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Pickens County school among 2008 Blue Ribbon award recipients

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EASLEY — East End Elementary School has been named a recipient of the prestigious 2008 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School award, one of only four schools in the state and 320 schools nationally to achieve that honor.

The award distinguishes and honors schools for helping students achieve at very high levels and for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap.

“We’re very honored and humbled,” said Principal Tammy Day. “We were working on doing the right thing, but now we all have the desire to do even better. We want to continue to exemplify what it means to be a Blue Ribbon School.”

Nominated to apply for the award last December by the South Carolina Department of Education, the East End staff completed the required application process and a panel of assessment experts reviewed applications last summer. Day was notified late in the summer that the panel had approved the school’s application, but that they had to still meet Adequate Yearly Progress requirements.

The school learned Oct. 1 that it had done just that, setting the stage for the Blue Ribbon award.

“What an outstanding honor and accomplishment this is for the entire East End community,” said Pickens County School Superintendent Lee D’Andrea. “The Blue Ribbon affirms the positive, progressive direction in which the school is moving as it makes student learning a priority.”

This year’s winners will be honored at an awards ceremony Oct. 20 and 21 in Washington, D.C. Fifth-grade teacher Phyllis Venable will accompany Day to the ceremony and, following their return, a school-wide celebration including a blue parade will take place Oct. 22. Children and guests will be asked to wear blue.

“We invite parents and community members to join us for the parade as we recognize the accomplishments of our students and teachers,” Day said. “This is a rare opportunity and we want the children to have a lifetime memory of what being a Blue Ribbon School means.”