



ANCHORED in FAITH

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Dear Saint Peter School Families,

I have some fantastic news to share with you!

Last year, under the leadership of Miss Berlino, St. Peter's applied for the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award from the U.S. Department of Education. Yesterday afternoon, we received the announcement that St. Peter School has been named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence!

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U.S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools, schools demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels. Fewer than 8,500 schools across the country have been presented with this coveted award since 1982. The National Blue Ribbon School award recognizes the hard work of students, teachers, families, and communities in creating schools that model excellence and engage students in rigorous curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment.

For nonpublic schools, like Saint Peter's, to be eligible for this prestigious award, they must be nominated by the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) and must meet certain criteria for recognition.

To be an *Exemplary High Performing School*, the students in the most recent year tested place the school in the top 15 percent in the nation in reading and mathematics as measured by a nationally normed test (the Terra Novas). In addition, the school must have a strong curricular program including enrichment classes and must have a school culture that supports students and engages families and the community.

St. Peter's met all of the stringent requirements and has now received *national* recognition for its excellence!

We were one of 329 schools across the entire country to receive this distinguished award, and one of only 50 private schools in the entire nation to be honored this year. In NJ, only four public and three other Catholic elementary schools received this award. It is

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In accordance with our Catholic Identity and rooted in Gospel values, it is the mission of Saint Peter School to provide a community of faith in which students will develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.

extremely impressive to note that we are the only Catholic school in Ocean County to ever receive this honor!

Miss Berlino, Mrs. Baglivio, and I will be attending the awards ceremony in Washington D.C. on November 7th and 8th.

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education will present St. Peter's with an awards plaque and the National Blue Ribbon School flag. This flag, which is widely recognized as a symbol of exemplary teaching and learning, will fly proudly overhead in the front of our school building.

This is such a tremendous honor for us and reflects the quality of our school, the hard work of our students, and the commitment and dedication of our teachers.

I would like to thank Miss Berlino for fostering excellence during her time here, for her vision, and for pursuing this award which was a very involved and time consuming process.

Thank you to Father Bob, Father Michael, and the Parish of St. Peter's for continuing to believe in and fully support the work that we are doing here. Catholic schools cannot flourish without this kind of dedication.

Thank you to our school parents who support us in our endeavors in providing high quality Catholic education and for encouraging our students to aim for success.

Thank you to our outstanding teachers and staff who believe in maintaining high standards and expectations and who foster the growth of our students.

Thank you to our students, who love to learn, and who strive to achieve their greatest potential, while bringing joy and enthusiasm into the school building.

Saint Peter's was already a Blue Ribbon School in my mind, not for high test scores, but for the blessing of every child and every person involved in the school who make it such a special place, a close knit community where God's presence is evident in all that we do. Our strong Catholic identity and high standards of excellence truly make St. Peter's a Blue Ribbon School! And now the U.S. Department of Education knows that too!

This is a very proud day for all of us, and we could not be more excited. Stay tuned for information on a celebration to take place in November.

Attached please find the press release from the Department of Education.

Thank you for all that you do to make Saint Peter's the great school that it is!

God Bless,

Mrs. Tracey Kobrin

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Principal

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