

# **Annual Plan to the Public**

**Annual Plan to the Public: Media Report Fall 2008**

10/14/2008

Coordinated by Dr. Robert L. Clowers

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The Arkansas State Board of Education requires that each school district in Arkansas provide and publish, in a newspaper with general circulation in the district before November 15 of each school year, a report to the public. [Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools, State Board of Education, Revised Edition, January 10, 2000.] In order to meet the requirements of the Arkansas State Board of Education, a Media Report is provided to the Board, which will subsequently be used for general circulation in a published newspaper. The Media Report follows this page.

**Pulaski County Special School District  
Annual Plan to the Public: Media Report Fall 2008**

**To Our Patrons Throughout the Community:**

**The Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) is pleased to bring you our 2007-2008 report on our education plans and programs. The PCSSD Board of Education, faculty and staff continue to be committed to the mission and philosophy that students are the most important persons in the school setting.**

**We are pleased to report PCSSD continues to make great progress in student achievement, fiscal responsibility and improved facilities. Our focus on educational excellence and on-going opportunities to advance a results-oriented learning experience for all our students remains unmatched.**

**Please read the report and contact us if you have any questions, comments or suggestions.**

**Thank you.**

**James R. Sharpe  
Superintendent**

## **Board Philosophy and Mission**

The Pulaski County Special School District's (PCSSD; the District) philosophy of education goals and objectives was adopted by the Board in 1981 (see Board Policy Manual, Code ADA). Since that time, the District's goals and objectives have been revised twice, with the most recent Manual Adoption occurring on February 8, 2000. The Board has established goals to guide the administration in developing specific system-wide objectives to provide standards for a quality educational program. These goals and objectives are ongoing, and the District is in the continual process of implementing its stated goals and objectives based on its philosophy of education and its mission statement, stated as follows: Our mission, as an innovative education system, is to ensure academic excellence and to serve the unique needs of all learners.

## **PCSSD Strategic Plan:**

### **Shared Vision Statement:** *(Adopted by the Board July 9, 2008)*

Pulaski County Special School District is committed to creating a nationally recognized school district which assures that all students achieve at their maximum potential through the collaborative, supportive and continuous efforts of all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, support staff, families, students, communities, and businesses).

### **Shared Core Belief Statement:** *(Adopted by the Board July 9, 2008)*

When it comes to student learning in Pulaski County Special School District, we the stakeholders (teachers, administrators, support staff, families, students, communities, and businesses) believe that for all students to succeed:

- They must have a safe physical, social and emotional learning environment.
- All stakeholders of education must be actively involved.
- Curriculum, instruction and learning opportunities must be diverse, engaging and developmentally appropriate.
- Schools should be communities of learning where all teachers and staff do whatever it takes to assure all students learn.
- All decisions must be data-driven.

### **Strategic Goals 2008-2011:** *(Adopted by the Board September 9, 2008)*

- The district will assure all schools are safe, orderly and quality learning environments as measured by a 4 out of 5 [ranking] on the Safe, Orderly and Quality School Rubric by May 31, 2011.
- The district will assure all schools meet NCLB AYP criteria by May 31, 2011.
- The district will build and maintain strong family and community partnerships that are actively involved in supporting student learning as measured by a 30% increase at all schools of family and community actively involved in their schools by May 31, 2011.
- The district will build and maintain a capacity of strong educational leaders through a systemic leadership development process as measured by a 10% increase in qualified candidates for leadership positions in the district by May 31, 2011.
- The district will recruit the highest quality staff possible as measured by an increase of 10% in applications by qualified applicants for professional positions by May 31, 2011.

- The district will use its fiscal resources in the most efficient and effective manner as measured by meeting or exceeding the projected fiscal surplus at the end of each year.
- The district will maintain quality facilities as measured by all schools scoring a four out of five on the Safe, Orderly and Quality School Rubric by May 31, 2001.
- The district will improve communications with all stakeholders as measured by a 10% increase in satisfaction each year on the Stakeholder Communications Survey.

### **Accreditation Standards**

In the 2007-08 school year, the Arkansas Department of Education will complete a standards assurance review for the District's schools. The District exceeds the minimum standards for accreditation in all but one school; Northwood Middle School has taken corrective action in order to achieve accreditation (see Accreditation Status Announcement below). Every PCSSD school strives to meet standards by analysis of data to include Formative Evaluation Process for School Improvement (FEPSI) and state mandated testing (criterion reference test & norm reference test) in order to address areas of concern through the School Action Plan. All PCSSD schools plan for school improvement using the Arkansas Consolidated School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) process with guidance from the district and Arkansas Department of Education.

