sets a high standard that should represent a goal for all schools that strive for excellence.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our dedicated faculty and staff, along with the faculty and staff of Samuel Staples Elementary School. We are very well aware that the formal education of our middle school students is one point along the continuum that began the day that each student entered the doors of the elementary school. I also realize that the credit for this moment is shared with you, the families of Easton who support their children and our school system each and every day. Most obviously, our hard working students deserve the longest round of applause.

Finally, the Blue Ribbon Schools award nomination is a tribute to the dedication and leadership of Mrs. Joan Parker, Principal of Helen Keller Middle School from 2004-2010. I will be accepting the award in her honor.

Student success on the Connecticut Mastery Test is but one indicator that they are acquiring the knowledge, skills, and character that will help them reach their potential. Please join us in celebrating this moment in an ongoing journey.

Sincerely,

Susan Kaplan, Principal
Helen Keller Middle School