

Edith Bowen Lab School Is Named One of the Best in the Nation | CEHS

11/30/2016

Every year the U. S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools—those that demonstrate that all students can achieve to high levels. In September 2016, U.S. Secretary of Education, John B. King, Jr., announced that Edith Bowen Laboratory School (EBLS) was named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School.

EBLS is a K-5 public charter school located on the campus of Utah State University and is a unit in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Edith Bowen Laboratory School is one of just two schools selected from the state of Utah for this honor in 2016. On November 29, EBLS hosted an unveiling of the National Blue Ribbon banner at an assembly with the students and teachers, which included a video compilation of the students created for the occasion. The students paid rapt attention during the ceremony and cheered wildly for their teachers during the unveiling ceremony. Students then released balloons with Dean Beth Foley and USU mascot Big Blue cheering them on.

When asked about their favorite part of attending EBLS, many students focused on special field trips, diverse ways to learn, and the fact that there are “no bullies at our school.” Their appreciation for their teachers was notable, as they reflected on the different specialists and “people who help us” at the school. Students and teachers alike showed particular enthusiasm for EBLS Director Dan Johnson, with whom they all seem to have a personal connection. Teachers appreciate the tools and autonomy given to them by Dr. Johnson. They are empowered to design their own lessons, work collaboratively, and put students first.

EBLS is a Title I school with 35% of the students on free and reduced lunch. In addition, 16% of the students at the school qualify for and receive special education services. “The faculty and staff value this diversity greatly,” said Dr. Johnson. “We are honored to be nationally recognized for

our commitment to fostering a diverse, interactive, and inviting school environment.”

“Nearly 250 pre-service teachers come to the school each year as part of the teacher education program at USU,” said Johnson. “They have the opportunity to see how powerful instructional practices influence learning on various levels in a typical school environment.” Master teachers at the school use a constructivist approach to teaching as they provide students exposure to a wide variety of learning options that are hands-on and inquiry based. Whether in the classroom or in the field, students are given the opportunity to engage with an experience, reflect upon it, form meaning, and then apply their learning to new or novel situations. “As a faculty, we are working diligently to skillfully guide Edith Bowen Laboratory School into the future,” Johnson said.

The National Blue Ribbon School flag gracing an entry or flying overhead is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning. Dr. Johnson and Laura Reina represented Edith Bowen at a two-day awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., to celebrate their hard-won achievements.





Laura Reina, Curriculum & Assessment Director; Dan Johnson, EBLIS Director; and Julie Moeller, Assistant Principal in Washington DC