### **Facilities Planning**

In 1999, the PCSSD Board authorized a comprehensive study of all facilities in the District. This study is used by the District to prioritize repairs, construction and other projects. A new elementary school was opened in Chenal for the 2008-2009 school year. The District is continuing the process of bringing all District schools in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. All schools are continually being repaired and upgraded to provide the type of appropriate atmosphere and environment that will assist learning.

### **Desegregation Plan 2000/Education Plan**

On March 21, 2000, the Federal Court approved the District's revised desegregation plan, Plan 2000. The District continues to operate under this plan. Plan 2000 includes programs and strategies that directly address Education Plan Goals. These goals focus on student achievement, attendance, reduction of discipline problems/classroom disruptions, and academic remediation/enrichment. The Education Plan incorporates a total-school process, which engages each school in an annual self-study with the objective of improving student achievement and discipline. All District schools participate in this process.

### **Staff Development**

Staff Development is committed to providing ongoing, meaningful training to support teaching and learning. Staff Development provides all Certified Staff with 60 hours of professional development, which includes the following: six hours of instructional technology; three hours of Parent Involvement Training for administrators and two hours for teachers, and two hours of Arkansas History. Required and funded by the ADE is the Pathwise Mentoring Program where novice teachers are paired with trained mentors. This program allows the novice teachers the opportunity to receive their Standard License within the state-mandated three-year period. The

emphasis of all staff development training will be to provide teachers with the necessary tools to raise student achievement.

### **Learning Services**

The PCSSD's Division of Learning Services seeks to provide leadership, resources and support to the PCSSD learning community for the purpose of increasing student achievement in an ever-changing technological society. Learning Services collaborates with the District-wide Instructional Management System (IMS) to fulfill this mission. Learning Services also assists school personnel in implementing the PCSSD Board and the Superintendent's adopted Action Plan 2008-2009, Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP), No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates, and the Desegregation Plan 2000. Support in the form of staff development is ongoing with a focus on vertical teaming, data analysis, identification of gaps in curriculum, academic coaching and research-based strategies that target at-risk and ethnic minority students.

### **Home School Counseling**

The Home School Counseling program (a part of the District's Plan 2000) consists of 12 counselors/consultants (four home-school counselors at the secondary level and eight home-school consultants at the elementary level). Creating a better school-to-home relationship is a major goal. Counselors/consultants identify students each semester based on low grades, test scores, poor attendance and behavior. They work with these students individually at school and make visits in the home with their parents. Home school counselors/consultants are instrumental in assisting families with basic needs including food, uniforms, shelter, eyeglasses, school supplies and transportation. The counselors/consultants also provide parent workshops, basic skills tutoring for students and community outreach, and serve as a liaison to outside referral agencies. When students come to school ready to learn they perform better in the classroom. Similar activities and efforts are underway or planned for the 2008-2009 school year.

### **Elementary Education**

There are now 24 elementary schools in the District (with the addition of Chenal Elementary in fall 2008). There is also a Pre-K Center at the former Adkins Elementary School in Jacksonville. All of the elementary schools have developed ACSIP plans to focus on raising student achievement. For school improvement, each elementary school analyzed data and then selected strategies to meet the needs of their unique student population. Accelerated Reader, Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas (ELLA), and Effective Literacy are at various stages of implementation in all schools. There are also two elementary schools that were awarded a Reading First Grant in 2006-07 and are in the third year of implementation. These programs are aimed at raising reading achievement. Our schools use a Standards Based math curriculum and supplement instruction with initiatives to increase higher-order thinking skills and writing in math. Additionally, teachers and math coaches are given the opportunity to train in state supported professional development to include Cognitively Guided Instruction, Math Links, and Math Coaches Training. All elementary schools will continue an emphasis on writing across the curriculum. These schools employ specialists in literacy and/or math to provide on-going coaching for the teachers in research-based strategies to improve learning. Elementary schools are using formative assessment as a tool to guide teaching of the state standards.

