

**Minutes  
Lawrence County School District  
Annual Public Meeting  
October 15, 2019**

**The Lawrence County School District met Tuesday, October 15, 2019 for the Annual Public Meeting.**

**At 6:15p.m. President Pat Roby called the meeting to order.**

**The first item was the Superintendent's Report, which was given by Superintendent Terry Belcher, who gave a general update for the school, discussed goals, and accreditation status. Mr. Belcher discussed the ACT Aspire and enrollment.**

**Superintendent Belcher gave the Walnut Ridge Elementary report. At the annual public meeting, he discussed the goals for the elementary school, the accreditation status, and the test scores results.**

**Superintendent Belcher gave the Walnut Ridge High School report. At the annual public meeting, he discussed the goals for the high school, the accreditation status, and proposals for the upcoming year.**

**Superintendent Belcher gave the Federal and State Categorical Funding Report.**

**At 6:45 p.m. Clay Sloan moved the meeting adjourned. Joe Penn seconded the motion. The motion received unanimous approval.**

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**Brittany Schmidt, Secretary**



## Lawrence County School District Annual Report to the Public 2019

### District Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Lawrence County School District to develop the ability of all students by motivating, challenging, and fostering independent education. To accomplish this mission, the Lawrence County School District will ensure a positive educational environment that enhances learning, fosters growth, and provides opportunities for all students and faculty to exceed and excel beyond the educational setting.

### Schools

The Lawrence County School District is home to 948 students and 131 staff members. The Walnut Ridge Elementary serves students in grades kindergarten through the sixth grade. Walnut Ridge High serves students in grades seven through twelve. The Lawrence County School District strives to support the schools in administering academic and extracurricular programs that aim at benefiting all students. District personnel accept the responsibility that ALL students can learn and the faculty and staff will continue to work diligently to accomplish that endeavor in order to develop future productive citizens of our communities.

Arkansas schools continue to ensure high quality instruction and instructional leadership through the implementation of the [Teacher Excellence and Support System](#) (TESS) that defines a system to support high quality classroom instruction and effective teaching and leading in Arkansas's schools. The teacher evaluation system provides school districts a transparent and consistent teacher evaluation system that ensures effective teaching and promotes professional learning.

### Annual Public Meeting

The Lawrence County School District held a public meeting on October 15, 2019 at 6:15p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress toward accomplishing district program goals, creating opportunities for excellence, accreditation standards, and school objectives for the 2020-2021 school year. Principals gave an overview of programs in each school. All parents and patrons were encouraged to attend.

### Walnut Ridge Elementary School 2019 Public Report

The Walnut Ridge Elementary School accredited by ADVANCED-ED is in full compliance with the state standards. The faculty and staff remain committed to the school mission while developing the abilities of each student through the implementation of motivating, challenging, and independent learning within a safe and positive school environment. New personnel for the 2019-20 school year include Cameron Priest, Kindergarten; Stephanie Denton, Elementary Office Assistant; Susan Doyle, Middle School Office, Courtney Wilcoxson, Middle School Resource Aide, and Rachael McQuay, Resource.

The elementary school consists of Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. Grades K-4 is located in the Ben R. Bush building along with an ABC program. Grades 5-6 location is in the Middle School building. There are 355 students enrolled in K-4 and 159 at the middle school totaling 514 students in the elementary school. The total enrollment for preschool is 58. Fifty eight percent of the students qualify for the federal food program.

Third through sixth grade students have the opportunity to participate in intramural basketball. Fourth grade through sixth grade students may participate in football, and fourth through sixth grade girls may participate in volleyball. All of these sports are part of the Walnut Ridge Elementary Booster Club's program under the direction of the school's Athletic Director. Learning extends at WRES through a variety of additional activities available to students. The Lawrence

County Spelling Bee, Chess Tournaments, Quiz Bowl, Elementary Field Day, and Odyssey of the Mind are some of the opportunities. Our K-4<sup>th</sup> graders participate in the One School, One Book. One School, One Book provides excellent involvement between the school, parents, and community. Students will be learning about different countries throughout the world this year. Classrooms, extra-curricular classes, and student support personnel are all participating in the project entitled Oh, the Places We Go.

The Walnut Ridge Elementary Before and After School Program remains a growing part of the elementary school. There are currently seventy-five students enrolled in this program. The Walnut Ridge Elementary Summer Program met the essentials of over eighty students. The average daily attendance is between 30-50 students. Our school is committed to serving the needs of our parents and community.

