



FAYETTEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

RAS earns prestigious Lighthouse distinction

Fayetteville, Tennessee, August 19, 2022 - Ralph Askins School has achieved a new level of success as a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School, the highest status awarded through the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, Inc.

The announcement was made last week via a phone call from Johnny Calder, assessor with Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, to Bill W. Hopkins, Jr., director of schools, who shared the call on speakerphone with the RAS faculty and administration.

"The honor of receiving Lighthouse distinction is a huge celebration for the entire community that loves and supports Ralph Askins Elementary School," said Tonja Whitenack, RAS principal. "This award was achieved by hard work, long hours, tireless dedication, and combating an ever-present pandemic. The love for our students is what kept us afloat and energized to continue the work of molding these young minds."

"The Blue Ribbon Schools process has been a catalyst driving competitive change within our schools," said Dr. Claudia Styles, supervisor with Fayetteville City Schools. "The process has encouraged schools to analyze and reflect on a variety of data sources. Having worked directly with this outstanding faculty, I had no doubt they would rise to the occasion."

Based on the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence assessment process, Ralph Askins School has met the required criteria in the nine performance areas of high-performing schools: Student Focus and Support; School Organization and Culture; Challenging Standards and Curriculum; Active Teaching and Learning; Technology and Integration; Professional Community; Leadership and Educational Vitality; School, Family, and Community Partnerships; and Indicators of Success.

"We are greatly honored to recognize such a deserving school working so diligently to fulfill the many learning needs of all students," wrote Judith Warden Fields, CEO, Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, in a letter of congratulations to Mrs. Whitenack.

Designation as a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School lasts for five years, at which time the school will be eligible for renewal, Fields explained. Blue Ribbon Lighthouse Schools commit to sharing expertise and exemplary practices with other schools on a local, regional, and national level, as well as providing mentoring and networking to schools seeking guidance and assistance in school improvement initiatives.

“What we learned during the BRSE process has been invaluable to our school,” Whitenack said. “I am so grateful for Johnny and Janet Calder for providing us with strategies to help our school with continued growth and success.

“I am extremely proud and deeply humbled to represent such a magnificent group of educators who work endlessly to educate our students in all ways,” she added. “Making Blue Ribbon Lighthouse status is an award that many schools seek and succeed. I am beyond delighted that Ralph Askins is among the schools that will be recognized on the same list.

“This is indeed a great time to be a RAS tiger!”

The award will be presented during the Blue Ribbon Schools Conference in Orlando, Fla., at Disney's Yacht and Beach Club Convention Center at the Awards Luncheon on Friday, Dec. 2.