

## EDUCATION

# Whittier celebrates Blue Ribbon status

*Kenney returns from D.C. with plaque, banner*

BY AMY KENT

Assistant Editor

CLINTON — Whittier Elementary School's September Blue Ribbon designation from the United States Department of Education was a crowning moment in Principal Brian Kenney's educational career.

When he traveled this week to Washington, D.C., to receive a plaque and Blue Ribbon banner from the U.S. Secretary of Education, it cemented the moment in history for the entire Clinton School District.

Kenney traveled with John Jorgensen, CCSD director of learning and collaboration, to the annual ceremony, where more than 300 schools from across the nation were not only honored with the designation, but celebrated for their success.

"It was a celebration of a lot of hard work by a lot of great educators," Kenney said. "It was a neat thing to be a part of." Though Kenney and Jorgensen were the only representatives from the Clinton School District, there were not alone in that celebration.

Students of Whittier Elementary School — a large reason they

SEE BLUE PAGE 4A



**Students in Laura Rose's fourth-grade class show off an award from the United States Department of Education dedicating the Blue Ribbon status of Whittier Elementary School in Clinton on Thursday.**

Submitted photo

**Article Continued Below**

See BLUE on Page A04

**BLUE**

**FROM PAGE 1A**

for the distinction, Kenney said — were able to watch the ceremony as well via a live stream in their classrooms. From what he was told by staff and faculty, Kenney said there were plenty of cheers and applause to be heard across the school when the Department of Education called Whittier's name.

"The whole school got to watch online," Kenney said. "The whole purpose of the ceremony was to have fun and celebrate this accomplishment so the (organizers) told us when we went on stage to do a little dance. I think the kids had fun watching that."

And the celebration doesn't end there. Following the September announcement, Kenney organized a pep assembly to announce the distinguished Blue Ribbon award, and next week he intends on having yet another.

This time around, the school will be dressed in matching blue T-shirts, donned with the U.S.

Department of Education Blue Ribbon seal, courtesy of the Parent-Teacher Association at Whittier.

Kenney feels that only symbolizes what he's always felt about the atmosphere of Whittier.

"We've got great parents here that we're blessed with, and like I said before, this is very much a 'we' accomplishment," Kenney said. "It's a celebration for staff, for the students, for parents —