



SAN RAFAEL
CITY SCHOOLS

from the desk of the
Superintendent



AN UPDATE FROM DR. MICHAEL WATENPAUGH

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Sun Valley Elementary School Named One of the Best in the Nation

The U.S. Department of Education announced today that Sun Valley Elementary School has been named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School. Sun Valley Elementary is one among 279 public and 50 private schools receiving this honor.

"We could not be more proud of this recognition for Sun Valley," said San Rafael City Schools Superintendent Dr. Michael Watenpaugh. "The teachers, staff, students and families are most deserving of this significant honor. The award affirms the school's outstanding academic program, as well as their model efforts to address students' social-emotional needs."



The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap. The award supports the hard work of students, educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging content. The National Blue Ribbon Schools flag gracing a school's building is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning. National Blue Ribbon Schools are an inspiration and a model for schools still striving for excellence.

Schools are nominated for the award by the state department of education, and then complete a comprehensive application about school practices. Schools may apply for status as Exemplary High Performing or Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing. Sun Valley Elementary is recognized in the category of Exemplary High Performing Schools, which means that it is among the state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.

"With more than 500 students from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, we have

worked tirelessly to create an inclusive community that addresses all of our learners' needs," said Sun Valley Principal Julie Harris. "To achieve high levels of student achievement, we've invested in extensive professional development, and as a result, the classrooms are rich with rigor, engagement and joy and every child has the skills and supports to reach their full potential."

Superintendent Watenpaugh, Principal Harris and Literacy Coach Dr. Maggie Stevens will represent Sun Valley Elementary at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 7-8 to celebrate their hard-won achievement. Following the trip, there will also be a local celebration for the Sun Valley school community.

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr. made the announcement this afternoon. The announcement can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heb5Mtr51BM>.

[Click here for more information about the National Blue Ribbon Schools program.](#)

