



*For Immediate Release*

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**Walter Bracken STEAM Academy selected as Blue Ribbon School**  
*School is one of only 286 in the nation to receive this prestigious honor*

**LAS VEGAS** – Walter Bracken STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Academy has been chosen as one of a select few schools in the nation to receive the coveted 2013 Blue Ribbon National School designation from the United States Department of Education. In addition to being named a Blue Ribbon School, Bracken also received an additional honor in being one of only 26 schools that were designated as “exemplary high achieving.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that out of more than 130,000 schools in the nation, only 286 schools – 236 public and 50 private – were selected for the honor this year. Bracken STEAM Academy was the only school in Clark County and one of only three schools in Nevada that were selected this year for the award that recognizes schools that are either academically superior or have made dramatic gains in student achievement and helped close the gap in achievement among minority and disadvantaged students.

Duncan applauded the schools for their recognition by stating, “Excellence in education matters and we should honor the schools that are leading the way to prepare students for success in college and careers. National Blue Ribbon Schools represent examples of educational excellence and their work reflects the belief that every child in America deserves a world-class education.”

In order to be eligible for the Blue Ribbon School designation, a school must achieve in the top 10 percent of its state tests. It must also have at least 40 percent of its students from disadvantaged backgrounds demonstrate dramatic improvement on state tests.

“We are so honored to receive recognition for our innovative program that is helping our students to achieve,” said Principal Katie Decker. “This is truly an award that helps us show what a school can achieve with everyone working together. Our strong community partnerships, parents, students and awesome staff can be very proud.”

The school, located on the valley’s east side, serves 520 students. About 30 percent of the students have limited English proficiency and about 60 percent of the students qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. In spite of those additional challenges, Bracken is ranked in the top five percent of all Clark County School District (CCSD) elementary schools and received a Five Star rating on the state’s recently announced School Performance Framework

rankings.

Decker will represent the school during the Blue Ribbon Schools awards ceremony that will take place Nov. 18 in Washington D.C.

The selection of Bracken STEAM Academy marks the fourth consecutive year that a CCSD school has been named, following Vanderburg Elementary School last year; Advanced Technologies Academy and Bendorf Elementary School in 2011; and H.M. Smith Elementary School in 2010.

The school was named after Walter Bracken, a civil engineer who was one of the early settlers in the Las Vegas valley, arriving in 1901 to select a new route for the railroad. He also served as postmaster and worked on the development of water projects to help the development of the town from the turn of the century through the 1940s.

For more information about the Clark County School District, visit [ccsd.net](http://ccsd.net).

*(Editor's note: If you would like a color photo of students from the school representing its various programs, please contact David Roddy at [dbroddy@interact.ccsd.net](mailto:dbroddy@interact.ccsd.net).)*

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