

National Blue Ribbon School Award



Greenville Tech Charter High School (GTCHS) Principal Fred Crawford makes the rounds of classrooms to tell students about the school being named a National Blue Ribbon School.

Principal Fred Crawford made the announcement to his students a few minutes after the Education Department released the news. “Really it was your hard work and our teachers and staff that have made this possible, and I just wanted to congratulate you,” Crawford told students. “I think you can be proud of attending GTCHS and of all its accomplishments.”

South Carolina’s **Greenville Technical Charter High School** was chosen by the U.S. Department of Education as a **National Blue Ribbon** recipient. It is a model of excellence that other schools can emulate. Winners are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

“Congratulations to this wonderful school,” said State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex. “This award signifies success in making it possible for each and every student to succeed, and it shows that it has outstanding administrators, creative teachers and dedicated staff members.”

Official award ceremonies will take place in November in Washington, where about 300 national winners will receive Blue Ribbon School flags and engraved plaques as symbols of their success.

The National Blue Ribbon program was modified in 2001 to make selection criteria consistent with the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. In the new system, the USDE determines how many nominees each state can submit. The federal agency allowed South Carolina to nominate five schools that had to meet one of two criteria:

- Schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that show dramatic improvement in test scores to high levels in English Language Arts and mathematics.
- Schools, regardless of their demographics, that achieve in the top 10 percent of schools in the state.

All nominees had to have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, and also had to make AYP for the 2009-10 school year to be eligible for recognition.

Greenville Technical Charter High School (Greenville, SC)

Greenville Technical Charter High aims for a seamless transition from high school to higher education and the world of work. With an enrollment of 420 students in grades 9-12, the school offers an academically rigorous four-year program based on Mastery Learning. Many students earn enough credits to enroll in college courses as sophomores. The school's ability to offer individualized academic plans and academic assistance creates an opportunity for success for each student. Teachers use state-of-the-art technology and resources. The school expects parental involvement at a minimum of one hour per week, 50 hours of community service for every student each year, project-based learning that is competency-based, and a capstone senior project prior to graduation.

Thanks to its high level of student achievement and graduation rate, Greenville Tech Charter High has earned Excellent report card ratings for six consecutive years and Palmetto Gold Awards for the past five years. It was designated as one of the top 15 charter schools in the nation by the USDE. In 2007, the school was honored as a National Charter School of the Year by the Center for Education Reform and received a bronze award from US News & World Report as one of America's Best Public Schools in 2009.

The GTCHS school family gratefully acknowledges the support of Greenville Technical College and the Middle College National Consortium in helping to provide early college opportunities for our students.

More about the Class of 2010:

- Received \$8,422,374.00 in scholarship offerings
- 99% graduation rate
- 8 graduates received Associate's Degrees from Greenville Technical College
- 4 received dual Associate's Degrees

- Average college GPA of 3.25
- 51% of the class received 24 or more college credit hours
- 64 eligible for the SC Life Scholarship
- 11 offered the SC Palmetto Fellows Scholarships
- 1 National Merit Scholar
- 1 Coca-Cola Scholar
- 100% enrolled to attend college

“It’s really an awesome school,” said sophomore Ashlie Gibson. “The teachers are really nice, and they care more, and they help you out more.” The school offers students a chance to earn college credits while working on their high school diploma. More than half of the class of 2010 earned at least 24 college credit hours. The class had a 99 per-cent graduation rate, and the one student who didn’t graduate earned a GED and is enrolled at Greenville Technical College now.

The school’s small size — 420 students, compared to some of Greenville County’s high schools that have around 1,500 students — fosters closer relationships between students and teachers, which helps them follow individual academic plans, Crawford said. Students must show “mastery” of each subject, meaning they need to earn a score of at least 80 to pass. Senior projects and an extended school day also help the school, which has a student body that roughly mirrors the demographic makeup of the school district, to be a top achiever, Crawford said.

“There are a lot of things we do that could be done in any school,” he said. “But we just have the will to do it.”