



Rogers Public Schools

SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC 2013

Thanks to an outstanding staff and supportive community, Rogers Public Schools offers an excellent education for more than 14,700 students, and I am pleased to share some of the highlights from the 2012-13 school year as part of the Annual Report. In Rogers, we are truly committed to our mission to provide an environment of educational excellence where all belong, all learn, and all succeed. We are in full compliance with the Standards for Accreditation for Arkansas Public Schools and also those of the North Central Accreditation Association for our high schools.

We had many outstanding student and staff accomplishments in 2012-13 that highlight the quality of our schools including:

- A new National Blue Ribbon School (Russell D. Jones Elementary was selected in 2012-13 and Bellview in 2011-12.)
- The Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership
- 98 teachers with national board certification
- 222 AP Scholars
- Six schools recognized by the National Center for Educational Achievement as high performing schools
- Six schools with Outstanding Educational Performance Awards from the University of Arkansas' Office of Educational Policy
- Kirksey -the state's First Diamond School to Watch – was renewed for the third time as a model of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness and organization and social equity
- State champions in tennis (RHS girls), indoor track (HHS boys) track and field (HHS boys), and cross country (HHS girls), and the Arkansas Cross Country Runner of the Year – Maggie Montoya
- 11 students selected for Arkansas Governor's School
- The Arkansas High School Assistant Principal of the Year
- 4 National Merit finalists
- Arkansas Business Teacher of the Year (middle level)
- State Special Education Administrator of the Year
- 14 seventh-graders recognized for exceptional ACT scores by the Duke Talent Identification Program
- Graduates who accepted over \$10.6 million in scholarships
- 2 high schools ranked among the Top 1,400 high schools in the country by U.S. News and World Report

We also have hard evidence of our students' learning. I am pleased to report that we scored very well on the norm-referenced achievement test, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, with most grades scoring above the state and above the national average of the 50th percentile in math, reading, language arts, and science.

In April 2013, students in grades 3-8 took the Benchmark examination. The charts show the percentage of our students who scored proficient or advanced in literacy

increasing over the past six years, as well as the outstanding growth over the past six years in math. We are, however, in an awkward transition time where students are assessed on our previous state standards but our teachers are teaching the new Common Core standards.

Despite this consideration that likely resulted in some small dips throughout the state, I am proud that in many areas we are reaching 85 to 93 percent proficient or advanced. We are also making progress in closing the achievement gap between at-risk students and the general population. Our goal is to close the achievement gap at every grade level.

Under the new accountability model introduced last year, each district and each school must cut the percent of students who are not proficient on state Benchmark exams in half and the percent of students not making expected growth by 2017. The state has not assigned the accountability status of our schools for the 2013 test results, but we are pleased that the University of Arkansas' Office of Educational Policy has identified at least seven of our schools with awards for their high achievement on the 2013 tests. From the latest available information on school improvement statuses from the 2012 results, Rogers was pleased that we had 17 schools with the highest rating of schools of excellence and three schools noted as schools exceeding standards. The areas that were noted where we could make greater progress in improvement based on the 2012 results included:

- Math in the district and at Northside, Westside, Tucker, Oakdale, Kirksey, Heritage and Rogers High School.
- And our graduation rates at both high schools and overall for the district. In the year since this information was released, we are pleased to have had a 4% increase to an 89% on-time graduation rate for the Class of 2013 but we continue to make improving that rate a top priority.

Our district constantly works on improving curriculum and instruction as well as on mentoring our students. Each year we work to further improve achievement for all students to ensure each one reaches his or her highest potential.

When we look at how our seniors compare to others, our college entrance exam scores are above the state and national averages. In 2012-13, 594 of our seniors took the ACT college entrance examination. Rogers' average composite score was 21.7, compared to 20.2 at the state level, and 20.9 nationally.

A great point of pride in our school system is the Advanced Placement Program. We had 1,268 students who took 2,445 AP tests in 2012-13 - an impressive number of students taking AP courses and in the number of tests taken. Students who score 3, 4, or 5 are given college credit at most schools across the nation. We are pleased that 43% of our Advanced Placement students scored a 3 or better with the potential of receiving college credit.

In accordance with Arkansas Code Annotated §6-13-629, all members of the Rogers Board of Education have met their state training requirements for the preceding year in addition to the many hours they spend in regular and special meetings, policy and study sessions, and as liaisons on district committees.

We would like to inform our public about our transfer policies. The Rogers School District accepts non-resident students who request to transfer into the district as required by A.C.A. §6-18-206, known as the Arkansas Public School Choice Act, and the applicable rules and guidelines for School Choice issued by the Arkansas Department of Education, unless the transfer creates the need for additional staff, services, or facilities. School Choice transfer application forms must be on file in the Superintendent's office on, or postmarked by, June 1st.

The Board may also approve legal transfers of students who have been released from their resident district if the transfer does not cause the district to add personnel or facilities. Petitions for legal transfers must be submitted by July 1st to be considered for the fall semester and December 1st for the second semester. The general policy is that the Rogers Board of Education will not approve requests for legal transfers out of the district but may make exceptions to this general policy in extraordinary circumstances upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Our 2012-13 budget was \$118,717,941. The majority of the budget (81 percent) was spent on salaries and benefits for certified and classified personnel. Of the remaining 19 percent, 9 percent was used for debt payment, 4 percent for supplies, and 6 percent for utilities and services. Approximately 6 percent of our total funding came from federal restricted funding. Of those federal funds, we received \$3,659,725 in Title I funds which were used for reading and math programs, personnel, and professional development. We received \$408,831 in Title II, Part A funds, which were used for professional development. We received \$474,238 in Title III funds which were used for ESOL salaries and professional development. The district also received \$40,000, and the individual schools collectively received \$44,552.73 from the Coca-Cola competitive beverage contract, which was used for materials, supplies, scholarships, and professional development, as well as to assist student activity clubs and to enhance activity facilities.

As you can see from our high student achievement to the national honors noted in this report, the Rogers School District is achieving its vision: *to be a recognized educational leader in developing and challenging all students to realize their potential in our ever-changing world.* To make this happen, the district and the community worked together to develop, and are in the eighth year of implementing, a strategic plan which guides us in our efforts to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. We continue to work on the five domains of the strategic plan: leadership, communication, data, professional development, and curriculum. We focus on these domain areas weekly and update board members and the public monthly. The strategic plan is the way we do business and has helped our district to be one of the finest school districts in the state and in the nation.

We sincerely thank our community for helping us prepare our students to become intelligent, thoughtful, and responsible citizens. The strong partnerships in our community make the Rogers area a great place to live, work and learn.

Janie Darr, Ed.D

Superintendent