## **Secondary Education**

There are 13 secondary schools and one alternative school in the District. All secondary schools have developed school improvement plans to monitor and improve student achievement following the PCSSD Desegregation Plan 2000, and utilizing the FEPSI and ACSIP school improvement planning process. In addition, the secondary schools are reviewed and accredited by the North Central Association. The middle schools include grades six through eight, with the middle school core team consisting of language arts, math, science and social studies for these grades. Three secondary schools are implementing America's Choice school-wide improvement design and one middle school is implementing the International Baccalaureate Middle Years program. There are also two gender-specific middle schools in their second year of implementation. The Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST) Lab program, which offers students hands on project-based learning, has been expanded at the secondary level. Several high schools have partnered with local universities to offer concurrent credit. All secondary schools have instructional coaches who support teaching and learning in the classroom. In order to address identified areas of concern, additional coaching models have been implemented using Literacy Now, the Johnson, Bailey, Henderson, and McNeel Education Group (JBHM) Math, Math Coaches Training, and Formative Assessment. Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre AP offerings continue to be expanded utilizing technology when appropriate. Students also have the opportunity to meet course requirements through alternative avenues such as The Learning Academy and Cyber Academy, which is credit recovery only.

## **Accreditation Status Announcement for the 2007-08 School Year**

As required by Arkansas Code 6-15-208, the district is publishing the following accreditation information for the 2007-08 school year: Northwood Middle School was cited for probation due to a teacher teaching outside of their certification area; the situation has been remedied by the teacher adding the appropriate certification to their Arkansas teaching license for the 2008-2009 school year.

## **National School Lunch Act**

The District also receives funds through the National School Lunch Act based on the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch. These monies are allocated for supplemental services at the secondary level for identified students who are underachieving as measured on the Benchmark Exams, End-of-Course Algebra and Geometry, Biology, and Grade 11 Literacy Exams. Innovative programs are supported such as the summer program, Transition Camp, for identified incoming 6th grade students and 9th grade students, technology, and 9th grade learning community. Additional services are provided through home school counselors, nurses, alternative learning, interpreters, academic coaches and professional development in identified areas such as research based intervention strategies.

## **Federal Programs**

Federal Title I funds for school improvement are assigned to elementary schools in the PCSSD based on the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch at each site. School communities establish a school improvement committee composed of administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and community representatives. The ACSIP model, FEPSI, and state mandated testing results are used to address improvements in the focus areas of literacy and mathematics. The

data analysis is used to identify individual student and students groups who are underachieving. This analysis of data is also used to identify possible gaps in areas of the curriculum. Research-based school-wide programs are then chosen and implemented at the school using Title I funds to improve instruction and student achievement. Parent/student/teacher compacts are designed at each Title I school to support the student achievement initiatives. At present, 21 elementary schools in PCSSD receive Title I funds. Title II A funds are used to employ eight class-size reduction teachers in K-3. These funds are also used to provide professional development to maintain highly qualified teachers and administrators.

### **Financial Overview**

While the Pulaski County Special School District has faced a number of financial challenges in recent years, we have never lost sight of our mission to ensure academic excellence for the 18,000 students and their families we serve. The 2005-2006 school year gave us the opportunity to restore the district to a sound financial position, and that effort has successfully continued into the 2007-08 school year. The administration and staff have worked diligently with the Board of Education and the Arkansas Department of Education to monitor revenues and expenditures to ensure that top-quality education is provided in the most cost-effective manner. As a result of our efforts, the financial health of the Pulaski County Special School District is greatly improved and continues to move toward a fiscally sound and healthy position. Our operating fund balance has remained steady over the past three years.

### **School Board Members Service Hours**

Act 1775 of 2005, is codified in Arkansas Code Annotated 6-13-629. Serving board members are required to receive six (6) hours of training during each calendar year of their continuing service. When board members are newly elected, or go back on the board after a break in service, they must receive nine (9) hours of training by December 31 of the year following their election. They are required to receive six (6) hours each calendar year thereafter. All regularly elected PCSSD School Board members met the required state hours of training for 2007: Shana Chaplin (3 hours); Danny Gilliland (25 hours); Pam Roberts (6 hours); Mildred Tatum (24.5 hours); William Vasquez (8 hours) Gwen Williams (26.25 hours); and Charlie Wood (12.5 hours).

### **For More Information**

For more information or for a copy of the District's 2007-2008 Annual Report, contact the Pulaski County Special School District, Director of Educational Accountability, 925 East Dixon Road, Little Rock, Arkansas 72206, or phone 501-490-6269. (An electronic copy of this Media Report may be obtained by downloading it from [www.pcssd.org](http://www.pcssd.org).)