There are two Parent-Teacher conferences scheduled for the 2019-20 school year. The first parent-teacher conference occurs at the end of the first nine weeks' period. The second conference follows at the end of the third nine weeks. Mid-term progress reports goes to parents each five weeks during the four quarters. Scheduling of individual conferences transpire as deemed necessary.

Student Recognition is a very important part of Walnut Ridge Elementary. Students receive quarterly awards for Honor Roll, Perfect Attendance, Good Work, Birthday, Principal's Award, Super Star, Caught Doing Good, Awesome Attitude and Most Improved. End of year awards will be presented fourth quarter. Students receive Bobcat Bucks for exhibiting exceptional behavior and work ethics. Mrs. Andrea Roark, WRES Counselor, focuses on character education through the incorporation of the quarterly character award and the monthly VIP award.

The Walnut Ridge School implements PLC learning communities meeting school wide with expectations that all students learn at high levels. The administration and faculty works diligently to obtain professional development that will foster student growth and provide an enhanced learning environment. All professional development alignment coincides with the district ACSIP Plan and meets the requirements mandated by the state. Teachers continue to grow professionally through active involvement in professional organizations and the state mandated TESS evaluation system. Professional Development will focus on Literacy, Data, and Mathematics. The Walnut Ridge Elementary certified teaching staff receives 60 hours of staff development during the 2019-20 school year.

Students at Walnut Ridge Elementary take the state required assessments annually. This includes the I Station Assessment for grades K-2, and the ACT Aspire Assessment for grades third through sixth. Students with academic deficiencies obtain opportunities for improvement within the Bobcat Block that provides multiple interventions through small group instruction. The Parent Center provides academic prescriptions for home learning reinforcement. We also offer After School Tutoring, In School Tutoring through the remediation/enrichment period in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, and one-on-one time with instructional aides are programs used for students who need additional academic instruction. Our reading staff assists teachers through the implementation of small intervention groups for students in grades K-4.

Walnut Ridge Elementary faculty and staff will continue to work with the students, parents, and community to meet the needs of all students. Walnut Ridge Elementary strives to make our school a true learning environment that promotes the belief that all students can learn. Researched base teaching strategies and techniques help support fundamental growth for our students. Administrators, teachers, and parents working together can make a positive difference in student achievement and educational quality, thereby initiating a "School of Choice".

**Spring, 2019 I-Station**

(Number and Percent at Tier levels)

	<b>I-Station</b>	<b>Number Tested</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>75</b>	13%	36%	51%
	<b>Math</b>	<b>75</b>	20%	27%	53%
<b>First Grade</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>67</b>	27%	25%	48%
	<b>Math</b>	<b>67</b>	12%	16%	72%
<b>Second Grade</b>	<b>Reading</b>	64	11%	22%	67%
	<b>Math</b>	64	9%	33%	58%

**Spring, 2019 ACT Aspire**

**National Percentage of students meeting or exceeding ACT Readiness Benchmarks.**

**Percentage of students in grades 3 and 4 meeting or exceeding ACT Readiness Benchmarks.**

<b>ACT Aspire</b>	<b>Number Tested</b>	<b>% Meeting/Exceeding</b>	<b>National %</b>
<b>Third Grade</b>			
<b>English</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Science</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Fourth Grade</b>			
<b>English</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Science</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>34%</b>

**Walnut Ridge High School 2019 Public Report**

**Walnut Ridge High School meets the Standards for Accreditation as established and set forth by the Arkansas Department of Education. Walnut Ridge High School is also a fully accredited member of the North Central Association.**

The faculty and administration are involved in an ongoing effort to accomplish goals of the school's mission statement. Workshops and training to obtain the highest level of services for our students and faculty are provided. The professional development hours are based on the requirements found within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Rules, Board policies, student achievement data, and local ACSIP plans. Specifically, professional development activities are designed to increase student academic performance. Two key focuses of professional development at WRHS are the improvement of reading scores and the continued development of a Professional Learning Community. In 2019, WRHS earned a letter grade of "B" on the ESSA school report card (early access portal).

