

# **PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER THREE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC**

**September 15, 2009**

This report to the general public, in care of the Board of Directors, serves as an overview of the 2008-2009 school year, with the current status and expectations for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year.

### **OVERVIEW STATEMENT**

The Pine Bluff School District is dedicated to ensuring that all of its students achieve at maximum potential in an environment that is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning and which is staffed by caring, considerate, and highly qualified educators, as well as well-trained security personnel. The district has recorded a growth in academic performance over the past years in many areas with the state-required CRT but must continue to focus each year on meeting the adequate yearly progress (AYP) as set forth by the Arkansas Department of Education. The faculty, administrators, and district as a whole have embarked on the mission of leaving no child behind, a commitment which is evident throughout the district.

### **DISTRICT REVIEW**

The district operates ten school sites, plus a four-year-old program (George Washington Carver Preparatory Preschool, located at the former Forrest Park Elementary

School) and an alternative program (First Ward Learning Center). All ten school sites are accredited by the North Central Association. A very detailed ACSIP (Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan) plan focusing on improving student achievement at each school site is in place to guide the schools by state guidelines each year, and all of these plans incorporate the numerous research-based strategies that have been implemented district-wide to improve student achievement. In addition, these plans incorporate the recommendations made by the Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Learning Services' Scholastic Audit Unit. The district is dedicated to meeting the challenges as set forth by big businesses and corporations to be accountable, transparent, and cognizant of the choice options parents have. Additionally, the district and schools have adopted a parental involvement plan required by Act 397 to enhance school, parent, and community relations as they endeavor to accomplish the goals of improving students' achievement in literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as the district's attendance and graduation rates. Each school has identified a parent facilitator to organize and manage the parent involvement project.

## **STUDENT PERSONNEL / ENROLLMENT**

A detailed chart of enrollment trends in the district is included in this report. It should be noted that the enrollment continues to decrease. This decrease impacts the amount of state aid the district receives based on average daily membership. The higher minority (black) and lower majority (white) percentages of the total student population continue the trend of the past several years. The latest enrollment count (September 11, 2009) is

as follows: approximately 97% minority, approximately 2% majority, and 1% other with a total of 4,861 students. These are unofficial approximate numbers.

An enrollment projection done by the Arkansas Department of Education predicted a decline of approximately one hundred students per year through the 2003-2004 school year. The fact is that we have lost approximately twelve hundred (1,200) students in the last six years. This year's figures place the decrease at an approximate one hundred twenty-five (125) student loss.

## **PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**

The district plans to enter into an agreement with The Learning Institute (TLI) in an effort to provide teachers with strategies and tools which can increase student achievement. The Learning Institute provides comprehensive curriculum and technical support to assist school districts with implementation of their assessment systems. TLI maintains a team of curriculum specialists, software developers, trainers, researchers, and technical support staff all dedicated to supporting district staff as they work to improve student achievement. The district will continue with its agreement with Q-Write which generates standards-based writing prompts to evaluate students' writings in the areas of math, literacy, and science. The writing prompts are hand-graded by Q-Write using the same rubric applied to state assessments.

The district will continue to offer its students a comprehensive reading initiative (K-12) which includes the Houghton Mifflin basal reading series, the Discover Intensive Phonics (a phonemic awareness program), and the HEC Reading Horizon systems. In addition, the district will be implementing a Comprehensive Literacy Model in grades

K-5. This initiative will provide a model classroom at each grade level on each of the six (6) campuses. It will also provide a district literacy lab, housed at the Jordan-Chanay Administrative Center, that will be used for professional development to support this initiative.

During the 2008-09 school year, the district partnered with JBHM to provide support to Pine Bluff High School and Jack Robey Junior High School. This 2009-2010 school year, the district will extend its partnership to include all K-5 schools and the two middle schools. JBHM is a data-driven school performance system that is designed to emphasize four essential practices for effective instructional leadership—guaranteeing an essential curriculum, providing a culture and climate conducive to learning, maximizing academic learning time, and monitoring student achievement. The consultants will work directly with the schools' principals on these essential practices and provide frequent feedback to central office personnel for monitoring and support.

In accordance with state laws, Acts 1108 and 1382 of 1999, and the components of ACTAAP, the district continues to utilize the Arkansas Pathwise Mentoring Model. To date, the district has twenty-six (26) teachers who have been recalibrated as Pathwise mentors. For this school year, all twenty-six (26) of these mentors are being utilized to work with novice teachers new to the district.

