Students and faculty of the Blanche Ely High School in Pompano Beach gathered to celebrate the school's new "A" rating from the state recently at the Broward County Commission meeting.

In honor of the school's achievement, Broward County District 9 Commissioner Dale Holness issued a proclamation declaring January 10, 2012, as "Blanche Ely High School Appreciation Day" in Broward County.

"You can feel the enthusiasm in the air as we get together to recognize the great work of Principal Karlton Johnson, the teachers, the students and the community support groups that have helped Blanche Ely High School achieve excellence," said commissioner Holness.

It's a school that, over time, has had its ups and its downs, but with the superb leadership of Principal Johnson and his team, they have been making steady advances."

Blanche Ely High School is noted for its medical and engineering magnet programs, vocational programs and LPN nursing program. The school also boasts a 96 percent rate of students attending four year universities after graduation. Currently, reports Principal Karlton Johnson, 200 students at Blanche Ely are dual enrolled in college courses.

"I call my teachers 'professional educators.' I call my students 'gifts,' our gifts of the future," said Principal Johnson. "This community takes a broad stance towards education. There is no other work, other than excellence...so that our children will have a life, a dream that will last a lifetime."

"Thank you for this opportunity to acknowledge us as being the only social economic disadvantaged school in the state of Florida to attain an A," said Principal Johnson.

Sixteen other Broward County high schools received an A rating from the state for the school

year. Blanche Ely High School and McArthur High in Hollywood were the only schools in this groups that improved from a C to an A rating.