

EL DORADO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
PRESS RELEASE

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OAK RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL IN TOP 10% ON STATE ASSESSMENTS EARNS BLUE RIBBON HONOR

The U.S. Department of Education has been honoring America's most successful schools since 1982 under the Blue Ribbon program. This nationally recognized program distinguishes schools that are academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

On September 9, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced this year's list of 2008 Blue Ribbon recipients.

Oak Ridge High School, in El Dorado Hills, one of eight high schools (four comprehensive, three alternative, one charter) in the El Dorado Union High School District was among the 320 top-performing schools in the country to receive this distinction. Of the 9,600 schools in California, only 35 schools were invited to submit an application.

Oak Ridge placed in the top 10 percent of California schools on the state STAR assessments in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, qualifying them for this distinction, among other criteria. In the recent past, Oak Ridge also received recognition as a California Distinguished School.

Application review by the Blue Ribbon committee included an assessment of the state test results over a 5-year period (from 2002/03 through 2006/07). Oak Ridge students demonstrated a 30-point gain in test scores in English/Language Arts on the California Standards Test over this period, and, in Math, these same students demonstrated a 10-point gain on the California High School Exit Exam for this same period.

Principal Steve Wehr says that, "This distinction validates the success of what we do every day to educate our students. Our graduation rate is 99%, and our support systems that have been in place are effective in keeping students motivated to learn as well as fulfilling our mission to educate our students with a rigorous, relevant curriculum."

Superintendent Sherry Smith states that, "Oak Ridge High School is exemplary. Students have demonstrated learning at the highest level. As a result, their readiness for whatever pursuits they may have beyond high school are available to them. Our Board of Trustees, community, staff, and, most importantly, our students are deserving of this honor."

This year's recipients will be honored at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on October 20–21. Oak Ridge will receive a plaque and flag signifying their Blue Ribbon status and will serve as a model for other schools throughout the nation.