

N.M. Schools Get National Award

Honor Given For Strong Academics

By **JUAN CARLOS RODRIGUEZ**

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Four New Mexico schools have been awarded a prestigious national honor for outstanding academic performance.

Holy Ghost Catholic School in Albuquerque, Bluewater Elementary in Grants, Harrison H. Schmitt Elementary in Silver City and Valley View Elementary in Roswell

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HOLY GHOST PRINCIPAL NOREEN DUFFY COPELAND

received the 2009 Blue Ribbon School award, issued by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement, and that are helping close gaps in achievement among minority

and disadvantaged students.

Holy Ghost made the cut by scoring in the top 10 percent on national math and reading tests, according to principal Noreen Duffy Copeland. She said the school participates in the state's Strengthening Quality in Schools project, which helps kids monitor their own progress and set goals.

"I credit that project, our staff and their hard work, and

also our students," Copeland said. "We've been dreaming about achieving this level of excellence for years."

New Mexico Secretary of Education Veronica Garcia said in a statement that the other schools were recognized because they increased reading and math proficiency.

Bluewater Elementary had a 23-point increase in student reading and a 19-point change in math. Harrison H. Schmitt Elementary increased 11 points in reading and 29 points in math. Valley View Elementary saw a 12-point increase in reading and a 24-point increase in math.