

SUNSET VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NAMED NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

NORTH HUNTINGDON, PA – Sunset Valley Elementary School in the Norwin School District has been named a National Blue Ribbon School for 2019.

Thursday, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos recognized 362 schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2019. The coveted National Blue Ribbon Schools award affirms the hard work of educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content.

The recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Sunset Valley was recognized for its students' academic performance on the 2017-2018 Pennsylvania System of School Assessments. That school year, Sunset Valley was one of the highest-scoring elementary schools in southwestern Pennsylvania in both math and reading.

The school serves 471 students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

Principal Mr. Jason Cendroski credited the daily dedication and hard work of the parents, teachers, and students at the school.

"It's not just one program or initiative," Mr. Cendroski said. "It's everyone's hard work, every day, to do the best we can for all children. And the parents do the same thing. The parents' commitment to their children is what makes Sunset a special place."

He added that the school's reinforcement of "Noble Knight" character traits, such as respect, responsibility, and courage, help to build a culture of success. Teachers even nominate other teachers for demonstrating good character. Students and staff are honored at a monthly positive behavior assembly.

Mr. Cendroski said the Sunset Valley teaching staff also believes that the school's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) has a lot to do with students' academic success. RTII is a multi-tiered, standards aligned, collaborative framework used to provide academic and behavior supports to all learners, most importantly struggling learners, at increasing levels of intensity based on student need. Sunset Valley Elementary School has spent the last six years focusing on the RTII process to ensure that all children have access to high-quality instruction and learning opportunities.

"We are incredibly proud of the collective effort of students, families, faculty, and staff of Sunset Valley Elementary and are pleased that they were selected to represent the Norwin School District as a National Blue Ribbon School," said Dr. Natalie McCracken, Assistant Superintendent.

"On behalf of the Norwin Board of Education and Administration, we congratulate Sunset Valley students, staff, and families for the tremendous honor of being named a National Blue Ribbon School," said Dr. Jeff Taylor, Superintendent. "Their example teaches us about the remarkable achievements that can happen when a school has a positive culture, encouraging family involvement, a sense of shared responsibility, and disciplined student work habits."

"We recognize and honor your important work in preparing students for successful careers and meaningful lives," said U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. "As a National Blue Ribbon School, your school demonstrates what is possible when



Sunset Valley Elementary School students celebrate with Principal Mr. Jason Cendroski at their monthly School-Wide Positive Behavior assembly on Friday, September 27, 2019. Photo by LJReed Photography

committed educators hold all students and staff to high standards and create vibrant, innovative cultures of teaching and learning.”

Now in its 37th year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed recognition on more than 9,000 schools. [Please click here to read more about Sunset Valley’s National Blue Ribbon Schools announcement.](#)