

EL DORADO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District High Schools Nominated for NCLB National Blue Ribbon Recognition

Only 35 schools of the 9,600 schools in California were invited to submit applications for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2008 National Blue Ribbon School recognition program. The program requires eligible schools to meet either of two assessment criteria. The first criterion requires that one-third of the schools recognized must have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and have demonstrated dramatic improvement in the performance of all students to high levels in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics on their state assessments over the past 3 years. The second criterion requires that schools must score in the top 10 percent on their state assessment scores in both reading (language arts or English) and mathematics, regardless of their demographics.

Oak Ridge High School in El Dorado Hills and **Ponderosa High School** in Shingle Springs are two of four comprehensive high schools in the El Dorado Union High School District, which serves more than 7,250 high school students. Oak Ridge and Ponderosa were nominated for Blue Ribbon status because of their high level of student achievement and their recognition as a California Distinguished School.

Principal Steve Wehr states that, "Oak Ridge students have had the good fortune to be the recipient of a supportive educational community committed to excellence in education." Academically, Oak Ridge has exceeded the state's Academic Performance Index (API) goal of 800 by 42 points. The average API score at the high school level in California (grades 9–11) is 689. Ponderosa Principal Christopher Moore states that, "Students at Ponderosa not only gain mastery over academic learning but more so gain mastery over themselves. They rise to the challenge of learning rather than sitting back and accepting the status quo." Ponderosa has exceeded the state's API by 36 points and has also won the County Academic Decathlon 16 consecutive years. According to Superintendent Sherry Smith, "These schools have set the bar as a standard for excellence in this District. I am proud of their achievement as well as proud of all our students in this district."

In September 2008, the U.S. Secretary of Education will announce the 2008 Blue Ribbon recipients. The principal and a teacher from the recognized schools will be honored with a plaque and a flag signifying their national recognition at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.