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**- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -**

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## **St. Thomas More School Honored as 2024 National Blue Ribbon School**

MUNSTER -- U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona today recognized 356 schools as the 2024 cohort of [National Blue Ribbon Schools](#). This prestigious recognition highlights schools that excel in academic performance or make significant strides in closing achievement gaps among different student groups. [St. Thomas More school in Munster, Ind.](#) was one of 16 Indiana schools recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School.

“The National Blue Ribbon Schools Award is a testament to the exceptional achievements of students and educators at each of these schools,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “The 2024 National Blue Ribbon Schools are raising the bar for our nation’s students, serving as models for effective teaching and intentional collaboration in their schools and communities. As we celebrate their achievements, let us look to these schools for inspiration as we champion education as the foundation of a brighter future for every child.”

St. Thomas More school principal Dr. Samantha Francis was thrilled to learn the school was named a 2024 Blue Ribbon School for its gap-closing achievements. “I am very proud of our school community, from faculty and staff to our families and students. We know that the efforts we put in on a daily basis make a difference. Every day our motto is ‘excellence happens on purpose.’ It is not an accident. It is intentional and it is driven home that we will try to do our best. I couldn’t be prouder of our school and our community.”

The National Blue Ribbon School award is a widely recognized honor for exceptional teaching and learning. These schools serve as models of effective and innovative practices for educators across the nation. Schools are recognized in both or either of two performance categories:

- **Exemplary High Performing Schools:** These schools are among the top performers in their state as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.
- **Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools:** These schools excel in narrowing achievement gaps between different student groups and the overall student body.

Faculty, families and students gathered for the announcement, released by the U.S. Office of Education today at noon central time. Students put on blue t-shirts to celebrate the achievement and enthusiastically responded to their school’s name being announced.

Pastor of St. Thomas More church Father Michael Yadron recognized the hard work of the school staff and described the award as an opportunity to showcase student abilities and the work they put in, noting that “each student improved last year.”

Most Rev. Robert J. McClory, Bishop of Gary, congratulated the school, acknowledging that they “are truly living out their motto that excellence happens on purpose.”

Diocese of Gary Superintendent Dr. Colleen Brewer affirmed Dr. Francis and the entire school’s faculty for their “commitment to excellence and ensuring that every student is learning and thriving” and further noted that “every school in the Diocese of Gary is committed to providing a high-quality values-based education, rooted in the Catholic faith.”

Another Diocese of Gary school, St. Paul Catholic School in Valparaiso, Ind. received the prestigious honor of being named a National Blue Ribbon High Performing School in 2022.

Each nominated school submits a comprehensive application detailing its school culture, curriculum, assessments, instructional practices, professional development, leadership, family, and community involvement.

The Department invites nominations for the National Blue Ribbon Schools award from the top education officials in all states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the Bureau of Indian Education. Private schools are nominated by the Council for American Private Education.

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS:**

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Pictures can be accessed on the [diocesan Flickr page](#).

You can reach the U.S. Department of Education Office of Communications & Outreach at (202) 401-1576 or [press@ed.gov](mailto:press@ed.gov). Photographs and brief descriptions of the 2024 National Blue Ribbon Schools are available at <https://nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov/>.

### **About the Diocese of Gary**

*The Diocese of Gary serves an estimated 170,000 Catholics in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke counties through 58 parishes, two missions and one Catholic student center, three diocesan high schools, one private high school and 17 parish elementary schools serving 5,985 students. An additional 5,610 students are enrolled in parish Catholic formation programs. More than two million are served by Catholic affiliated agencies including seven Catholic hospitals, residential and day care facilities for adults and children, and centers for Social Services. Learn more at [dcgary.org](http://dcgary.org).*