

PRESS RELEASE
NOVEMBER 16, 2017

**ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR
2017 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON RECIPIENT
OUR LADY OF THE LAKE SCHOOL**



Pictured are (from left to right) Ben Ronquillo, Principal Of Our Lady Of The Lake School, Essex County Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold, and teachers Bethanne McNamara and Beth Grimes during the special presentation. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – On Wednesday, November 1, 2017, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored Our Lady of the Lake School, recipient of the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

On September 28, 2017, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos declared Our Lady of the Lake School in Verona, New Jersey, a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School for exemplary high performance. The school won its first National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award in 2011, and its 2017 win marks the second consecutive award for the school.

The school is ranked as one of the 50 private schools to earn the National Blue Ribbon School award from among over 120,000 schools nationwide. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U. S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools that demonstrate achievements at high levels. The National Blue Ribbon distinction is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning.

Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold sponsored and presented the school with the Board’s Commendation for receiving the award. She stated, “Receiving this award is very difficult, but receiving

it twice is very rare. As a retired schoolteacher, I can appreciate the hard work that goes into educating our children, and I commend the staff members, parents, and teachers for achieving this level of success.”

Teachers Bethanne McNamara and Beth Grimes along with Ben Ronquillo, Principal of Our Lady of the Lake School, accepted the Board’s Commendation, thanking Freeholder Sebold and the Board for their support. They were instrumental in overseeing the rigorous application process for the award.

Our Lady of the Lake School is committed to the Word of God through living out the Good News of Jesus Christ. The school is comprised of a supportive educational team of students, staff, parents, and community leaders that aim at providing a creative, Christian learning environment.

The school emphasizes developing students’ individual abilities, social awareness, and responsibility as contributing members of the church and society. The school strives to achieve a balance of scholastic, social, personal, artistic and physical programs and activities. The spirit of inquiry, intellectual achievement, the desire to learn and create, and the never-ending search for wisdom are the credible goals the school seeks to secure.

For Additional Information:
Medinah E. Muhammad, Public Information Officer
Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,
Newark, New Jersey, 07102
(973)-621-4452
mmuhammad@freeholders.essexcountynj.org