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St. John's School Honored

This weekend, administrators from St. John's Lutheran School will accept an award in Washington, D.C., only given to 50 private schools in the country.

St. John's is the first private school in Bakersfield to receive the yearly Blue Ribbon School award.

"For us, it is obviously great to hear from the national education department that your school is performing at a high rate," said Patrice Appold, a first-grade teacher who organized the school's application.

The Blue Ribbon program started in 1982 and has been taken under the wing of the No Child Left Behind initiative, according to the government's Blue Ribbon Web site. Nationally, 320 schools were honored with 32 coming from California.

To receive the award, a public school must be in the top 10 percent on state tests while a private school must be in the top 10 percent nationally on one of the accepted tests. Schools with 40 percent of students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve on state tests can qualify. The last Bakersfield school to receive it was Stockdale Elementary School in 2000, Appold said.

She said four other schools also received it in the past.