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## Pierce Street Elementary named one of 100 National Distinguished Schools in U.S.

The Tupelo Public School District elementary school is one of only two schools in the state to receive the honor.

By BLAKE ALSUP Daily Journal  
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In this photo provided by the Tupelo Public School District, Pierce Street Elementary School teachers react to hearing that the school is one of just 100 in the country to be named a National Distinguished School by the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators in 2021.

COURTESY

**TUPELO** • Pierce Street Elementary School teachers gathered in the school's auditorium Tuesday afternoon for what they thought was a normal staff meeting.

But with a cake and balloons set up on a table at the front of the room, they knew something was amiss. Once the teachers were seated, Principal Amy Tate informed them that Pierce Street Elementary is one of just 100 schools in the country to be named a National Distinguished School by the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators in 2021.

The National Distinguished School award, which was created in 1996, is based on one of three categories: exceptional student performance and academic growth for two or more consecutive years, closing the achievement gap between student groups for two or more consecutive years and excellence in serving special populations of students like homeless, migrant or English learner students.

Pierce Street Elementary was selected because of the success of educational programs and student progress, Tate said.

"Because only two schools per state are honored, this award is not only prestigious for Pierce Street, but it is prestigious for the Tupelo Public School District as well," she said.

Cherokee Elementary School in Pascagoula is other Mississippi awardee.

Pierce Street will be formally recognized at a conference in New Orleans in February 2022.

"While being named a school of distinction for sustained academic achievement is humbling, it is certainly not surprising," Tate said. "Because as we know, unyielding expectations, a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to do what is right for all students are foundations of our belief system."

Tate encouraged her teachers to savor their achievement.

"Very few times in an educator's career does anyone turn back to say, 'Thank you,' much less to honor you with such a prestigious award," Tate said. "So be proud of yourselves, be proud of your school. Celebrate your work, the work of your colleagues and more importantly, simply enjoy this accomplishment."



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The National Association of ESEA State Program recognizes qualifying federally funded schools for the outstanding academic achievements of their students and highlights the efforts of schools across the country making significant improvements for their students.

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