

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Mount Washington Elementary/Middle Named National Blue Ribbon School**

(Baltimore, MD) — U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools today, and among them is Mount Washington Elementary/Middle School. Mount Washington is one of 305 public and private schools across the country being honored for academic excellence and major student achievement gains this year. Its designation brings to seven the total number of Baltimore City public schools to receive the national distinction since its inception in 1982.

“This is an extremely well-deserved and timely honor for the Mount Washington Elementary/Middle School community,” said Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Andrés A. Alonso. “It recognizes the consistently high performance of Mount Washington’s students and the highest possible expectations by Principal Sue Torr, her teachers and staff, and the entire school community. When the Baltimore City Board of Commissioners approved the school’s expansion to include middle grades this year, it was a strong statement by the district about the kind of excellence we are striving to create for all of our students. To have this national honor on top of that is strong affirmation that we can and will get there. I extend sincere congratulations to Principal Torr and Mount Washington’s families and staff.”

“This award is a reflection first and foremost of the hard work of Mount Washington's students, followed by our talented, dedicated teachers and our supportive, involved parents and community. This prestigious award is an honor and a thrill,” said Principal Torr.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon Program honors public and private schools that demonstrate sustained academic excellence or dramatic student achievement gains among disadvantaged students. To date, seven Baltimore City public schools have received the honor: Mt. Washington, Western High School, Baltimore School for the Arts, Patapsco Elementary School, Baltimore City College, George Washington Elementary School and Cecil Elementary School. To qualify, schools must first be recognized as Blue Ribbon schools at the state level.

Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools must either fall within the top 10 percent of all Maryland schools in their school category (elementary, middle, high) based on at least three years of state assessment data, or they must show dramatic student achievement gains (also based on at least three years of state assessment data) with a student population where at least 40 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-priced meals. Schools in this latter category must also fall within the top 40 percent of all Maryland schools in their school category.

Mount Washington was named a Maryland Blue Ribbon School in December 2010 and submitted to Secretary Duncan for National Blue Ribbon consideration by then-State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick, who hailed the school and five others from across the state as “golden examples of educational leadership.” The school has consistently produced high scores on the Maryland School Assessment in both reading and math in recent years; and this fall, the long-time elementary school expanded to include middle grades.