The George Washington Carver Preparatory Preschool is staffed by nine (9) P-4 certified teachers and nine (9) highly qualified instructional assistants who provide curriculum and instruction that is standards-based and aligned to the Arkansas Early Childhood Frameworks. The students are also served in the computer lab each day and work on software that focuses on building readiness skills for pre-school children.

Carver now services approximately 180 students with the goal of continuing to expand the student enrollment. The school received an Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Grant in the amount of \$388,800.00. This allowed the district to prepare more students for kindergarten.

The mentoring partnership that the Pine Bluff School District and community have enjoyed in past years continues to grow. Community partners and businesses are invaluable in their support of programs such as Volunteers In Public Schools (VIPS), Helping One Student To Succeed (HOSTS), and the vocational work-related programs. Volunteers, parents, and civic and social organizations are more involved and are making a positive contribution in impacting the lives of children.

The district will continue to utilize the Mastery Math Learning Program which is being used by all teachers at Pine Bluff High School, Jack Robey Junior High School, and First Ward Learning Center who teach pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry. This program enables students to have a complete understanding and mastery of concepts before they move forward in the curriculum. The success of this program has been evidenced by an increase of proficient and advanced students in the areas of algebra and geometry on the state-mandated End-of-Course Exam.

The district continues to employ three (3) mathematics coaches for grades K-5 to support the implementation of math initiatives for improved student achievement, three (3) science coaches for grades K-5 to assist science teachers in incorporating new instructional strategies, and six (6) literacy coaches for grades K-5 to work with content-area teachers to establish continuity with instructional practices and expectations. In addition, the district has one (1) district literacy coordinator, one (1) literacy

coach/instructional facilitator for the two (2) middle schools and one (1) literacy coach/instructional facilitator for Jack Robey Junior High School to coordinate school-wide literacy initiatives and provide teachers with technical assistance.

The faculty will continue with their efforts of making standards-based instruction a goal of daily lessons. Teachers will utilize their newly-designed lesson plans to remain on target for teaching all standards with rigor and relevance. Teachers will also use structured teacher planning time to organize strategies for reaching goals for each nine weeks.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education ACT of 2004, the Pine Bluff School District's Special Education Department provides a free, appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities and supports student learning in the least restrictive educational setting. This department strives to meet the requirement of assessing at least ninety-five percent of its students with disabilities through regular state-wide/district-wide assessment, with or without accommodations, or through an alternate portfolio assessment method to determine the level of progress the students with disabilities are making in the general curriculum.

The Special Education Department utilizes the Diana Browning Wright Behavior Intervention model to assist campus staff in managing inappropriate student behavior. This enhances academic achievement of low performing students, including the children who are more difficult to motivate and teach through the traditional methods.

The PBSD Special Education Department continues to utilize the district's academic intervention initiatives to improve student achievement of the struggling learner. One of the most successful initiatives for these students with disabilities is the Jedi Learning Initiative, which is a web-based delivered basic skills tutorial program with emphasis on improvement in reading, math, and language arts and which is aligned with the Arkansas Frameworks and the ACTAAP assessment. This initiative will be utilized on all of the district's campuses. The software with this program is designed to provide diagnostic and prescriptive teaching that allows teachers to identify students' academic weaknesses quickly and then assign individualized instruction to remediate these deficiencies and to monitor student progress regularly.

## **REMEDICATION REGULATIONS AND PROGRAMS**

As required by the Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program and Academic Distress Program, "beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, a) students identified as failing to achieve at the proficient level on the State 2004-2005 or any subsequent mandated CRT (as referenced in Section 6.03 tables: Mathematics Criterion Referenced Assessments, Benchmarks, raw score points and Literacy Criterion Referenced Assessments, Benchmarks, raw score points, etc.); b) students in Grade K scoring delayed on either written language or oral communications and scoring delayed in mathematics on the state mandated uniform readiness screening (as referenced in Section 3.36 and 3.37 Uniform Readiness Screening); and c) students in Grades 1, 2, and 3 not scoring proficient on the state mandated NRT (as referenced in Section 6.02 tables, Mathematics Norm Referenced

Assessment standard score cut score and Reading Norm-Referenced Assessment standard score cut score), shall be evaluated by school personnel, who shall jointly develop, a remediation plan with the student's parents. The remediation plan (AIP or if appropriate IRI) will assist the student in achieving the expected standard and will describe the parent's role and responsibilities as well as the consequences for the student's failure to participate in the plan.

Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, students in Grades three through eight, identified for an AIP who do not participate in the remediation program shall be retained. The local district shall determine the extent of the required participation in remediation as set forth in the student academic improvement plan.

Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, students not proficient on the End-of-Course tests or on the high school Literacy test, shall participate in a remediation program to receive credit for the corresponding course.”

To comply with these rules and regulations, the Pine Bluff School District, provides a remediation period for grades 6-12 that focuses on mathematics and literacy skills utilizing the A+ Courseware, which is a research-based computer software program. For students in grades 3 – 5, an FOS intervention block is used as a means of remediation.

## **MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides “Stimulus” monies for schools and organizations to boost the economy. The Pine Bluff School District has made application for and received conditional approval to use the funding allocated to the district. The Pine Bluff School Board of Education approved the plan June 30, 2009. The

funding amounts allocated to the district from the three funding sources are:

1. Stabilization Funds—\$6,822,435.00
2. Title I—\$2,735,753.00
3. IDEA, B—\$1,408,125.00

The projects in this plan are dedicated to the four goals of College and Career Ready Preparation, Data-Driven Programs or Processes, Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution of Highly Qualified Teachers, and Intensive Support and Effective Interventions. Some of the projects include renovations and modernizations to various campus sites to include the Pine Bluff High School Little Theater and the Trice Building, the purchase of a new bus for special needs students, and an infusion of technology into to every classroom in the district to include SMART Boards, classroom computers, and Classroom Performance Systems.

The plan was outlined and presented for the public during the Open House held at the Frank Anthony Administration Center on June 30, 2009. An overview of the stimulus plan is available by contacting the district.

After the renovation of the old AP&L building was completed, the administrative staff moved their offices to this location on the first of April. Shortly after, the Board of Education voted to rename the building the Frank Anthony Administrative Center.

All certified staff members in the district were provided an opportunity during the 2008-2009 school year to complete their six (6) state-required technology hours by using Arkansas Ideas, a web-based software that enables teachers to become proficient in basic computer skills which will allow them to meet the continuous demands for technological

skills. Arkansas Ideas allows teachers to receive training in the most basic to advanced skills.

Even though every school in the district showed a percentage increase of proficient and advanced students on the state-mandated Benchmark and EOC exams, Broadmoor Elementary and W.T. Cheney Elementary were the only two schools to make AYP.

The district again received the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) grant totaling \$388,800.00 for the 2009-2010 school year. These funds will allow the district to continue its efforts to provide a solid readiness foundation for four-year-old pre-school children.

The Pine Bluff School District offers a number of additional programs aimed at improving student achievement to its students during the regular school year and summer months. These opportunities include: before-school, lunch, and after-school tutorial sessions, summer school, the College Preparatory Enrichment Program, the Mastery Learning Math Summer School, night school, and trailer courses.

## **MAINTENANCE AND TRANSPORTATION**

The district has continued to upgrade all of its facilities by making general preventive maintenance and end-of-life cycle repairs. During the summer of 2008, the district installed a new HVAC system at Belair Middle School— a \$1.5 million dollar project.

During the 2008-2009 school year, renovation was finalized at the Frank Anthony Administrative Center at an approximate cost of \$1.2 million dollars (purchase and repairs). During the summer of 2009, a new HVAC system was installed at Pine Bluff High School (Trice) at a cost of \$1.3 million dollars and a new roof installed on the Trice

Building at a cost of \$140,000. Other projects such as asphalt installation, major painting projects district-wide, renovation of the Pine Bluff High School Little Theater, to name a few, were completed during the summer of 2009 as well.

In the Transportation Department, there is a continued effort to recruit and train prospective, reliable bus drivers. Several bus routes have been eliminated by combining and rerouting. The district has purchased a bus routing software package for more efficient and timely service to our students. Also, ten (10) surveillance cameras have been purchased to rotate from bus to bus. Most importantly is the fact that the district implemented a bus replacement practice. Over the last ten (10) years, approximately \$1,785,000 has been spent for bus purchases without incurring any debt! Two additional buses were purchased this year—one (1) seventy-two (72) passenger bus and one (1) twenty-one (21) passenger handicapped bus.

## **FINANCE AND BUDGET**

Strategies are continually being implemented to improve the financial status of this school district. On May 9, 2000, the State Department removed the district from the classification of Fiscal Distress Phase I. Enrollment in the district continues to decline—**approximately two thousand (2,000) students during a ten-year period**. This decrease impacts the revenue coming to the district. However, the district is working to help control expenditures (teacher salary fund) through attrition and retirement notices while at the same time complying with the state standards. The district has reduced the total certified FTE's each year.

During the 2008-2009 school year, total revenues were \$41,599,166; and total expenditures were \$41,118,697. The district's expenditures did not exceed its revenues.

