

PRESS RELEASE

St. Francis Xavier Catholic School

Brunswick, GA

September 15, 2009

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan named St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, located in Brunswick, as a 2009 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School. The No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools award distinguishes and honors schools for helping students achieve at very high levels and for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap.

The No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels. The schools are selected based on one of two criteria:

- schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests; and
- schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests or in the case of private schools in the top 10 percent of the nation on nationally-normed tests.

Under No Child Left Behind, schools must make Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, in reading (language arts) and mathematics. Each state—not the federal government—sets its own academic standards and benchmark goals.

A total of 413 schools nationwide can be nominated. This number is determined based on the number of K-12 students and the number of schools in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The Chief State School Officer (CSSO) nominates public schools, and the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) submits private schools' nominations. The schools are invited by Secretary Duncan to submit an application for possible recognition as a No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School. This year's winners, 264 public and 50 private schools, will be honored at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. on November 3.

Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Francis Xavier Catholic School began as St. Joseph's School and was established in Brunswick in 1900. The mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph continues to be carried out by Miss Erin Mary Finn, principal, Sister Anna B. Kearns, CSJ, and a dedicated faculty and staff. Thus far, St Francis Xavier Catholic School is the only school in the Catholic Diocese of Savannah to have earned this honor.