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Two Idaho elementary schools honored as National Blue Ribbon Schools

(BOISE) – U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos today recognized two Idaho schools as [National Blue Ribbon Schools](#) for 2018.

The Blue Ribbon schools, both nominated in December as Exemplary High Performing Schools, are Lincoln Elementary in the Southeast Idaho’s Madison School District and Garwood Elementary in the North Idaho’s Lakeland District.

“I’m thrilled that these two exemplary Idaho schools have received the national recognition they deserve,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “These schools provide a positive culture in which students make great gains in the skills they need to succeed.”

Garwood and Lincoln are both covered by Title IA, a federal program that provides funding to help students who are most at risk meet state academic standards and be proficient on state assessments.

Lincoln Elementary outperformed 92.6 percent of other Idaho schools in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency in English language arts and mathematics in 2017, and Garwood Elementary outperformed 88.6 percent of other Idaho schools by the same measure. Garwood improved its mathematics proficiency rate from 48.7 percent in 2015 to 62.2 percent in 2017, with particularly strong improvement in the performance of students with disabilities and minority students. Lincoln greatly increased its participation rate in English language arts assessment from 84.9 percent in 2015 to 98.7 percent in 2017, exceeding the state requirement of 95 percent.

“I’m pleased to celebrate with you as your school is named a National Blue Ribbon School,” DeVos said in a video message to the honorees. “We recognize and honor your important work in preparing students for successful careers and meaningful lives. Congratulations on your

students' accomplishments and for your extraordinary commitment to meeting their unique needs.”

Garwood Elementary teachers “model both traditional and ‘outside of the box’ thinking and provide students opportunities to experience and develop 21st century skills through project-based self-discovery as well as inquiry and STEM-focused learning,” according to its nomination materials. Nearly half – 44 percent – of its students are identified as economically disadvantaged.

Lincoln Elementary, a K-4 school, partners with Brigham-Young University-Idaho for expanded learning opportunities within walking distance of the school. With a high number of parents who are university students, Madison County has the highest poverty rate in Idaho, but families consistently support the school district’s levies and bonds, according to nomination materials.

Now in its 36th year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed recognition on more than 8,800 schools. On Nov. 7 and 8, DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education will celebrate with all honorees at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

In addition to Exemplary High Performing Schools, the Blue Ribbon program recognizes Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools for closing achievement gaps between a school’s subgroups and its overall student body over a five-year period.

Up to 420 schools may be nominated each year, and 340 winners were selected this year. The department invites National Blue Ribbon School nominations from the top education official in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Department of Defense Education Activity and the Bureau of Indian Education. Private schools are nominated by The Council for American Private Education (CAPE).

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Editors, reporters: Photos from Lincoln and Garwood, provided by the U.S. Department of Education, are attached. The provided caption with the Garwood photo is “Mrs. English welcomes back students.” More information about the National Blue Ribbon Schools program and winners is available at <http://www.ed.gov/nationalblueribbonschools>.