For the current year, the Pine Bluff School District has projected revenues of \$41,000,000 and projected expenditures of \$41,000,000 which will leave the district in a break-even mode for the current year.

However, the recent loss of two thousand (2,000) students within a ten-year period continues to have a detrimental impact on the financial stability of the district.

### **COCA-COLA CONTRACT REVENUE / EXPENDITURES**

During the 2008-2009 school year, the Pine Bluff School District received \$12,021.00 from commission and sales. The expenditures from this category were \$22,600.00. These expenditures were for textbooks, field trips, athletic trips (chartered buses), educational materials and supplies, and band equipment and trips.

### **SCHOOL BOARD TRAINING**

As mandated in ACA 6-13-629, school board members are required to obtain at least six (6) hours of training and instruction each year. The training hours obtained by each board member are reported to the district by the Arkansas School Boards Association each calendar year. The training hours obtained by each board member during this reporting period are as follows: David Brown, Zone 5, has received a total of twenty (20) hours of in-service credit; Laura Brown, Zone 6, received a total of thirty-four and three-fourths (34.75) hours of in-service credit; Jimmy Fisher, Zone 1, received a total of

seventy-four and one-fourth (74.25) hours of in-service credit; Herman Horace, Zone 3, received a total of thirty-two (32) hours of in-service credit; W. R. Norful, Sr., Zone 2, received a total of eight (8) hours of in-service credit; and Tyra Tyler-Johnson, Zone 4, received a total of twenty-seven (27) hours of in-service credit.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Arkansas' new Smart Accountability System has a plan that utilizes six overall categories when determining the improvement status for each school in the state:

- Achieving Schools—Schools that meet standards.
- Targeted Improvement Schools—Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for 25 percent or fewer groups and do not miss the AMO for combined population resulting in school improvement years one through three (1-3). TI-1, TI-2, and TI-3 Corrective Action
- Whole School Improvement Schools—Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for combined population and/or more than 25 percent or groups resulting in school improvement years one through three (1-3). WSI-1, WSI-2, WSI-3 Corrective Action
- Targeted Intensive Improvement Schools—Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for 25 percent or

fewer groups and do not miss the AMO for combined population resulting in school improvement for four (4) or more years. TII-4, TII-5: Restructuring

- Whole School Intensive Improvement Schools—Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy and miss the AMO for combined population and/or more than 25 percent groups resulting in school improvement for four (4) or more years. WSII-4, WSII-5: Restructuring
- State-directed Improvement Schools—Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in math and/or literacy after TI-5 or WSII-5.

After receiving the district’s 2008-2009 assessment results, the following improvement status has been determined for each of the district’s schools. Broadmoor Elementary and W.T. Cheney Elementary are the only two (2) schools that have been deemed “Achieving Schools.” Greenville Elementary and Southwood Elementary have been placed in “Whole School Improvement -1” (WSI-1), and Southeast has been placed in “Whole School Improvement-2” (WSI-2). Oak Park Elementary and Belair Middle School have been placed in “Whole School Intensive Improvement-5R” (WSII-5R), and Thirty-Fourth Avenue Elementary has been placed in “Whole School Intensive Improvement-4R” (WSII-4R). Last, Pine Bluff High School has been placed in “State-directed Improvement-6” (SD-6), while Jack Robey Junior High School has been placed in “State-directed Improvement-7” (SD-7). We recognize the need for improvement and plan to continue to implement strategies and programs such as “Test, Target, and Teach,” comprehensive standards-based literacy and math instruction, The Learning Institute, and JBHM. These programs provide an opportunity for teachers to utilize power-essential standards daily as well as give interim standards-based assessments to evaluate students’

progress toward meeting state standards. Additional initiatives which include MAX Teaching, A+ Courseware, Kids College, Q-Write, Houghton Mifflin, Reading Horizon, Mastery Learning Math, extended day, scheduled remediation periods, and before-school, at lunch, and after-school tutorial programs will be incorporated into the school schedule. Positive gains have been documented, and continued growth is expected from our use of all improvement strategies throughout the curriculum. Our primary focus for raising student achievement is to “assess, analyze, and act” in a timely manner to be assured of improved student achievement.

The district plans to continue its efforts to provide for child wellness, safety and security, enrollment marketing, financial stability, and employee productivity and morale. We must be totally aware of the detrimental impact that losing twelve hundred (1,200) students in a six-year period has on the district, and we must understand the burden this places on the district’s financial stability now and in future years. It is the district’s continued philosophy that if better is possible—good is not enough. **School improvement is a continuous process...There is no finish line.**