At Walnut Ridge High School, 28 faculty members provide instruction in a broad spectrum of subjects ranging from special education and basic skills to Advanced Placement courses. WRHS offers nine Advanced Placement courses. A smart core curriculum and a core curriculum are offered that benefit both the college bound student and those students who will be entering the workforce after graduation. Students may also become a "Completer" by completing a course of study in one of four career and technical pathways at WRHS: Agriculture, Business, Jr. Firefighter, and Family & Consumer Science. Students are allowed to pursue a course of study that will enable them to attend the Northeast Arkansas Career and Technical Center in Jonesboro which offers 13 technical programs. Walnut Ridge High School also offers courses in six academic subjects totaling twenty-seven concurrent credit hours through Black River Technical College that allows students who qualify academically to receive college credit in those courses for a reduced rate of tuition. BRTC has also allowed our students to take online courses through their campus at the reduced rate for any course not offered on our campus. Two new concurrent credit courses have been added for the 2019-20 school year, Trigonometry and Calculus. With new legislation, the lottery scholarship will now pay for up to six hours of concurrent credit in both the junior and senior years of high school.

WRHS partners with BRTC on the Technical Opportunities for Secondary Students (TOPSS) program. This program allows students to attend BRTC for half of the day during their junior and senior years and receive training and certifications in welding, advanced manufacturing, electrical, or allied health (nursing). This program is grant-funded and is of no charge to the students. WRHS offers a complete course of study in fire science. Students can learn basic firefighting and first responder skills and earn numerous certifications and concurrent credit through BRTC. In 2019-20, Introduction to Criminal Justice was introduced as a new course at WRHS with the hopes of adding the complete course of study in future years.

In 2018-19 WRHS added an EAST (Education Accelerated through Service and Technology) program. The EAST Initiative is a high tech project-based program that requires students to problem solve and create while encouraging them to be active in the community.

Walnut Ridge High School students participate in a variety of nationally sponsored activities that include FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, Key Club, National Honor Society, Student Council, and a number of school sponsored clubs. WRHS students have excelled both at the state and national level in such competitions as Quiz Bowl and Odyssey of the Mind. Students are also involved in community activities with Key Club, Ralph Joseph Leadership, and Red Cross. Walnut Ridge High School students attended Boys and Girls State sponsored by the American Legion.

Students are given the opportunity to attend an ACT summer program hosted by Walnut Ridge High. The preparation course offered during the summer months gives many students a significant increase in scores as a result of their participation. ACT help sessions are also sponsored throughout the school year in the week before a scheduled test.

Students may participate in a host of extracurricular activities that enhance the learning process. Athletic programs include football, volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, track and field, golf, the "Alleycats" dance team, and trap shooting team. An active cheerleading squad, band, and

choir compete in a host of local, state, and national events. Individual clubs and organizations meet a diverse range of student needs.

Alternative Education is located on the Walnut Ridge High School campus and serves students in grades 9-12. This program serves students for behavioral issues, attendance issues and academic issues. WRHS teachers teach most courses. Students may also take electives in their field of interest or attend the Jonesboro Career and Technical Center to learn skills for specific trades.

Technology continues to be an important component of the educational process. Every classroom has Internet accessibility and the high school library has sixteen computers available for student research and projects. The high school has three computer labs. One of the labs is used for classroom instruction in the business department. One lab is used for students to take online college classes and for students to earn lost credits through Credit Recovery. The other is a general lab adjacent to the Library used for a variety of educational needs. WRHS also has four carts containing 25 laptop computers, each that are assessable to all classrooms throughout the building. The laptops are also used for ACT Aspire testing in the spring. The entire high school building has Wi-Fi access.

Students at Walnut Ridge High take the state-required assessments annually. ACT Aspire became the state-mandated test for grades 3-10 in 2015-16. The chart below describes the results of the ACT Aspire test:

### 2018-19 Walnut Ridge High School ACT Aspire Subject Proficiency

	9th	10 <sup>th</sup>
English	60%	62%
Math	35%	32%
Science	33%	33%
Reading	32%	39%

### 2018-19 ACT College Admission Exam---State-Tested 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

	2017-18 WRHS	State Avg.
Number Tested	64	
English	18.4	17.9
Mathematics	16.5	17.9
Reading	17.7	18.9
Science	18.4	18.6
Composite	17.9	18.5

## 2018-19 Advanced Placement Tests/ Scores of 3 or higher

AP Course	# Taking Exam	3.0	4.0	5.0
Biology	3	0	0	0
English Lang./Comp	24	0	1	0
Government & Politics	7	3	2	1
Calculus AB	5	1	0	0
World History	20	0	0	0
English Lit./Comp.	25	2	0	0
Music Theory	1	0	0	0
U.S. History	22	0	0	0

