



# Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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November 4, 2022

Dear Hastings Community,

Today's letter comes from our Nation's capital, where I am supporting Amy Cazes and Phyllis Udice for two days of celebration of Hillside being named a National Blue Ribbon School.

## **Hillside Goes to Washington, D.C.!**

Ms. Cazes and Ms. Udice sent highlights and lessons from the program to the Hillside team this morning. Let me share excerpts from their update—it is valuable for all of us.

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## **Day One: General Session, Roundtable & Video from National Hall**

**Arlington Traditional School Chorus** - The General Session began with an amazing performance by the Arlington Traditional School Chorus from Arlington, V.A. They sang about unity, peace, and love. Here is a [short clip](#).

**Welcome from Educational Leaders** - We were welcomed by Adam Honeysett, Managing Director of the State and Local Division of the Office of Communications and Outreach in the U.S. Department of Education and other educational leaders who shared congratulatory remarks. Speeches included many comments about National Blue Ribbon Schools and why they are recognized. Below are the ones that resonated.

### **National Blue Ribbon Schools**

Are exemplary schools  
Model a path to excellence  
Have dedicated, passionate educators  
Put the needs of students first  
Have educators who show up to support kids  
Value and educate the whole child  
Show the courage to stimulate an attitude of  
curiosity  
Honor  
Achieve  
Tirelessly navigate through difficulties  
Provide an opportunity for all students to learn,  
thrive, and receive excellence in education  
Provide access and opportunity for each child  
Provide safe and supportive learning environments  
Know that every child matters

**Continuing to Grow Your Leadership** - This was a roundtable discussion where we were able to engage in dialogue with educators from around the country. It was reaffirming to learn that educators everywhere are grappling with the same challenges, recognizing that social-emotional wellness is a priority, and leading with love in an effort to build a home away from home for our children.

**National Mall Visit & Video** - We ended day one with a visit to the National Mall to create a [Greetings from D.C.](#) video for you.



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## **Day Two: NBRIS Recognition Ceremony and Luncheon**

**Recognition Luncheon** - Today, there is a 2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition Luncheon. As it turns out, Secretary of Education Miguel A. Cardona is home with COVID-19, so he will not be available to present us with the National Blue Ribbon Award. Not to worry, though. We invited him to our Kickoff Assembly on November 14th! Maybe he will come!

**Link to View Ceremony** - We anticipate that Hillside will be called to the stage to receive the National Blue Ribbon award and flag sometime between 2:30-3:30 PM today. [If you would like to view the ceremony, please use this link.](#)

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Ms. Cazes will be reporting to the Board of Education at Wednesday's meeting about the work to achieve National Blue Ribbon School status. She also will feature upcoming programs and events to celebrate the award and to extend lessons from

the Washington, D.C. conference.

## Final Word

Having traveled the domestic education world more than many, including many gatherings of the best educators, I can attest to these two days as a time in rarified air. The Hillside educational community earned a place at this pinnical of excellence and achievement.

Onward and upward we climb.

Be well.

*Bill*

William S. McKersie, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



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