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Idaho schools honored as national Distinguished Schools, Blue Ribbon nominees

(BOISE) – Four Idaho schools producing stellar results in helping at-risk students succeed have been identified for national recognition by the State Department of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra announced.

Legacy Charter School in Nampa and Donnelly Elementary School in the McCall-Donnelly Joint School District were selected as this year's Distinguished Schools for Idaho. Chief Joseph School of the Arts in the West Ada School District and Burton Elementary School in the Madison School District are Idaho's two nominees for the National Blue Ribbon Award.

"These four schools are outstanding examples of Idaho educators' dedication and achievement, helping their students succeed regardless of background, economic status or prior performance levels," Superintendent Sherri Ybarra said. "I am proud to honor the skill, hard work and individualized attention these professionals offer to their students, inspiring them to accomplish amazing things."

All four honored schools met their targets in ISAT for all student subgroups, with at least 95 percent participation in the standardized test.

The Distinguished Schools will be honored during the National ESEA Conference Jan. 30-Feb. 2, and Blue Ribbon honorees are expected to be named in September 2019.

The annual Distinguished Schools Awards recognizes outstanding achievements by two Title I schools from each state that are serving a high proportion of at-risk students.

Legacy Charter School was honored in the category of Exceptional Student Performance. The school outperformed 90 percent of other Idaho elementary/middle schools in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency in the content standards for both English language arts and

mathematics in 2017. More than 37 percent of Legacy students come from an economically disadvantaged background.

Donnelly Elementary School's selection came in the category of Closing the Achievement Gap. The school improved the mathematics performance of economically disadvantaged students by 20.6 percentage points during the past two years. More than 35 percent of its students come from an economically disadvantaged background. The school also outperformed 95 percent of other elementary/middle Idaho schools in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency in the content standards for both English language arts and mathematics in 2018.

In order for a school to qualify for the Distinguished School Award, it must: have a poverty rate among students' families of at least 35 percent for the selected school year; demonstrate high academic achievement for two or more consecutive years; and meet or exceed state-determined criteria based on two or more consecutive years of achievement data.

Like this year's Distinguished Schools, Idaho's two Blue Ribbon nominees are covered by Title IA, a federal program that provides funding to districts and schools, helping students who are most at risk meet state academic standards and be proficient on state assessments.

Idaho's Blue Ribbon nominees are both nominated as Exemplary High Performing Schools. Chief Joseph School of the Arts in Meridian achieved 68.7 percent proficiency in English language arts and 69.4 percent proficiency in mathematics. Chief Joseph also improved its proficiency rate during the past three years, with an increase of 8.2 percentage points in English language arts and 11.7 percentage points in mathematics. Nearly 51 percent of Chief Joseph students come from an economically disadvantaged background.

Burton Elementary in Rexburg achieved 66.1 percent proficiency in English language arts and 70.7 percent proficiency in mathematics. Nearly 43 percent of Burton's students come from an economically disadvantaged background. In English language arts and mathematics, Burton Elementary students from an economically disadvantaged background outperformed students from 95 percent of other Idaho elementary/middle schools serving economically disadvantaged students. With Lincoln Elementary selected last year, this is the second year in a row a Madison School District school has been honored as a Blue Ribbon nominee.

In order to be nominated for a National Blue Ribbon award, a school must be in the top 15 percent of all schools in the state, ranked on the performance of all students who participated in the most recently administered state assessments in English language arts and mathematics. Idaho nominees must have at least 40 percent of their students identified as economically disadvantaged.

Idaho's Distinguished Schools and Blue Ribbon nominees each will receive a \$1,500 monetary award.

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