## Lawrence County School District Graduation, Drop-Out, Remediation Rate

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Graduation Rate*	96.8	85.7	93.9	94.2	91.0
Drop-out Rate	0.60	0.93	1.34	1.45	Not avail.
College Remediation Rate	52.2	55.8	52.5	60.3	Not avail.
College Going Rate	53.3	52.5	52.5	53.7	56.9

\*State Goal for Graduation Rate is 85%

Walnut Ridge High School is committed to excellence in education. The mission of Walnut Ridge High School is to enable all students and faculty an opportunity to exceed and excel. We recognize that the responsibility of a solid educational foundation lies with the students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community. Our mission is to develop the abilities of each student by maintaining an educational setting that enhances learning, fosters growth, and ensures development.

### Alternative Learning Environment

The Lawrence County School District continues to advance its Alternative Learning Environment program. The CATS (Creating A Thriving Student) Program is located in the Walnut



Ridge High School and serves students 9-12. This program serves students who are at risk for not graduating, who have behavioral issues, and who have attendance issues. Students may earn credits in English, Social Science, Science, Math and various electives. Core courses in English, Math and Social Science are taught by accredited on-campus faculty, and core Science courses are taught via Virtual Arkansas, a live-streaming simulcast taught by highly qualified teachers across the state and facilitated by WRHS faculty. For electives, students may take on-campus electives and complete courses in Agriculture, Business or Consumer Science. Students who meet the proper criteria may also attend the Jonesboro Service Center to learn skills for vocational trades.

## **Parent Center**

The Walnut Ridge School Parent Center is committed to providing materials and services to assist parents in improving their child's academic achievement. We continue to encourage and support active parental involvement in a variety of ways including but not limited to volunteering.

Informational packets are prepared in the center and will be distributed during parent/teacher conferences. Packets consist of useful information including but not limited to school calendar, contact information, parental involvement plan, volunteer opportunities, parenting tips in areas such as homework, health or nutrition, and projected parent involvement activities planned for the school year.

The Parent Center is using the app Remind to provide communication between the school and parents in a regular and meaningful manner for the elementary school. Remind announcements are posted on the school website, and can be available in paper form. The school website is another method for parents to communicate or be informed in a regular and meaningful manner. Parents are encouraged to visit the website at [www.bobcats.k12.ar.us](http://www.bobcats.k12.ar.us) to check their child's progress, assignments, and activities.

Parent Center surveys will be sent home annually and are available to download on the parent center page on the school website. Results from the surveys will be used to better understand the needs of the parents. Parent meeting topics and material suggestions are also compiled from the surveys.

Volunteerism is supported and encouraged at Walnut Ridge School. Volunteer surveys are sent home annually and are also available to download on the school website. Instructional volunteers are trained through the center each year. Faculty members receive a volunteer resource book which is updated yearly from the survey results. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of this useful resource.

The parent center provides resources and materials free of charge. The center is available daily and is located near the middle level building. It is coordinated by Lindsey Romine and facilitated by Dyan Heard. Mrs. Romine may be reached at 870-819-0443 and Mrs. Heard at 870-819-0441 or both at [www.bobcats.k12.ar.us](http://www.bobcats.k12.ar.us). The Walnut Ridge Elementary School encourages all parents to utilize this valuable asset.

## **Gifted, Talented and Creative Program**

The Lawrence County School District's gifted and talented program provides students with various program options such as Whole Group Enrichment, Resource Room, Pre-Advanced Placement, and Advanced Placement Courses.

Kindergarten through second grade are served through Whole Group Enrichment by the GT coordinator for 30 minutes per week.

Students in the third through sixth grade are provided services in the resource room for 150 minutes per week by the GT coordinator.

Students in the fifth through tenth grade are served through Pre-Advanced Placement courses such as Civics, English, Economics, Math, Physical Science, Biology, and Algebra II, by a certified teacher for 250 minutes per week.

Students in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade are provided services through Advanced Placement courses such as Biology, Calculus, Music Theory, U.S. History, World History, American Government, English Language, and English Literature and Composition by a certified teacher for 250 minutes per week.

All seventh through twelfth grade students have the opportunity to meet with the GT coordinator on the third Monday of the month from 8:00 a.m. until 8:45 a.m.

