

10-9-2007

**Annual Plan to the Public:
Media Report Fall 2007**

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 2007**

To Our Patrons Throughout the Community:

The Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) is pleased to bring you our 2006-2007 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.

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 three schools. The schools, Jacksonville High School, Mills University Studies High School, and Fuller Middle School, have taken corrective action in order to achieve accreditation. 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 ADE.

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 middle school was recently completed in Maumelle. The District is continuing the process of bringing all District schools in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The District is now in the process of building a new elementary school in the fast-growing Chenal Valley area on Denny Road. 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, a new Plan 2000 was given approval by the Federal Court. The District continues to operate under this plan. Plan 2000 is intended to meet the educational interventions required by the PCSSD Desegregation Case Settlement. The plan encompasses a total-school process, which engages each school in a self-study with the outcome of improving educational achievement and discipline for all students. Plan 2000 is part of a comprehensive plan that includes increased educational achievement for all students, individual School Action Plans, ACSIP (state evaluation) and North Central requirements (for secondary schools). All of the District's 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 2007-2008, 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 14 counselors/consultants (six 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 2007-2008 school year.

Elementary Education

There are 23 elementary schools in the District. There is also a Pre-K Center at the former Adkins Elementary School in Jacksonville. All of these schools have developed ACSIP plans to focus on raising student achievement. For school improvement, each 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 second 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 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.

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 Cyber Academy and The Learning Academy.

Accreditation Status Announcement for the 2006-07 School Year

As required by Arkansas Code 6-15-208, the district is publishing the following accreditation information on three schools for the 2006-07 school year: 1) Fuller Middle School: probationary status due to one teacher not certified to teach Physical Education; corrective action taken at FMS: all physical education teachers are certified or on an additional licensure plan. 2) Jacksonville High School: probationary status due to findings that not all 38 required units were offered; specifically, Integrated Algebra B did not count towards the 38 required units that were offered; corrective action taken at JHS: all 38 required units are now offered; and 3) Mills High School: probationary status due to findings that not all 38 required units were offered; specifically, a) Integrated Algebra B did not count towards the 38 required units that were offered; b) one teacher was not certified to teach Spanish; and c) one teacher was not approved to teach an advanced placement course; corrective action taken at MHS: all 38 required units are now offered and are taught by certified teachers or teachers on an additional training plan.

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, 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 thirteen class size reduction teachers in K-2. 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 begin to restore the district to a sound financial position. 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 increased 17% over the past two 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 2006: Gwen Williams (14.25 hours); James Bolden (6 hours); Danny Gilliland (7 hours); Pam Roberts (6 hours); Mildred Tatum (10 hours); Charlie Wood (6 hours).

For More Information

For more information or for a copy of the District's 2006-2007 Annual Report, contact the Pulaski County Special School District, Office of Communications, 925 East Dixon Road, Little Rock, Arkansas 72206, or phone 501-490-6203. (An electronic copy of this Media Report may be obtained by downloading it from www.pcssd.org or by contacting the Office of Educational Accountability at 501-490-6269.)