

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## State Board of Education recognizes three HISD schools for national Blue Ribbon awards

*April 5, 2019* – Houston Independent School District faculty, staff and students from three campuses traveled to Austin today to receive a special recognition from the State Board of Education for their designation as 2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

HISD's three Blue Ribbon campuses are: Challenge Early College and East Early College high schools, as well as Debakey High School for Health Professions.

"I could not be prouder of these schools that represent some of the best and brightest in the nation," HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. "I want to thank the State Board of Education for recognizing the tremendous work our students, teachers, and administrators put in each and every day."

Blue Ribbon Schools are public and private elementary, middle, and high schools in the United States that the Department of Education recognizes for having high levels of academic achievement or outstanding progress toward closing achievement gaps.

"We are excited about receiving this high honor that recognizes the tremendous work by our staff, students and parents," said Challenge Early College High School Principal Tonya Miller. "Being named a Blue Ribbon School demonstrates the three R's we promote really do work: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships."

Challenge Early College High School was previously named one of the nation's Blue Ribbon Schools in 2011.

East Early College High School also is a two-time National Blue Ribbon Award winner, receiving the award previously in 2012.

"Being named to the list of America's best schools never gets old," East Early College High School Principal Stephanie Square said. "This honor today in the state capital and this latest Blue Ribbon award belong to all of our parents, staff, community and students."

Debakey has won the Blue Ribbon award four other times: in 1997, 1998, 2003, and 2009. Principal Agnes Perry said her campus, which was the nation's first high school for health professions, is expected to set the bar high.

“We were the first, and we aim to be the best at preparing students for health careers,” Perry said. “I want to thank the State Board of Education for their special recognition today, and I want to thank the U.S. Department of Education for once again honoring us.”

The state board also honored the 21 other Blue Ribbon schools in Texas.

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The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with 284 schools and more than 214,000 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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