Identified students also have the opportunity to participate in outside learning opportunities such as Odyssey of the Mind, quiz bowl, chess competitions, NEAC Business Expo, U.S. Space Camp, Story Store, Bioscience Institute, Stock Market Game, and Project Fair. Additional field trips are arranged when appropriate.

Referrals for the gifted and talented program are accepted throughout the year. Please feel free to access Tonda Brand's website page for more information or contact her at 819-0439.

### **District Technology**

iPads have been implemented in K-4 with good feedback from the teachers. This will be last grade level that iPads will be rolled out to with laptops being the preferred device for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up. The assumption is that content consumption is the usage model for lower elementary and content creation begins around the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

New interactive panel upgrades are on a temporary hold due to the expense. Most teachers 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up now have interactive panels which has several advantages over the projector type presentation systems such as brightness, clarity, lack of shadows, low maintenance etc.

A new district wide bell/announcement system is being rolled out to replace the old and hodge-podge system currently in use. The new system has the capability to play pre-recorded announcements such a fire drills, weather warnings, and other emergency situation communications. The system can play the bells/announcements over multiple device types such as classroom phones, computers, Smartboards, and cell phones. The biggest hurdle is getting coverage in the hallways and outdoors. We are shooting for the summer to get this completely rolled out.

Security cameras are being upgraded in high school and middle school as well as adding some to the community center.

We will be researching laptop usage in 5-12 to see if there are enough devices to satisfy requirements and will proceed accordingly.

Another challenge coming soon is replacing the Compute Stick devices running the Smartboards. The Compute Stick is nearing end of life and a replacement will be needed soon. On the plus side the Compute Stick was a low-cost device and made for a clean installation but has been difficult to support and added to ownership costs. Newer Smartboards have a slot for small form factor devices and will be utilized but existing boards and projectors will need to be retrofitted.

### **Capital Improvements**

- Computers
- Teacher Desks
- Window Blinds
- Replacing Outdated Heat and Air Systems
- New Cameras in Cafeteria
- Upgrades to Server

- Purchase of Student Desks and Tables
- Halls Painted
- Various Doors Replaced
- Replaced Ceiling Tiles
- New Copiers
- Purchase of iPads for 5th Grade
- Various Water Fountains Replaced

## **Federal and State Categorical Funding**

The Lawrence County School District receives federal monies and state categorical monies to supplement educational programs. The District receives Title I, Title II-A, Title IV-A, Title V (state), Carl Perkins, National School Lunch Act (NSL), English Language Learners (ELL), Professional Development (PD), and Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) funding. All funds (except Carl Perkins) are administered through the schools' Arkansas Consolidated School Improvement Plans.

Title I funds are utilized for Walnut Ridge Elementary. Funds are used to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities for teachers and students. Literacy, math, and science are targeted areas of improvement. The Parent Center is funded using Title I funds.

Title II-A funds are used to help with professional development in the elementary grades. Currently, Brooke Bramlett's salary as Literacy Coach is partially funded by Title II-A funds.

Title IV – A funds are transferred to Title I to help with expenses in the Title I budget.

Title VI (state) funds are used to help provide a security officer for the district.

Carl Perkins funds are specifically used in the Vocational Department. Business, Agriculture, and Family and Consumer Science classes provide supplemental activities with Carl Perkins funds. Funds are also used to provide teachers with professional development opportunities and travel expenses.

National School Lunch Act (NSL) funds are geared at increasing student academic performance in math, literacy, science, and social studies. Positions paid with NSL funds: School Nurse, Security Officer, MS Guidance Counselor, Technology Lab aide in HS, Librarian in ES, Before and After School Tutoring, Summer School at the high school, and others. NSL monies are used for software and materials and supplies for math, literacy, science, and social studies.

Professional Development funds allow teachers to attend various trainings throughout the year. Teachers are also afforded the opportunity to attend meetings that address best practices in their respective academic field and that pertain to their Professional Growth Plan.

Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) funds assist in the establishment of the Alternative School located on the Walnut Ridge campus. Part of the salary of the ALE Coordinator is paid with ALE funds.

The Lawrence County School District does not have a soda contract.

### **Equity**

The Lawrence County School Equity coordinator for the district is Amy Privett. She can be reached at 870-886-6697.

### **Homeless**

**The Lawrence County School Homeless Coordinator for the District is Candace Eveland. She can be reached at 870-886-6697.**